Self-serving Bias in Collective Context

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Abstract

Two hundred and thirty-five students were initially screened with a collectivism scale. The top 25% and the bottom 25% on collectivism were used as criteria to select subjects to participate in the experiment (N=90, 81 females and 9 males, average age=20). Attribution categories and success/failure criteria were predetermined in a pilot study. The subjects were then randomly assigned to the public and private conditions to present their attributions. Culture X situation interaction effects were noted in the self-serving biases in most attribution categories. The most consistent cultural effects were in the effort attribution. Ability shows the most robust self-serving bias. There was either an attenuated self-serving bias or a self-effacing bias in the public situation across both culture groups. Results were interpreted to suggest that: (1) self-serving bias effect differs with different attribution factors, and (2) where there is self-serving bias, the bias may be a transcultural phenomenon but the manifestation of which has to be studied within each culture.
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Introduction

Individual human beings are often engaged in the cognitive process of attempting to make sense of the world (Heider, 1958) and to formulate schemata and scripts to guide their normal everyday behaviour (Markus and Zajonc, 1985). Following Lewin’s concept of psychological fields, psychologists often analyze a person’s attribution in terms of internal (self, dispositional) and external (non-self, situational) factors (Weiner, 1979).

Frieze (1976) found that subjects used multiple sources of information to draw causal conclusions about an event: task, the situation and the individual’s past experience. Frieze’s subjects were also found to compare their performance with the norm of a reference group to make causal judgements of task difficulty or individual ability and/or effort. The social context in which the performance takes place would thus affect the person’s causal attribution. Most of the achievement attribution studies focus on the analysis of the factors present at the moment of performance. Personality and motivational factors such as gender and need for achievement have been mentioned as factors affecting an individual’s attribution. They are classified as internal factors in the situational and dispositional interaction paradigm.
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In this context, the subject is viewed as an ahistorical and acultural agent, who makes decisions independently, devoid of the general cultural context.

Studies by Ross (1977) suggest the salience of dispositional factors in making a causal attribution, the famous "fundamental attribution error". These observations pointed out a systematic preference to search for the internal, self-related factors in making causal judgement. This error is assumed to be a common error of human beings. However, studies of the Chinese noted an exception: The Chinese, compared to Americans, seem to exhibit a tendency to attribute causes of social events more to the situation (Morris and Peng, 1994) than to dispositional factors. The present authors would like to suggest that the salience of dispositional factors perhaps reflects a cultural phenomenon of the modern day Western cultures, where the individual tends to focus on internal characteristics in self construction (Baumeister, 1987).

Culture

Besides the self and the situation, the common person obtains his/her knowledge about the world from a wealth of the accumulated wisdom of the collective.

Inherent in the cultural beliefs are explanations of success and failure. Weiner (1979) identified effort and ability as the most probable cause for
achievement. External factors such as task difficulty and luck were perceived as less consistent factors for achievement. Weiner (1979) suggested that these reflect the work ethic of American subjects (Weiner and Kukla, 1970).

This pattern of achievement attribution is not universally true for subjects of different cultures. For instance, Japanese usually attribute success by pointing to the help they receive from others and attribute failure by pointing to lack of effort on the part of the self (Kashima and Triandis, 1986).

In a cross-cultural survey, it was reported that patience (in Greece and Japan) and tact and unity (in India) are perceived causes of success (Triandis, 1972). In Iran, it was reported that the Iranians place high emphasis on hard work (effort) and pay less, compared to American subjects, attention to the outcome (Salili et al, 1976). Clusters of causal models are also found as fundamental prototypes in languages (Lakoff, 1987).

It was found that while in most cultures, the subjects draw conclusions about multiple causes, the relative weightage given to each factor seems to be different across cultures. This difference in relative importance may represent the differences in the cultural conceptions of achievement events. We would like to suggest that the cultural conception of the self and achievement forms the basic framework with which the individual evaluates his/her role in an achievement event. Causal judgement of the achievement event will also
follow this cultural framework. Searching and evaluating available information in a given achievement performance will be guided by this cultural schema.

