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ABSTRACT

Cognitive factors have been shown to play an important role in marital distress. To examine the importance of the self-other distinction for understanding the impact of attributions on marital satisfaction, two studies were conducted. In the first study, causal attributions for naturally occurring behavior by the self and spouse were investigated in 44 married couples, including both distressed and nondistressed spouses. Subjects completed a Spouse Observation Checklist, reporting on specified behaviors of their spouses over a 24-hour period. It was found that both self-enhancing and spouse- enhancing attributions were related to greater marital satisfaction. In addition, nondistressed spouses were more willing to see themselves as the cause of their partners' negative behavior than were distressed spouses. In the second study, causal and responsibility attributions for hypothetical behaviors by both the self and spouse were investigated in 76 distressed and nondistressed spouses. The results of the first study were replicated and extended, showing that self attributions accounted for variance in marital satisfaction which is independent of that due to attributions for partner behavior. Self- other attribution differences varied as a function of marital distress. Nondistressed spouses showed a positive attribution bias by making more benign attributions for partner versus self behaviors whereas distressed spouses showed a negative attribution bias, making less benign attributions for partner than self behavior. These findings suggest that self attributions may, in part, determine the impact of attributions for spouse behavior on marital satisfaction. A six-page list of references concludes the document. (NB)

Attributions to the self and partner in distressed and nondistressed couples

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Abstract

The importance of the self-other distinction for understanding the impact of attributions on marital satisfaction is examined in two studies. In Study 1, causal attributions for naturally occurring behavior by the self and spouse were investigated. It was found that both self-enhancing and spouse-enhancing attributions were related to greater marital satisfaction. In addition, nondistressed spouses were more willing to see themselves as the cause of their partners' negative behavior than were distressed spouses. In Study 2, causal and responsibility attributions for hypothetical behaviors by both the self and spouse were investigated. The results of Study 1 were replicated and extended, showing that self attributions account for variance in marital satisfaction which is independent of that due to attributions for partner behavior. Moreover, self-other attribution differences varied as a function of marital distress. Nondistressed spouses showed a positive attribution bias by making more benign attributions for partner versus self behaviors whereas distressed spouses showed a negative attribution bias, making less benign attributions for partner than self behavior. These findings suggest that self attributions may, in part, determine the impact of attributions for spouse behavior on marital satisfaction. The clinical relevance of the results and their implications for research on "actor-observer" attribution differences are outlined.

There has been widespread recognition from both a clinical and theoretical perspective that cognitive factors play an important role in the initiation and maintenance of marital distress, a viewpoint now supported by a growing number of empirical studies (e.g. Baucom, Bell & Duhe, 1982; Baucom, Wheeler & Bell, 1984; Doherty, 1982; Eidelson & Epstein, 1982; Epstein & Eidelson, 1982; Fincham, 1985a; Fincham, Beach & Nelson, in press; Fincham & O'Leary, 1983; Holtzworth-Munroe & Jacobson, 1985; Jacobson, McDonald, Follette & Berley, 1985; Madden & Janoff-Bulman, 1981; Newman, 1981). The major portion of this theoretical development and empirical research has been dominated by attribution theory and has focused on the causal attributions spouses make for their partners' behavior. In the present paper an attempt is made to broaden the current perspective on attribution processes and marital dysfunction by investigating: (a) spouses attributions for their own behavior, and (b) differences between self and partner attributions, in distressed and nondistressed marriages.

A number of empirical findings now suggest that relative to nondistressed spouses, distressed spouses view the causes of their partners' negative behavior as reflecting enduring, global characteristics of their partners (i.e., internal, stable, and global attributions). Distressed spouses also tend to view positive partner behavior as being situationally determined and thus to reflect temporary, situation specific causes (i.e., external, unstable and specific attributions). The same patterns of causal attributions have been found to characterize nondistressed spouses but for positive and negative behavior, respectively (Baucom et al., 1982; Fincham, 1985a; Fincham & O'Leary, 1983; Fincham et al., in press; Holtzworth-Munroe & Jacobson, 1985; Jacobson et al., 1985). The significance of these attribution differences is emphasized by the fact that they tend to

accentuate the impact of negative partner behavior and minimize the impact of positive partner behavior for distressed spouses, whereas for nondistressed spouses they emphasize the impact of positive partner behavior and minimize the impact of negative partner behavior. Consequently, these attributional tendencies may help account for the different patterns of behavioral exchanges found between spouses in distressed and nondistressed marriages (Baucom, in press; Berley & Jacobson, 1984; Fincham, 1983, 1985b). In fact, there is already some evidence that these attributional tendencies are related to the affective impact of partner behavior which, in turn, affects intended behavioral responses (Fincham et al., in press; Fincham & O'Leary, 1983).

The above findings raise an important question: what determines the significance accorded to attributions for partner behaviors by a spouse? A complete answer to this question requires, at the very least, consideration of attributions for partner behavior relative to those for one's own behavior. Consider, for example, a positive partner behavior and an identical behavior performed by oneself (e.g., "Partner compliments me"; "I compliment my partner"). The attribution made for the partner's behavior is likely to have the most positive impact on the attributor when it is more benign (more internal, stable and global; e.g., "my partner always cares about how I feel") than that made for one's own behavior (e.g, "I happened to be in a good mood"). Such a discrepancy is likely to accentuate the feelings generated by the partner's behavior and, in general, is likely to make the attributor feel especially positive towards his/her spouse. Similarly, perhaps the impact of a negative partner behavior (e.g., "Partner shouts at me") is enhanced to the extent that attributions are less benign (less external, unstable and specific; e.g., "my partner is self-centered

and insensitive") than those made for one's own behavior (e.g., "I had a bad day at the office"). Again the discrepancy between self and partner attributions is likely to produce particularly strong negative affect. In sum, we propose that the impact of a spouse's attribution for partner behavior varies as a function of the extent to which it differs from attributions the individual would make for his/her own similar behavior towards the partner.

The question raised above is important for both theoretical and applied reasons. From a theoretical perspective, it behooves marital researchers to determine the source of the attributional differences for partner behavior found between distressed and nondistressed spouses. Do these differences reflect a positive bias (i.e., a tendency to make more benign partner than self attributions) on the part of nondistressed spouses, a negative bias (i.e., a tendency to make less benign attributions for partner behavior than own behavior) on the part of distressed spouses, or both[1]? At the applied level, the resolution of this question has important implications. For instance, an intervention may entail explicit consideration of the attributions an individual makes for his/her own behavior and comparison of these self attributions to the attributions made for partner behavior. Such an intervention makes sense if distressed spouses show a negative bias in their attributions but not if they make similar attributions for both their own and their partners' behavior.