**Self-serving Biases**

Related to the fundamental attribution error is the self-serving bias (Mullen & Riordan, 1988), commonly reported by researchers working with Western subjects: a tendency to ascribe success to internal (self) factors and failure to external (non-self, situational task) factors (Bradley, 1978; Miller & Ross, 1975). Operationally, this is typically illustrated by demonstrating that following success, individuals are more likely to attribute their performance to things like ability and effort; whereas, following failure, they are generally likely to attribute their performance to things like task difficulty and luck.

In a meta-analysis of self-serving biases in naturalistic settings, Mullen and Riordan (1988) found that the effects of self-serving biases vary with different categories of attribution: The internal-external dimension and ability attribution produced moderate effects, whereas effort, difficulty and luck produced effects of small magnitude. Specifically, for sporting tasks, ability attribution exhibits the largest self-attributing effects.

One issue in the study of self-serving bias attributions has been the debate surrounding the mechanisms assumed to be underlying these effects.
Several potential explanations have been proposed: a motivational strategy to protect the self (e.g., Zukerman, 1979), to enhance the public image of self (e.g., Bradley, 1978); that is, people accept responsibility for success and deny responsibility for failure because this might foster a positive public image. Miller & Ross (1975), on the other hand, proposed that self-serving attributions are due to perceptual distortions in the self-relevant information. Both explanations, however, imply the importance of the conceptualization of self and self-presentation. Both are highly culture-embedded concepts. The motivation approach would suggest that the culture's conceptualization of self and self ideal are critical in self-serving biases. The information distortion approach would suggest that cultural differences in salience of available situation/disposition information would make a difference in potential biases.

Baumeister (1995) noted two intertwining trends in the modern construction of the self: (1) an inner (dispositional) focus and (2) a belief in the self as an autonomous, independent agent, continuously engaged in the constructing and negotiating of the self. This individual-oriented, inner focused and autonomous notion is socially constructed, also noted by Baumeister. The social construction of the Western self is within a general cultural context of individual rather than social emphasis (Baumeister, 1987; Lasch, 1979). Perhaps the phenomenon of self-serving biases should be re-
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evaluated in the light of this somewhat culture-specific self construct.

There is an increasing interest in the cultural variations of conceptualization of the self and their implications on behaviour (see for instance, Markus & Kitayama, 1991; and Triandis et al, 1988). Available evidence suggests that Asians seem to construe the self with greater emphasis on the context. Asians, along with some other populations that place more emphasis on the collective, construe the self with more reference to the others in the individual’s social context. Such interdependent self-construct guides behaviours that are more other-oriented, which includes higher attention to others and a preference for norm-referenced behaviour (Triandis, 1989).

It can be deduced logically that in the collectivist and situation-oriented cultures, people would show less self-serving biases in attribution. With either the salience or motivation explanation of the bias, people of the more collectivist cultures would show less self-serving bias. In the context of attribution studies, it was found that Japanese students demonstrated less self-serving bias (Kashima & Triandis, 1986). The explanation given by the authors for this observation is that the Japanese are more used to group cooperation in problem solving. The individual’s self/ego is less at risk in a success/failure situation.

Since self-serving bias is intimately tied to the construct of self, the
extend of ego involvement of attribution factors seems to be of crucial importance in the existence and magnitude of self-serving biases.

Dimensions of attribution factors, such as stability and controllability of the attributed factor would be related to whether an attribution factor is relevant to the ego. If the factor is highly stable and less controllable, as a given part of the self, there might be more ego involvement; if the factor is less stable and within the control of the individual, it may not be perceived as ego-involving. At any rate, we propose that the perceived relationship between the attribution factor and the conceptualization of self would make a difference in self-serving biases.

Situation Variation of Self-presentation

Collectivism (Triandis et al., 1990) and the hierarchical human context, with intricate role differentiation, is an important aspect of the Chinese culture (Hsu, 1981). The Chinese make a clear distinction between face (mianzu) and substance (liezu) (Hu, 1944). The former refers to socially expected proper behaviors in a given situation while the latter refers to the individual ‘authentic’ thoughts and feelings of the person. While the two may not always be in conflict, situations may arise where the individual’s ‘authentic’ feeling and thoughts may be considered socially inappropriate (Chiu, 1992).
The more relevant domain of daily life for a collectivist is the public domain where ‘correct’ presentation and management of the self according to situational demands is important. To be able to correctly present the self is considered a high virtue (Hsu, 1981) rather than "unprincipled" (Snyder, 1974).