It is difficult to evaluate the above arguments on the basis of existing data, even though differences in attributions to the self versus another have been widely investigated in social psychological research. Jones and Nisbett (1972, p. 80) postulated a "pervasive tendency" for people to attribute their own actions to situational factors while attributing the

actions of others to stable, personal dispositions. The numerous studies which provide support for this hypothesis (see Monson & Snyder, 1978; Watson, 1982 for reviews), like most in the attribution literature, involve causal inferences for the behavior of acquaintances, strangers or hypothetical others (Fincham, 1985b). Spouses in a marriage are clearly more than the "actors" and "observers" investigated in these studies, a fact which is likely to affect the attributions they make. For instance, it has already been shown that attributions are influenced by factors such as expected future interaction (Knight & Vallacher, 1981) and the affect experienced by an attributor towards an actor (Goldberg, 1978, 1981; Regan, Straus & Fazio, 1974), both of which characterize the marital dyad.

The difficulty of generalizing the findings of basic research on self-other attributional differences to attributions in close relationships, as well as the problems encountered in interpreting this basic research, is illustrated in a series of studies by Taylor and Koivumaki (1976). These investigators varied the attributor's relationship with the target person (acquaintance, friend, spouse, self) and had subjects ascribe traits to the person (Experiment 3) or rate the causes of their behaviors on a dispositional-situational bipolar scale (Experiments 1 and 3). Little support was found for differences in self-other attributions. Instead, a "positivity" effect emerged, as persons were seen to cause good behaviors while situational factors were considered to be the cause of bad behaviors, an effect which became more pronounced as a function of increasing familiarity with the target person. However, the interpretation of this finding is problematic as these studies reflect two deficiencies common to most attribution research on this topic (Watson, 1982). First, the rating of traits as the major dependent variable is a problem as not all traits are

seen as stable, global characteristics. Moreover, subjective uncertainty regarding the applicability of trait ascriptions, ambiguity of trait meaning, attributor neutrality and situational attributions are confounded (Goldberg, 1981). Second, subjects found the dispositional-situational rating troublesome, a difficulty which pervades research using this distinction (Taylor & Fiske, 1975; Uleman, Miller, Henken, Tsemberis & Riky, 1981). These difficulties, combined with the fact that the dimensions perceived to underlie causes vary across time and between people (Weiner, 1983), led us to: (a) investigate explicitly dimensions which underlie the causes of behavior in marriage and (b) obtain subjects' ratings of these dimensions.

Thus, while existing attribution research in social psychology can provide important guidelines for marital researchers (especially at the level of methodology), a true understanding of the role of attributions in marital dysfunction requires the direct investigation of attribution processes in distressed and nondistressed couples. Kyle and Falbo (1985) recently used Taylor and Koivumaki's (1976) procedure to examine self-other attributions in a group of married spouses which comprised volunteer, student couples. Consistent with previous research, spouses in `high stress marriages' were more likely to attribute positive partner behavior to situational causes and negative partner behavior to dispositional causes, relative to spouses in `low stress marriages'. While group differences were also found for self attributions (low stress spouses made more dispositional attributions for positive behavior, whereas high stress spouses exhibited the same tendency for negative behaviors), close examination shows that no self-other differences in attributions were found in either group. Unfortunately, the interpretation of these findings is difficult since a

median split was used to form high and low marital stress groups using a measure of unknown validity. It is, therefore, not possible to determine whether the sample investigated represents the full range of marital satisfaction. Consequently, further investigation is warranted in this area.

Although they did not investigate marital distress, two studies provide evidence for self-partner attributional differences in close relationships. Orvis, Kelley and Butler (1976) found that when explicit disagreements occurred between cohabiting couples regarding the cause of a behavior, subjects tended to see the causes of partner behavior as due to partner characteristics or attitudes; their own behavior was perceived as due to environmental factors, temporary internal states, the intrinsic quality of the activity, concern for partner welfare, or beliefs about what is preferable. These findings generally accord with the actor-observer differences posited by Jones and Nisbett (1972). Of greater relevance in the present context are Thompson and Kelley's (1981) findings that the more successful a romantic relationship is rated by its participants (including dating and marriage), the more likely they are to see the partner, rather than themselves, as being the cause of positive relationship events (Experiments 1 & 3) and to assume responsibility themselves for at least some negative events (Experiment 3). As most subjects rated their relationship as highly successful, such findings suggest the possibility of a positive bias regarding attributions for partner behavior as compared to self attributions in nondistressed couples. Again, however, these results are only suggestive in the present context given the subject populations used.

In view of the paucity of data available on self-partner attributions in distressed and nondistressed marriages two studies were undertaken. Their

goal is to provide initial information on self and partner attributions in marriage and to determine whether these attributions are related to marital distress. The first study attempts to extend previous attributional research on marriage by examining attributions for naturally occurring behavior. In order to compare directly self and partner attributions, the behaviors rated by subjects were experimentally manipulated in the second study.

Study 1

Study 1 was designed to extend previous research on attributions in marriage by examining whether: (a) the attributional differences found between distressed and nondistressed spouses for partner behavior apply for naturally occurring behaviors in the relationship; (b) marital satisfaction is also related to self attributions; and (c) attributions for self and partner behavior interact with level of marital distress.

Method

Subjects. Forty-four married couples participated in this study. Half of the couples were either seeking marital therapy or had recently begun marital therapy. None of the couples had attended more than three therapy sessions. The remainder of the sample were recruited from the community by advertising for couples to participate in a research project. Community couples in which both spouses scored below 100 on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976) were excluded from the nondistressed group. The DAS scores of distressed and nondistressed groups differed significantly, $F(1,81) = 6.4$, $p < .05$. As expected, the mean score for the distressed group was lower (81.5, S.D. = 24.5) than that for the nondistressed group (113.7, S.D.= 18.0). No sex difference or sex by group interaction was found for DAS scores.

There were no differences between the distressed and nondistressed groups in regard to number of years married, number of children, education, and age. The mean number of years married and number of children for the sample were 8.6 (S.D. = 3.7) and 1.99 (S.D. = 1.1), respectively. Husbands averaged 36.9 (S.D. = 9.5) years of age and 15.9 (S.D. = 2.8) years of education. Corresponding figures for wives were 35.5 (S.D. = 9.9) and 15.2 (S.D. = 2.4).

Procedure. The data for this study were collected as part of a larger data set which involved the investigation of several facets of family life. Clinic couples were contacted through cooperating mental health agencies and private practicioners. Community couples telephoned the laboratory in response to an advertisement in a local newspaper. For both groups of couples, a research assistant explained that the study involved peoples' perceptions ot their family life and that couples were paid $15.00 for their participation in the study. Arrangements were then made for the couple to come into the laboratory to participate in the study. Each spouse completed questionnnaires independently and was given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the task if there was uncertainty about what to do.

Measure of Attributions. The Spouse Observation Checklist (Weiss & Perry, 1979) was used to generate everyday behaviors for which attributions could be made. This checklist of 409 items comprises a list of potential events which can occur in a marital relationship on a daily basis. Approximately 25% of the spouse behaviors on the checklist were selected to most fully represent the content reflected in the SOC (Baucom et al., 1982). The majority of items on the SOC are phrased to refer to the behavior of the partner (e.g., "spouse criticized me"). For the purposes of the study, the items were also reworded so that they referred to the respondents' own

behavior (e.g., "I criticized my spouse"). Thus subjects were presented with a checklist containing potential behaviors performed by their partners and by themselves.

Subjects examined the checklist and indicated which of the behaviors had occurred during the past 24 hours in the relationship. For each behavior checked off, they also indicated whether the impact of the behavior was positive, neutral or negative (for their own behaviors, this response indicated the intended impact of the behavior on their partners). They then wrote down the one most important cause of the behavior and rated the cause in terms of the internal-external, stable-unstable and global-specific causal dimensions. The first dimension was assessed by three judgments: the extent to which the cause was due to the respondent, to the spouse and to outside circumstances. Causal stability entailed a judgment regarding whether the cause would again be present in the future when the behavior occurred. Finally, the global-specific nature of the cause was examined by asking the subject to indicate the extent to which the cause affects other areas of the relationship and not only the behavior in question. All responses were made on 7-point rating scales.

Results and Discussion

Responses to six categories of behavioral events were analysed: partner behaviors and own behaviors which were rated positive, neutral and negative in impact. Since subjects could respond to multiple behaviors in each category, average responses in each of the six categories were obtained for each of the five attribution questions. In view of the fact that attributions are influenced by both the attributional tendencies of the attributor as well as the event for which an attribution is made, it was decided that information regarding at least two behaviors in a category was

needed in order to yield meaningful results for that category of behavior. Thus where a spouse checked off only one behavior in a category, the attributional data for that category was coded as missing.

Unfortunately, less than half of the respondents provided data in all six categories. This imposed constraints on the analysis of the data as the combined use of all six categories in a single analysis would have created statistical problems.[2] Consequently, the relationship of attributions in each category to marital satisfaction was examined independently. It is noteworthy that none of the correlations involving neutral behaviors was significant. The correlations between the attribution ratings for positive and negative behaviors and DAS scores are shown in Table 1.[3]

Insert Table 1 about here

The data in Table 1 show that the pattern of attributions found for partner behavior is consistent with that obtained in previous research. Specifically, for behaviors with a positive impact, marital satisfaction was positively related to attributions which were perceived to be located in the partner, stable and global. The inverse pattern of results was found for negative behaviors. In addition, locating the cause of negative partner behavior in the self was positively related to marital satisfaction. In combination, these findings suggest that a willingness to give credit to the partner for positive behavior and assume partial responsibility for the partner's negative behavior, is associated with marital satisfaction.

The data in Table 1 show that attributions for self behavior are also related to marital satisfaction. This pattern of correlations is virtually identical to that which characterised partner behavior. However, in the case

of negative behavior, causes which reflected outside circumstances were positively related to marital satisfaction. These data are consistent with those of Kyle and Falbo (1985) and support the view, outlined earlier, that a complete account of attributional processes in distressed and nondistressed marriages requires the investigation of self attributions in addition to attributions for partner behavior.

Further evidence in support of the above conclusion would be established if significant correlations between self attributions and marital satisfaction were obtained after controlling for variance due to attributions for partner behavior. To test this possibility, partial correlations between self attributions and marital satisfaction were computed. That is, for each self attribution rating regarding positive behavior, a correlation with marital satisfaction was calculated partialling out the corresponding attribution rating for partner behavior. Similar correlations were computed for negative behavior. For positive behaviors, the partial correlation between partner as causal locus and marital satisfaction was significant, r (67) = .26, p <.05 whereas for negative behaviors the partial correlations for partner as the locus of the cause, r (27) = -.32, p <.05, the stability of the cause, r(27) = -.35, p <.05, and the globality of the cause, r (27) = -.43, p <.05, were all significant. Hence it can be concluded that self attributions do acccount for variance in marital satisfaction which is independent of that accounted for by causal attributions for partner behavior.

The correlational analyses reported might simply reflect an association between marital satisfaction and the number of behaviors rated in each category. Indeed, there is evidence that the frequency of positive and negative spouse behavior is related to marital distress (Jacobson et al.,

1982). Consequently, the correlations between DAS scores and the number of behaviors rated in each category were examined. The number of positive partner behaviors was directly related to marital satisfaction, r (74) = .44, p <.001 whereas the number of partner behaviors with a negative impact was inversely related to marital satisfaction, r (44) = -.47, p <.001. The frequencies of behaviors in the remaining categories were not significantly related to marital satisfaction. In view of these findings, the correlations between the attribution ratings and DAS scores were recomputed partialling out the number of behaviors in the category. The same pattern of results was obtained, indicating that attribution ratings account for variance in marital satisfaction which is independent of the frequency of the behaviors for which the attribution is made.

In summary, this study demonstrates that the attributions found in previous marital research apply to naturally occurring partner behavior. It is also the first study to demonstrate that marital satisfaction is related to several dimensions which underlie self attributions for such behavior. Unfortunately, however, the data do not permit the direct comparison of self-partner differences in attributions between distressed and nondistressed spouses, a comparison which is investigated in the second study.