This proper presentation of the self, whereby the self takes a role and executes it correctly (e.g. Goffman, 1959) is highly valued and demanded of a "civilized" person in the Chinese context (Chiu, C., 1989; Chiu, R., 1992). It is understood that public presentation is sometimes at variance with the private feelings of the individual. But such inconsistency is often expected and accepted as a culturally conditioned norm (see Doi, 1973 for a discussion about the Japanese).

Since self presentation varies with the situation, we would expect that the collectivists will demonstrate more differences in self-serving biases across different social situations.

We now have empirical evidence suggesting that, not coincidentally, people from the more collectivistic cultures are more sensitive to the situation (Cousins, 1989). They also process social and personal information with greater detail of the concrete and specific situations (Shweder & Bourne, 1984). Thus, they demonstrated less fundamental attribution errors (Morris and Peng, 1994). Would they also demonstrate less self-serving biases?
would they express self-serving biases according to the situation?

Known for their collectivism (Hofstede, 1980) and steeped in the Chinese values of social sensitivity (Chang and Wong, 1995), will the Chinese in Singapore demonstrate self-serving biases? Everyday observation of the Chinese, mostly in the public context, would suggest self-effacing instead of self-serving biases in communication of personal achievements. We think this might reflect a normative expectation of proper behaviour (Chiu, 1989). “There should not be pride in success; nor should there be despair in failure” is a popular Chinese adage, which admonishes against excessive ego-involvement in personal achievement. This adage also prescribes the script of proper behaviour in communicating personal success or failure.

The implicit psychology of the Chinese is expressed in many of these old sayings (World Publication, 1990): "It depends on the will of the person to embark on achievement striving while success depends on the will of Heaven". It can be deduced from these folk sayings a commonly held causal schema of the Chinese: Effort (human) is seen as a controllable and necessary factor for achievement; while Heaven (luck) representing the uncontrollable factors, is seen as the critical element to round up the success. Together, man and heaven, or effort and luck, constitute the sufficient condition for success. Recognizing the uncontrollable and somewhat unpredictable nature of Heaven
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(Heaven is capricious and demands myriads of beings for sacrifice --- Laotzu, circa 500BC) (Laotzu, 1963), this culturally conditioned conceptualization of achievement perhaps provides the epistemological framework for attribution of success and failure by the Chinese.

Our initial observations suggest that Chinese Singaporeans attribute success to luck and significant others, and failure to lack of effort and luck. We think this pattern of attribution also constitutes the normative expectation in the Singaporean society.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The present study was designed to address the issue of self-serving bias in the Singaporean Chinese. The following specific questions are addressed:
(1) What are the achievement attribution factors perceived by Singaporean Chinese?
(2) Is there self-serving bias in Singaporean Chinese?
(3) Do public/private situations make a difference in self-serving bias in Singapore?
(4) Does the individual's collectivist value orientation make a difference in the situational variations of self-serving biases?

We suggest that there will be a balanced result of internal and external
factors to reflect the situation sensitivity of the subjects. We hypothesize that there will be situational variations in self-serving biases. We further hypothesize that there will be more situational variations in the high collectivists and less situational variations in the low collectivists. Specifically, we hypothesize that there will be 'cultural differences' in self-serving biases in the public situation but not in the private situation. In other words, we hypothesize that there will be culture and situation interactions in attribution and in self-serving biases in the following directions:

The self-effacing norm of the Chinese society will lead to situational variations in the presentation of attribution: that there will be a difference in the self-serving bias in the presentation of attribution depending on whether the situation is public or private. It is further hypothesized that there will be self-effacing bias in the public situation, while more self-serving bias in the private situation.

It is hypothesized that the situational variation would be large for subjects with more collectivist values than for those with less collectivist values.

The empirical study consisted of three phases: a pilot study, an experiment and a post-hoc interview.
Pilot Study: Attribution of Anagram

A pilot study was conducted to identify the attribution categories of the subjects with respect to the task used in the experiment: anagram.