Study 2

The current paper proposes that differences between self and partner attributions vary as a function of marital distress. In order to examine this issue directly, greater control was exerted over the stimuli used to generate attributions in the present study. More specifically, spouses made attributions for preselected partner behaviors from the Spouse Observation Checklist which were categorized as positive and negative on an a priori

basis. They also made attributions for the same behaviors performed by themselves. In both cases they were asked to imagine the occurrence of the behavior in their relationship. This strategy appears to be a reasonable one since attributions for naturally occurring behaviors in Study 1 yielded response patterns similar to those obtained when spouses' are asked to imagine the occurrence of spouse behaviors (e.g., Fincham & O' Leary, 1983; Jacobson et al., 1985). Study 2 thus provides: (a) the opportunity to replicate the findings of Study 1 in regard to self attributions; (b) further data regarding attributions made for partner behavior in distressed and nondistressed marrriages; and (c) allows for a direct examination of self-partner attributions and marital distress.

The fact that spouses made attributions for fewer behaviors in the present study (and thus made fewer judgments) permitted a further important issue to be investigated. This issue concerns the nature of the attributions which give rise to self-partner attribution differences and is relevant to the process which underlies such attribution differences. Although Jones and Nisbett (1972) were primarily concerned with the role of cognitive factors in producing self-other differences in attributions, they do acknowledge the possible influence of factors such as the need to protect self-esteem and the "need to justify blameworthy action" (p. 80). In marriage, issues of accountability for one's action are central (Fincham, 1985b) and such factors cannot be considered incidental to potential self-partner attribution differences (cf. Jones and Nisbett, 1972, p.92). In fact, recent data suggest that differences between distressed and nondistressed couples are much greater in regard to attributions of responsibility than to causal attributions and that these responsibility attributions are more closely related to the affective impact of partner behavior (Fincham et al., in

press).[4] To the extent that any self-partner attribution difference in marriage involves justification and exoneration of behavior, an interaction with level of marital distress is likely to be most evident in relation to attributions of responsibility. This possibility is also investigated in the present study.

Method

Subjects. Seventy-six persons (38 males and 38 females) participated in this study. The distressed group comprised 36 spouses who were seeking marital therapy at the University Marital Therapy Clinic at Stony Brook. A nondistressed group of 40 spouses was recruited by means of an advertisement in a local newspaper which requested volunteers to participate in a study on marriage. Only persons who scored above 100 on the Marital Adjustment Test (Lock & Wallace, 1959) were invited to participate in the study.[5] All eligible subjects agreed to participate. Marital Adjustment Test scores showed that the distressed (M = 73.5; $S.D.$ = 20.5) and nondistressed groups (M = 125.8; $S.D.$ = 14.3) differed in marital satisfaction, F (1,72) = 84.5, p <.001. There were no significant differences between the groups in years of marriage (M = 9.5, $S.D.$ = 6.9), income (M = \$33,100, $S.D.$ = \$13,800), number of children (M = 1.5, $S.D.$ = .2), age (for husbands, M = 35.9, $S.D.$ = 6.9; for wives, M = 33.1, $S.D.$ = 5.6) and education (for husbands, M = 15.6, $S.D.$ = 3.1; for wives M = 15.0, $S.D.$ = 2.7).

Procedure. The distressed group completed the materials used in this study as part of a battery of questionnaires administered during their intake interview. Nondistressed spouses came to the clinic for a single visit during which they completed the attribution measure. Spouses in both groups were encouraged to ask questions regarding the task whenever they

felt uncertain about what to do. Nondistressed spouses were paid $10.00 upon completion of the study.

Measure of Attributions. Attributions were obtained for 12 stimulus items (2 targets x 2 behavioral valences x 3 behaviors). These comprised six behaviors which were phrased to reflect spouse behavior (e.g., your spouse does not pay attention to what you are saying) and six instances of own behavior (e.g., you do not pay attention to what your spouse is saying). Three of the six basic behaviors were positive and three were negative. Thus a subject responded to three positive and three negative spouse behaviors and to the same behaviors performed by him/herself.

For each behavior, the subject made six judgments, three relating to causal attribution dimensions and three regarding responsibility attributions. After writing down the major cause of the behavior, the subject made a judgment regarding the locus of the cause. For partner behavior, they indicated whether the cause reflected something about his/her spouse versus something about themselves, other people or circumstances. In the case of their own behavior, the contrast was between something about themselves versus something about their spouse, other people, or circumstances (for the purpose of analysing these judgments, responses were scored so that higher scores indicated causes internal to the person who performed the behavior).[6] The remaining two questions asked about the stability and globality of the cause and were identical to those used in the first study. Responsibility attributions comprised three questions which asked respondents to assign blame/praise for the behavior, and to report the intent and motivation which gave rise to the behavior. These latter judgments were included since they are the conceptual foundations for attributions of responsibility regarding intentional behavior (Fincham &

Jaspars, 1980) and have been emphasized in theoretical analyses of family violence (Gelles & Strauss, 1979; Hotaling, 1980). Subjects indicated the extent to which the behavior: (a) was intended to be positive or negative/destructive, (b) was motivated by selfish concerns, and (c) was worthy of blame versus praise. Responses to all questions were made on 7-point rating scales.

Results and Discussion

Responses to each attribution question were summed across the three stimulus items in each category of behavior. Hence subjects received four sets of scores, two pertaining to their partners' behavior (positive and negative), and two regarding their own behavior (positive and negative). An initial analysis showed that the sex of the respondent did not influence responses either as a main effect or in interaction with other variables. Consequently, a 2 x 2 x 2 repeated measures multivariate analysis of variance was used to analyse the data: group (distressed vs. nondistressed) served as a between subjects factor with the target of the attributions (self vs. partner) and the valence of the behavior (positive vs. negative) as within subject factors. The six attribution ratings were the dependent variables. Significant main effects were found for all three independent variables: group, F (6,68) = 4.78, $p < .001$, attribution target, F (6,68) = 10.85, $p < .001$, and valence of behavior, F (6,68) = 106.2, $p < .001$. However, significant two-way interactions, which involved each of the independent variables, were also obtained. Since these interactions qualify the interpretation of the main effects, we turn directly to them.

Marital Distress and Self-Partner Attributions. As predicted there was an interaction between marital group and attribution target, $F(6,68) = 3.51$, $p < .005$. Simple main effect analyses were conducted to examine whether: (a)

the groups differed in regard to self attributions; (b) the groups differed in their attributions for partner behavior; and (c) whether self-partner differences in attributions were found in each group. Univariate analyses were conducted, where appropriate, to examine overall findings in greater detail. The mean scores pertaining to the group x attribution target interaction and the F ratios obtained for this interaction are shown in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

For partner behavior, a simple main effect was found which showed a difference in attributions between distressed and nondistressed groups, $F(6,68) = 5.87$, $p < .001$. Univariate analyses revealed that the groups differed (unless otherwise stated all mean differences are significant at $p < .01$) on the global causal dimension (distressed couples saw the causes of negative partner behavior as more global whereas the opposite held true for positive partner behavior), the intent of the behavior, its motivation (distressed spouses inferred less positive intent and more selfish motivation for partner behaviors than their nondistressed counterparts), and the extent to which they attributed praise/blame for the behavior (distressed spouses attributed more blame for negative behavior and less praise for positive behavior).

The pattern of group differences obtained replicates that found in prior studies. Regarding the causal attribution dimensions, the global-specific dimension appears to be the most consistent in differentiating distressed from nondistressed spouses (Fincham & O' Leary, 1983; Fincham et al., 1985; Holtzworth-Munroe & Jacobson, 1985) although the groups have also

been found to differ on both stable-unstable and internal-external dimensions (Baucom et al., 1982; Jacobson et al., 1985; Fincham, 1985a; Holtzworth-Munroe & Jacobson, 1985).

While the reason for the lack of consistency in findings regarding the stability dimension is not clear, it is worth noting that where differences on this dimension have been obtained, distressed couples in the community who are not seeking treatment have been included in the study. It is possible that the very act of seeking marital therapy is inconsistent with viewing the causes of problem behavior as stable and that only spouses who do not seek therapy view the causes of their marital difficulties as stable. The lack of consistent findings obtained on the internal-external dimension most likely reflects the inadequate conceptualization and measurement of this dimension at the dyadic level. A bipolar internal-external rating scale seems inadequate to capture the distinctions spouses make regarding the locus of causality for partner behavior in marriage. It seems important to consider the spouse, self, the spouse in relation to the self (an interpersonal attribution, Newman, 1981), the relationship, and outside circumstances as potentially independent loci for the cause of spouse behavior (see Fincham, 1985a for a discussion of this dimension). This deficiency in conceptualizing and measuring the internal-external dimension is hardly surprising as this dimension continues to cause difficulties in social psychological research at the level of the individual (Uleman et al., 1981).

For <u>self</u> attributions, no significant simple main effect was found between distressed and nondistressed spouses, F (6,68) = 1.89, $p < .10$. To examine whether the relationship found in Study 1 between self attributions and marital satisfaction was replicated, the correlations between the causal

dimensions and Marital Adjustment Test scores were calculated. Again significant but small correlations were found for both positive (r (73) = .34, p <.01 and r (73) = .28, p <.01 for stable and global dimensions, respectively) and negative events (r(73) = -.19, p <.06 and r(73) = -.51, p <.01 for stable and global dimensions, respectively). Moreover, when correlations between self attributions and MAT scores were computed partialling out the corresponding attribution for partner behavior as in Study 1, these correlations all remained significant. Thus it appears that while there is some relationship between marital distress and the causal dimensions underlying self attributions, this relationship is not sufficiently large to result in attributional differences between distressed and nondistressed groups. The group difference obtained by Kyle and Falbo (1985) should therefore be interpreted with caution as it was found on only a single causal attribution dimension in their study.

To examine the importance of responsibility attributions regarding the self in accounting for unique variance in marital satisfaction, stepwise regression analyses were performed. Owing to sample size, analyses were conducted separately for positive and negative events using a composite index for the causal judgments (the sum of the ratings for the three questions pertaining to the cause) and a composite index for the responsibility judgments (the sum of the three questions assessing attributions of responsibility). In each analysis MAT scores were predicted by first entering the causal and responsibility indices pertaining to partner attributions and then entering the index regarding causal attributions to the self, followed by the index for attribution of responsibility regarding the self. This procedure examines whether self attributions account for unique variance in marital satisfaction, and

whether responsibility attributions regarding the self account for additional variance to that accounted for by causal attributions to the self. The self attribution indices accounted for a significant portion of the variance in marital satisfaction for both positive, R^2 change = .20, $p < .001$, and negative events, R^2 change = .13, $p < .01$). Moreover, self attributed responsibility accounted for a significant portion of the variance in marital satisfaction even after that pertaining to partner attributions and causal attributions regarding the self had been removed (for positive events, R^2 change = .12, $p < .001$; for negative events, R^2 change = .06, $p < .01$). These findings show that self attributions of responsibility also need to be considered in any complete account of attributional processes in marriage.

Regarding self-partner differences in attributions, simple main effect analyses showed an attribution target main effect for both the distressed, $F(6,68) = 7.83$, $p < .001$, and nondistressed groups, $F(6,68) = 6.11$, $p < .001$. The only causal dimension on which self-partner differences were obtained was the global-specific dimension (the distressed group made attributions for partner behavior which were more global than self attributions). Close examination, however, shows that this difference is due entirely to negative behavior; the self ($M = 15.67$) and partner ($M = 15.69$) ratings for positive behavior were almost identical in this group. In regard to responsibility attributions, distressed spouses considered their own behavior, relative to that of their partner, to reflect more positive intentions and unselfish motivation ($p < .05$). In contrast, nondistressed spouses viewed their partner's behavior as more unselfishly motivated and more praiseworthy than their own. This pattern of findings suggests that both nondistressed and

distressed spouses manifest attributional biases but in the opposite directions. For nondistressed spouses the bias is a positive one in which attributions for partner behavior are more benign than for own behavior whereas the reverse holds true for distressed spouses.

Marital Distress and Attributions for Positive versus Negative Behavior. A significant interaction was obtained between the valence of the behavior for which attributions were made and marital distress, $F(6,68) = 7.5$, $p < .001$. The mean scores pertaining to the valence of behavior x marital group interaction and the F ratios obtained for this interaction are shown in Table 3.

Insert Table 3 about here

Simple main effect analyses regarding marital group differences showed that distressed and nondistressed groups differed in regard to attributions for positive behavior, $F(6,68) = 5.92$, $p < .001$, and negative behavior, $F(6,68) = 3.72$, $p < .005$. As expected, nondistressed spouses made more benign attributions for positive behavior (more global, stable, unselfishly motivated, positively intended and praiseworthy) whereas distressed spouses made more destructive attributions for negative behavior (more internal, global, selfishly motivated and blameworthy).