This pilot study consisted of 20 subjects of similar demographic background (university students with average age around 20 as the subjects used in the main study). The pilot study yielded the following categories: effort, ability, attention, task difficulty, clarity of instruction, luck and representativeness of the norm group. Success and failure are defined with reference to the median of a norm group. No deception or random assignment to success or failure conditions were involved.

The median performance of this pilot study was used as the norm for the actual experiment.

The Experiment: Culture, Situation and Self-serving Biases

Subjects

Two hundred and thirty-five students enrolled in the first classes of psychology and social work at the National University of Singapore were initially surveyed with the individualism/collectivism (INDCOL) Scale (Singh and Vasoo, 1994).

Ninety subjects (81 females and 9 males, average age=20) were then
selected from each end of the distribution (the top 75% and the bottom 25% of scores on the INDCOL). The INDCOL scores for the individualist-oriented group ranged from 31 to 44. For the collectivist group, the score ranged from 52 to 67. Subjects who fell into these categories were contacted for the experiment.

Selection Instrument

The Individualist-collectivist scale was constructed and validated in Singapore (Singh and Vasoo, 1994). The scale consists of 24 attitude items. Subjects were required to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with the items on a 6-point scale. The reliability for the current group was found to be 0.60, low but acceptable for the purpose of selecting subjects into the individualist (low collectivism) and the (high) collectivist groups.

The Test Evaluation Questionnaire

A Test Evaluation Questionnaire was constructed on the basis of attribution results of the pilot study and fashioned after Weiner’s success and failure attribution analyses. The following categories were listed in the questionnaire: attention, effort, task difficulty, luck, clarity of instruction, ability, and whether the standard used for success or failure was based on a
representative sample of students.

Task (Anagram)

Following Feathers and Simon's (1971)'s classic study in self-serving biases, we used an anagram task consisting of 50 6-letter words. The words were from the dictionary of anagrams. These words were then put in a computer program which generated random combinations of the words to avoid biases. Each subject's task was to identify the correct word. This task was presented by computers and subjects were required to complete the program with a computer.

A practice trial of 5 anagrams were given to each subject before the actual task was presented. A success or failure standard was adopted by calculating the median success rate of a pilot run with a group of subjects also made of first-year psychology students.

Procedure

Two phases of the experiment were involved:

1) Phase I

Upon arrival, subjects were stationed in front of a computer. They were then given an instruction sheet each to complete the anagram task. Upon
completion of the task, the median success rate would appear on the computer screen so that each subject could decide whether he/she had completed the task with success or failure (higher or lower than the median).

They were then instructed to complete the test evaluation questionnaire.

(2) Phase II

Two conditions were set up for the evaluation:

(a) Private condition

Subjects in the private condition performed the anagram individually in a cubicle. The evaluation was executed on the computer in an anonymous fashion.

(b) Public condition

Subjects in the public condition did the task in groups of 15 and complete the test evaluation questionnaire in an open discussion-interview session with an experimenter in the presence of other group members.

Post-hoc Study: Dimensions of Attribution Factors

A post-hoc interview was conducted with a group of students of similar demographic background (N=23, age=20, 19 females and 4 males). The purpose of the interview was to check the classification of
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internality/externality of the attribution categories. For the internal factors, further interviews were conducted to rate the degree of ego involvement, stability and controllability of attributed causal factors.

Results

The results are presented in several sections: Firstly, we will present results using analyses of variance with the attribution categories as the dependent variables. Secondly, we will create a derived dependent variable --- self-serving bias, calculated from the difference between attribution scores across the success and failure conditions --- and present the results using this derived dependent variable.

I. Attribution Categories

Seven categories of achievement attribution were generated by subjects of the pilot study. The categories represent a mixture of internal as well as external factors. These categories were used in the main study. Table 1 presents the mean attribution of each category and its rank order of importance (see Table 1 & Figure 1).
The post-hoc interview yielded a rating of three dimensions of attribution: internality/externality, controllability and stability for each attribution category (see Table 2). We used the post-hoc results to help organize the attribution categories.

It can be seen from the results that the subjects showed a mixture of internal (attention, effort and ability) and external attributions (task, instruction, sample representativeness and luck). The balance of ranked importance however, favours the internal factors (mean internal rank=3; mean external rank=4.3).