Attributional differences regarding positive versus negative behavior were found to be significant for both distressed, $F(6,68) = 36.56$, $p < .001$, and nondistressed groups, $F(6,68) = 78.81$, $p < .001$. However, the differences were less marked for distressed spouses and occurred on a fewer number of attribution dimensions than for nondistressed spouses. The valence of the behavior did not influence the causal attribution ratings of distressed

spouses whereas nondistressed spouses saw the causes of positive behavior as more stable and global. In regard to responsibility attributions, both groups saw positive behavior as more unselfishly motivated, positively intended and praiseworthy than negative behavior. However, the distinction drawn between these two forms of behavior was smaller for distressed than nondistressed spouses. In sum, the attributions of distressed spouses were overall less benign than those made by nondistressed spouses and showed less differentiation between positive and negative behaviors.

Self-Partner Attributions and Positive versus Negative Behavior. The interaction between attribution target and valence of behavior was also found to be significant, $F(6,68) = 8.04$, $p < .001$. While not directly relevant to marital distress, this finding is important because it demonstrates that what has been called the self attribution bias also occurs in close relationships (Weary, 1979). Table 4 shows the mean scores and F ratios associated with this interaction.

Insert Table 4 about here

Simple main effect analyses for attribution target revealed that self attributions are more benign than partner attributions for both positive, $F(6,68) = 13.82$, $p < .001$, and negative events, $F(6,68) = 6.01$, $p < .001$. For positive behavior, spouses saw themselves as having more positive intent, unselfish motivation and deserving of greater praise than their partner. In the case of negative behavior, self attributions were less global but the motivation for the behavior was more selfish. The latter finding is due to a positive bias on the part of nondistressed spouses ($M = 9.9$ and 12.5 for self and partner, respectively); the means for the distressed group were

virtually identical (M = 9.66 and 9.58 for self and partner, respectively). In contrast to these findings, the cause of partner behavior was seen as more internal for both positive and negative behavior. According to a motivational bias interpretation, self attributions should be more internal for positive behavior. The finding on this attribution dimension is consistent with the self-other difference predicted by Jones and Nisbett (1972) rather than that predicted by a motivational bias.

Simple main effect analyses for the valence of the behavior, however, favor a motivational bias interpretation of this interaction. Attributions for positive versus negative behavior differed for both self, $F(6,68) = 96.94$, $p < .001$, and partner, $F(6,68) = 63.84$, $p < .001$. In both conditions, attributions for positive behavior were seen as more stable, global, reflective of positive intent, unselfishly motivated and deserving of more praise than attributions for negative behavior. However, the differences between attributions for positive and negative behavior were more accentuated for self attributions than partner attributions. This finding is consistent with the view that spouses are influenced by concerns regarding self presentation when making attributions in their relationships.

General Discussion

As anticipated, the results of the present studies support the view that a complete account of attribution processes in distressed and nondistressed spouses requires consideration of self-partner attribution differences. However, partner and self attributions are discussed independently before considering the nature of the self-partner attribution differences found and their clinical implications. The significance of the present data for basic research on the "actor-observer" attribution

difference is then briefly discussed. Finally, the limitations of the present studies and their implications for future research are noted.

Attributions for partner behavior

The present data replicate the findings of previous studies which report differences between nondistressed and distressed spouses in the causal attributions they make for partner behavior. The nature of these differences and the reasons for possible inconsistencies between studies were discussed earlier. It suffices to make two observations here. First, in contrast to previous research, some evidence was obtained to suggest that attributing negative partner behavior to the self is positively related to marital satisfaction. This finding is consistent with Thompson and Kelley's (1981) studies on highly satisfied partners in romantic relationships where similar correlations were found for relationship events. Second, the pattern of attributions found for partner behavior was similar for naturally occurring behavior and hypothetical behavior. In a similar vein, the same pattern of self attributions was obtained for these two forms of behavior.

The above findings are similar to the those obtained in a study by Madden and Janoff-Bulman (1981) which showed no differences between wives' attributions for hypothetical vignettes of conflict situations and their attributions for actual conflicts they experienced with their husbands. While not central to the issues investigated, this aspect of the present findings is important in assessing the validity of prior studies, most of which have asked spouses to imagine previously reported partner behaviors (Holtzworth-Munroe & Jacobson, 1985) or hypothetical partner behaviors (Baucom et al., 1982; Doherty, 1982; Fincham & O'Leary, 1983; Fincham et al., in press). However, a full validational study utilizing the logic of the "mulitrait-multimethod" approach to examine convergent and discriminant

validity (Campbell & Fiske, 1959) needs to be conducted before the equivalence of attributions for hypothetical and real behaviors can confidently be assumed.

Attributions for own behavior

Unlike attributions for partner behavior, self attributions in distressed and nondistressed marriages have received little attention. The present studies emphasize the importance of this oversight. Study 1 showed that the perceived stability of a cause, its globality and its location within the partner are directly related to marital satisfaction for positive behaviors and inversely related to marital satisfaction for negative behavior. The results for the stability and globality causal dimensions were replicated in Study 2. In both studies, these relationships persisted even after attributions regarding the partner were taken into account. Study 2 also demonstrated that self attributed responsibility accounts for variance in marital satisfaction which is independent of that accounted for by either partner attributions or causal attributions regarding the self. However, when the self attributions made by distressed and nondistressed groups of spouses were compared directly, no group difference was found. This inconsistency in findings may result from the fact that membership in a clinic or a community group is not necessarily a veridical reflection of marital satisfaction. Clinical experience shows that couples in marital therapy often contain one spouse who is indeed satisfied with the marriage. Thus self attributions appear to be less strongly related to marital satisfaction than attributions for partner behavior and only emerge as important in marriage when a sensitive measure of marital satisfaction is used (i.e., scores on a marital adjustment test). Nonetheless, it is argued

that self attributions are important in a clinical context when they are considered in relation to attributions for partner behavior.