Among the external factors, the situation specific factors --- task, instruction and sample representativeness --- were ranked much higher than luck, a non-situation specific factor. This reflects a situation sensitivity of these subjects.
Multivariate analysis (MANOVA) of combined categories

Using cultural orientations (high or low collectivism), performance outcomes (success or failure) and performance conditions (public or private) as independent variables and all categories of attribution as the dependent variables, we conducted a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Table 3 presents the result.

Performance outcome and performance condition both produced main effects on attribution; cultural orientation however, did not produce a main effect.

Culture, however, produced interaction effects with both performance outcome and performance condition. Culture also produced a three-way interaction effect with performance outcome and condition. These results confirm our hypothesis about culture orientation: that its effect varies with the situation.

Performance outcome and conditions produced two-way interactions with each other in addition to the interaction effects with culture.
Analysis of variance (ANOVA) with each attribution category

A series of ANOVA was carried out to see the effects of the independent variables on each attribution factor. The pattern of relationships between the independent variables were different for each dependent variable.

No significant effects were found in instruction and sample representativeness. To make the reading easier, we summarized the significant findings here.

Three-way interaction effects were found in effort, task difficulty, and attention (see Table 4).

Insert Table 4 about here

Two-way interaction effects were found in effort (culture X outcome; condition X outcome), luck (culture X outcome), ability and task difficulty (condition X outcome) (see Tables 5 & 6).

Insert Tables 5 and 6 about here

It can be seen from these results that culture does not act alone, it produces effects in interaction with outcome and condition variables. This culture and
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condition effect affects different attribution factors differently. This means that there might be different mechanisms involved in attributing success and failure to different factors (see Figures 2-6).

Insert Figures 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6 about here

Rating of internality/externality, stability, controllability and ego-involvement generated by the post-hoc interview will be used to guide our efforts in trying to make sense out of the results.

II. Self-serving Biases

It is difficult to draw a consistent pattern of self-serving biases with the abovementioned results. Perhaps there is no consistent pattern across specific factors. Our original aim for this study is to investigate the cultural and situational variations of self-serving biases. Self-serving bias should be the real dependent variable. We operationalize self-serving bias, following contemporary literature, separately for internal and external factors. For internal factors, self-serving bias means attributing more to the category for success than failure conditions; for external factors, attributing more to the categories for failure than for success outcomes.
in high collectivists and for both internal and external factors.

Analyzing the two remaining internal factors, ability and effort, it was found that effort attribution confirmed our hypothesis of self-effacing bias in public conditions and self-serving bias in private conditions. Ability, however, followed a slightly different pattern: There is a consistent self-serving bias for both high and low collectivists. The difference in self-serving biases is across situations. In the public situation, both cultural groups showed a reduced self-serving bias than in the private condition.

We think that the difference in self-serving biases between effort and ability attribution is explainable by the differences in the degree of ego involvement and perceived controllability of the factors. Ability is considered highly stable, least controllable and most ego-involving. The self-serving biases found in ability in all conditions across both cultural groups indicate a strong tendency for the subject to enhance and to protect the ego in reference to ability. The general culture of Singapore, in terms of normative expectations of modesty in self presentation, perhaps plays a role in the public/private difference in self-serving bias in ability. This effect however, was not significantly different across the high and low collectivist groups.
Conclusion and Discussions

A complicated array of results was generated from the study, largely due to the different effects of independent variables on different attribution categories. It is suggested that self-serving biases have different meanings with different attribution factors. As suggested by Mullen and Riordan (1988), self-serving bias is not universal across attribution factors and certainly not across all situations.

Findings of the present study can be summarized as the following: (1) The situation, the task and culture all contributed to the attribution and presentation of attribution by the subjects. These factors however, affect each attribution category differently. (2) Culture factors, affect self-serving biases in their variations across situations. In other words, culture does not produce a main effect by itself but interaction effects with the situation (i.e. public/private situation). (3) The perceived ego involvement, controllability and stability of attribution factors affect the pattern of self-serving biases. Our Discussion of the results will focus on the effect of culture and self-serving biases.