Self versus partner attributions

As predicted, marital distress was related to self-partner attribution differences. Both distressed and nondistressed spouses were found to exhibit such differences. However, the direction of the discrepancy differed for each group. Distressed spouses made less benign attributions for their partner's behavior than their own behavior, a pattern referred to earlier as a negative attribution bias. In contrast, nondistressed spouses showed a positive attribution bias as they made more benign attributions for their partner's behavior than their own behavior. It is precisely this pattern of attributions which is likely to maximize the impact of negative partner behavior for distressed spouses and positive partner behavior for nondistressed spouses. That is, distressed spouses may discredit positive spouse behavior because they do not believe it matches up to the motivation which characterizes their own behavior and instead focus on negative partner behavior. The discrepancy between partner and self attributions for such behavior is likely to result in a strong affective response and the reciprocation of the negative behavior. A sense of righteousness on the part of each spouse would not be surprising (e.g., "I am not motivated by such selfish concerns") which would account for the long chains of negative interchanges (e.g., "s/he is not going to get away with it") which distinguish distressed from nondistressed spouses (Gottman, 1979). On the other hand, the positive attribution bias of nondistressed spouses will lead them to discredit negative partner behavior and focus on positive behavior. These partner behaviors most likely result in warm, positive responses and a sense of relationship well-being which allows each spouse to noncontingently

exchange positive behaviors (Gottman, Markman, Bank, Yoppi & Rubin, 1976). Too great a positive attribution bias could, however, result in individual self esteem problems for the spouse who might feel excessively indebted to their partner and unable to match his/her standards.

Clinical relevance

The present data are consistent with the viewpoint articulated above, but the findings do not provide information on the processes which give rise to the significance accorded to partner attributions. Thus, while plausible, the processes described above require direct investigation. Nonetheless, the biases found have an important clinical implication. They suggest that it is insufficient to help distressed spouses make similar attributions for self and partner behavior. Rather marital satisfaction seems to be associated with viewing the partner's behavior through rose colored glasses and making attributions accordingly. It therefore may be difficult to alter attributions directly when this is the goal of the intervention. However, initial changes in attributions may be affected directly by helping distressed spouses to make at least equally benign attributions for their own and their partner's behavior.

The significance of the attribution biases found and their clinical implications are further emphasized by the fact that they occurred for both causal attributions and attributions of responsibility. To date, most research on couples has focussed solely on causal attributions and hence the present findings suggest the need to broaden this research to include attributions of responsibility. Unlike causal attributions, which locate the factor(s) producing an outcome or behavior, responsibility attributions concern the acceptability of the outcome or behavior according to a set of standards. Responsibility attributions thus involve an evaluative component,

comparing behavior with normative criteria. In marriage such "criteria" may be explicit, but more often they are implicit and constitute the expectations spouses have for each others' behavior. Thus a "causal" attribution may often result from an inquiry as to why the partner's behavior violated the attributor's expectations. Such attributions concern the issue of accountability or answerability, the quintessence of responsibility. The exact conditions under which causal and responsibility attributions overlap in this way remains to be determined. However, we speculate that causal attribution differences found between distressed and nondistressed spouses may only occur when such attributions entail an evaluative component, a contention which may account for inconsistent results obtained to date for these attributions (Fincham, 1985a).

In view of the above argument, which emphasizes the importance of responsibility attributions, it appears that the attributions of distressed spouses reflect a greater concern with the justification and exoneration of their own behavior as compared to their partner's behavior. This is perhaps not surprising in view of the greater incidence of negative behaviors in distressed marriages (Jacobson et al., 1982) which may sensitize spouses to such issues. Clinically, this suggests that attribution related interventions focus on responsibility attribution. Indeed, it has even been shown that such a perspective on attributions in marriage facilitates the integration of various cognitive therapy techniques (see Fincham, 1985b). An important implication of this perspective is that it necessarily focusses the clinician's attention on spouses' expectations (e.g., are they explict?, have they been communicated to the partner?, were they negotiated by both parties?), the consideration of which comprises "much of what occurs in good marital therapy" (O'Leary & Turkewitz, 1978, p. 247).

Relevance for research on actor-observer attribution differences

The present findings also have implications for prior research on "actor-observer" attribution differences (Jones & Nisbett, 1972). As anticipated, the simple self-partner difference found in previous social psychological studies did not emerge (cf. Watson, 1982). This again emphasizes the difficulty of generalizing the findings of such studies to close relationships and to the clinical context, a caution which tends to be overlooked by researchers (e.g., Kyle & Falbo, 1985). Moreover, the "positivity" effect (good behaviors are attributed to persons whereas bad behaviors are attributed to situational circumstances) found by Taylor and Koivumaki (1976) turned out to be more complex than previously reported. First, the extent of the differences found in attributions for positive and negative behavior varied as a function of marital satisfaction with nondistressed spouses showing a greater "positivity" effect than distressed spouses.[7] Second, the valence of the behavior emerged in a significant interaction with the target of the attribution. In this regard, the results obtained on the internal-external causal dimension were consistent with previous research as partner behavior was attributed more to internal causes while self attributions were rated as more external, regardless of the valence of the behavior.

The importance of the present findings is emphasized by the fact that, in contrast to previous studies, other attribution dimensions assumed to underly self-other attribution differences (e.g., stable-unstable, global-specific) were directly assessed. The pattern of findings reflected on these dimensions is quite different and suggests that individuals exhibited ego enhancing attributions. They tended to make greater distinctions between positive and negative behavior for self attributions than for partner

attributions and made more benign attributions for self as compared to partner behavior. It would be valuable to determine why these differences were found for the various attributions especially in view of the problems already noted regarding the assessment of the internal-external attribution dimension. In any event, it is clear that the conditions under which there is a "pervasive tendency" to attribute another's actions to "stable personal dispositions" while attributing one's own similar actions to "situational requirements" is actually more complicated than Jones and Nisbett (1972) have suggested. The present findings suggest that at the very least the valence of the behavior and the relationship between the observer and actor need to be taken into account.

Conclusion

Finally, the above mentioned interaction between marital distress and the valence of the behavior points to an important limitation of the present studies and indeed of the existing research on attributional processes in marriage. The fact that the attributions of distressed spouses did not distinguish between positive and negative behavior as strongly as those of nondistressed spouses is similar to findings regarding attribution style in depressed and nondepressed persons (Peterson & Seligman, 1984). In fact, depression is known to occur fairly frequently in maritally distressed spouses (Beach, Nelson & O' Leary, 1986). These observations suggest that maritally distressed spouses may manifest the general attributional style associated with depression (Peterson, Raps & Villanova, 1984) and that this is reflected in their attributions for events in the relationship. This possibility could materially alter the conceptualization of what appears to be a marital problem. Future research on attribution processes in distressed and nondistressed spouses should therefore assess whether the attributions

found are specific to the relationship or part of a general attributional style. The self-partner attribution differences found also need to be replicated in a more naturalistic context, and the processes which give rise to the differences require further investigation. Despite these limitations the present studies provide data which point to the importance of partner and self attributions in providing a more complete account of attribution processes in distressed and nondistressed spouses.

Footnotes

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1. The term "attribution bias" is widely used by attribution researchers often without recognition of the fact that it implies the existence of a normative model. In the present paper we make no claims regarding the "accuracy" of attributions as such claims are highly problematic. Rather, our use of the term is limited to the discrepancy between attributions made for spouse behavior compared to the attributions an individual makes for his/her own behavior.

2. It is possible to eliminate a case from calculations only for the particular variable that is missing. However, such a procedure, known as pairwise deletion, often results in computational inaccuracies and hence little confidence can be placed in the resulting statistics (Kim & Kohout, 1975).

3. Since different numbers of data points were available for each set of correlations computed, the degrees of freedom differ.

4. The phrase "attribution of responsibility" is used in a more restricted manner than in the first author's previous work. It approximates what has

previously been referred to as "moral responsibility" (cf. Fincham & Jaspars, 1980).

5. Although a different measure of marital satisfaction is used in the present study, this should not render the findings of Study 1 and Study 2 incommensurate as: (a) the DAS and MAT correlate highly ($r = .86$; Spanier, 1976); (b) factor analyses of different marital satisfaction measures generally yield a single, overall factor of marital satisfaction (see Fincham & Bradbury, 1986 for an analysis of issues relating to the assessment of marital satisfaction). It should also be noted that because the present study investigates the attributions of individuals rather than dyads, it is not necessary that subject spouses actually comprise sets of married couples. Hence no attempt was made to ensure that subjects were married to each other.

6. Although presented as Study 2 for conceptual reasons, this study was actually begun before Study 1. At that point, we were assessing the internal/external dimension with a single rating on a bipolar scale. Since that time, we have found that three separate ratings for the internal/external dimension as described in Study 1 is more appropriate.

7. Here the term 'positivity effect' refers to several causal attribution dimensions as well as to attributions of responsibility.

Table 1. Correlations between attributions and Dyadic Adjustment Scale Scores

Attribution Dimension	Behavior Impact: Positive		Behavior Impact: Negative	
	Self	Partner	Self	Partner
Locus				
Self	.17	.09	.12	.28*
Partner	.34**	.24*	-.31*	-.33**
Outside Circumstances	-.15	-.11	.32*	.14
Stability	.25*	.25*	-.40*	-.38**
Globality	.28*	.33**	-.42**	-.27*
	(n = 70)	(n = 88)	(n = 32)	(n = 53)

*p < .05.

**p < .01.

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations (in parentheses) and F Ratios for Marital Distress x Attribution Target Interaction

Attribution	Marital Group				Marital Group X Attribution Target F
	Distressed		Nondistressed		
	Self	Partner	Self	Partner	
	Causal Attribution Dimensions[1]				
Locus	9.81 (4.22)	13.19 (3.87)	10.85 (4.04)	13.23 (3.29)	1.18
Stability	15.07 (3.02)	15.81 (2.94)	15.97 (3.61)	16.10 (3.31)	1.13
Globality	14.69 (3.48)	16.06 (3.06)	14.99 (4.56)	14.46 (4.69)	8.53**
	Responsibility Attributions[2]				
Intent	14.22 (5.41)	13.24 (4.90)	15.33 (5.21)	15.41 (5.23)	7.50**
Motivation	12.93 (4.91)	11.81 (4.35)	13.90 (4.98)	15.37 (4.42)	12.04**
Blame/ Praise	12.76 (4.39)	12.46 (4.75)	13.82 (4.62)	14.97 (5.11)	5.23**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

1 Higher scores indicate more internal, stable and global attributions.

2 Higher scores indicate more positive intent, unselfish motivation and praise.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations (in parentheses) and F Ratios for Marital Group x Valence of Behavior Interaction

Attribution	Marital Group				Marital Group X Valence of Behavior F
	Distressed		Nondistressed		
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	
	Causal Attribution Dimensions[1]				
Locus	11.46 (4.25)	11.54 (4.53)	11.21 (3.59)	12.87 (3.97)	4.36*
Stability	15.83 (3.02)	15.04 (3.12)	17.68 (2.99)	14.40 (3.10)	12.71**
Globality	15.68 (3.41)	15.07 (3.24)	17.69 (2.56)	11.76 (4.31)	36.22**
	Responsibility Attributions[2]				
Intent	17.81 (3.36)	9.65 (2.95)	20.08 (1.69)	10.67 (2.63)	2.66
Motivation	15.11 (4.11)	9.63 (3.40)	18.09 (7.41)	11.18 (3.71)	4.34**
Praise/ Blame	15.89 (3.56)	9.33 (2.73)	18.44 (9.03)	10.36 (2.48)	3.71

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

1 Higher scores indicate more internal, stable and global attributions.
2 Higher scores reflect more positive intent, unselfish motivation and praise.

Table 4. Means, Standard Deviations (in parentheses) and F Ratios for Attribution Target x Valence of Behavior Interaction

Attribution	Attribution Target				Attribution X Valence of Behavior F
	Self		Partner		
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	
Causal Attribution Dimensions[1]					
Locus	9.43 (3.81)	11.27 (4.29)	13.23 (2.99)	13.20 (4.08)	4.82*
Stability	16.68 (3.28)	14.40 (3.23)	16.91 (3.00)	15.01 (2.99)	<1
Globality	16.87 (3.41)	12.83 (3.98)	16.59 (3.07)	13.87 (4.47)	6.59*
Responsibility Attributions[2]					
Intent	19.44 (2.36)	10.16 (2.80)	18.53 (3.23)	10.20 (2.88)	5.10*
Motivation	17.08 (3.58)	9.79 (3.11)	16.24 (3.91)	11.08 (4.02)	17.24**
Praise/ Blame	16.79 (3.36)	9.84 (2.37)	17.64 (3.63)	9.89 (2.91)	2.96

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

1 Higher scores indicate more internal, stable and global attributions.

2 Higher scores reflect more positive intent, unselfish motivation and praise.

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