Culture X situation interaction effect is most consistent in effort attribution categories. As we predicted, there is a self-effacing effect of the high collectivists in public situations but not in private; the low collectivists
showed the same self-serving biases as reported in current Western psychology literature. We suggest that the self-effacing attribution represented an effort of the high collectivists to project a positive public image, consistent with the self-effacing norm of the Chinese.

In the ability category, there were consistent self-serving biases across both culture groups and across both conditions. We attributed this to the high degree of ego involvement of ability. It might be 'face gaining' by taking responsibility for lack of effort as one can still try harder and to do better in the future and thus redeem the self. However, it is far more ego-damaging to admit a lack of ability. In the meta-analysis conducted by Mullen and Riordan (1988), it was found that the effect of self-serving biases was most pronounced in the ability category. Our finding in ability attribution is thus consistent with Mullen and Riordan's. However, the smaller self-serving biases observed in the public condition in our study reflects the norm expectations in Singapore to be modest in public presentations.

A cultural difference was observed in the luck category. The high collectivists showed persistent higher luck attribution to success than to failure, in contrast to the usual self-serving biases observed in the low collectivists. This might reflect a strong cultural belief in luck as a necessary and a crucial ingredient in success. One can, and should try very hard, according to the
Chinese; however, it requires luck to round up the necessary condition for success. This causal schema has been amply expressed in classics and in folk sayings and is an important part of the culture. The high collectivists might be more acculturated to the traditional culture of the Chinese and thus have a stronger belief in luck.

The results obtained for the attention category were somewhat peculiar. Self-serving biases were found in all conditions and across both groups. According to our post-hoc interview, attention was perceived to be a task-specific causal factor. It was considered especially important for the anagram type of task. However, as a causal factor for personal achievement, it was considered transient, controllable and not very important to the ego. The attribution to attention in success conditions and less to failure conditions perhaps reflects a frank assessment of the task at hand.

For task difficulty, the only self-serving biases was found in low collectivists and in the public situation. This was a clear case of effort for image management by the low collectivists.

Although self-serving bias is generally assumed to be a replicable phenomenon, its generality and viability has been consistently called into question. It has been pointed out that the typical laboratory achievement tasks, such as the anagram tend to be novel or trivial, ambiguous and minimally ego-
involving (Mullen and Riordan, 1988). We think the inconsistent results in self-serving biases in attention and in task difficulty attribution reflect the nature of the task, i.e. anagram, and its minimum ego involvement. It is suggested that in the future, self-serving bias should be studied by averaging its effect over a diversity of tasks to avoid task-specific findings. This also suggests that self-serving biases may not be a widely generalizable phenomenon. The different degree of ego involvement of the task as well as the attribution factors may be more important in the biasing effect.

Our subjects in both the high and low collectivist groups were university students of Asian origin. The cultural context makes a difference in the conceptualization of the self and the normative expectation of public images, issues we consider crucial in the self-serving biases phenomenon. The design of the study was such that through selection, the Singaporean subjects were divided into the high and low collectivists groups, thus creating a within-society cross cultural design whereby the effect of the culture was explicitly tested. But since both groups were drawn from the larger Singapore culture, the collectivist nature of this common context for both groups, in terms of its normative expectations, has to be taken into consideration.

Relevant results obtained in the present study were interpreted to support the hypotheses that value orientations in collectivism does affect the
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subject’s self-serving biases in different situations. The collectivists showed more inconsistency across the public/private situations in most categories of attribution. The public presentation of the collectivists reflected a remarkable lack of the self-serving bias defined in the Western context. In the public situation, the collectivists demonstrated a self-effacing bias. This self-effacing manner of presentation should be interpreted in terms of the normative expectation of the Chinese in Singapore. This normative expectation of proper self-presentation in Singapore can be inferred from the reduced self-serving biases in public situations across both cultural groups. Within this cultural context, the self-effacing behaviour in the public situation was ‘establishing face’ for the subject. Face is a highly desirable social achievement of the Chinese, self-effacing in public is thus, in reality, self-serving in the ego enhancing manner.

The present study demonstrated the dynamic interplay of the individual’s value orientation, culturally conditioned beliefs concerning success and failure, the scripts for appropriate self-presentation and the degree of ego involvement of the attribution category. It seems that the phenomenon of self-serving bias is an end-product of the interactions of the factors mentioned above. The results of the study further suggest that self-serving bias is perhaps a transcultural phenomenon but its manifestations would vary with the
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References


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Table 1.

Rank Order of Causal Attribution Collapsed Across All Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution categories</th>
<th>Mean rating</th>
<th>Rank order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>5.980</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>5.725</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>5.700</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>5.250</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>5.245</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample representativeness</td>
<td>5.090</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luck</td>
<td>3.765</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.

Dimensions of Internal Attribution Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Effort</th>
<th>Ability</th>
<th>Attention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controllability</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego-involvement</td>
<td>More</td>
<td>Most</td>
<td>Least</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.

2 X 2 X 2 MANOVA Table: Main and Interaction Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Wilk’s lambda</th>
<th>df 1</th>
<th>df 2</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Orientation</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Condition</td>
<td>0.68</td>
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<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance Outcome</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
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<td>Culture X Condition</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture X Outcome</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition X Outcome</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture X Condition X Outcome</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.
Effects of Culture X Outcome X Situation on Individual Attribution Factors

### a. EFFORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Collectivists</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Collectivists</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F(1,82)=6.90, p<.05

### b. TASK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Collectivists</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Collectivists</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F(1,82)=6.45, p<.05

### c. ATTENTION

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Collectivists</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Collectivists</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F(1,82)=6.88, p<.05
Table 5.

Means for Culture X Outcome Interaction on Individual Attribution Factors

a. EFFORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Collectivists</th>
<th>Low Collectivists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F(1,82)=6.43, p<.05

b. LUCK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>High Collectivists</th>
<th>Low Collectivists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luck</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F(1,82)=8.70, p<.01
Table 6.
Means for Condition X Outcome Interaction on Individual Attribution Factors

a. EFFORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Success</th>
<th>Public Failure</th>
<th>Private Success</th>
<th>Private Failure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>6.43</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F(1,82)=17.92, p<.01

b. ABILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Success</th>
<th>Public Failure</th>
<th>Private Success</th>
<th>Private Failure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>7.34</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F(1,82)=13.31, p<.01

c. TASK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Success</th>
<th>Public Failure</th>
<th>Private Success</th>
<th>Private Failure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F(1,82)=24.84, p<.01
Table 7.

Self-serving Bias of Internal and External Attribution Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal factors</th>
<th>Self-serving bias</th>
<th>External factors</th>
<th>Self-serving bias</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Task</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Luck</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key to superscripts:

2. + indicates presence of self-serving bias.

3. 0 indicates absence of self-serving bias.

4. - indicates reverse of self-serving bias, self-enhancing bias.
Table 8.

Culture and Condition Interaction in Self-serving Bias of Internal and External Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Collectivists</th>
<th>Low Collectivists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Collectivists</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9.
Culture and Condition Interaction in Self-serving Bias

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Collectivists</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Collectivists</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Rank Order of Causal Attribution Collapsed Across All Conditions
Figure 1.
Mean effort attribution scores as a function of cultural orientation and performance outcome.

Mean effort attribution scores as a function of performance condition and performance outcome.

Mean effort attribution scores as a function of cultural orientation, performance condition and performance outcome.
Mean ability attribution scores as a function of cultural orientation and performance outcome.

Mean ability attribution scores as a function of performance condition and performance outcome.

Mean ability attribution scores as a function of cultural orientation, performance condition and performance outcome.
Figure 4.
Mean attention attribution scores as a function of cultural orientation and performance outcome.

Mean attention attribution scores as a function of performance condition and performance outcome.

Mean attention attribution scores as a function of cultural orientation, performance condition and performance outcome.
Figure 5.
Mean task difficulty attribution scores as a function of cultural orientation and performance outcome.

Mean task difficulty attribution scores as a function of performance condition and performance outcome.

Mean task difficulty scores as a function of cultural orientation, performance condition and performance outcome.
Figure 6.
Mean luck attribution scores as a function of cultural orientation and performance outcome.

Mean luck attribution scores as a function of performance condition and performance outcome.

Mean luck attribution scores as a function of cultural orientation, performance condition and performance outcome.