

Impact of Social Role (Actor-Observer) On Attribution

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ABSTRACT

In this study social role means that what are we play role as an actor or as an observer. When a person play an actor roles then attributing their acts to situational factors (external) whereas play an observer role then attributing others' the same acts to personal factors (internal) . Therefore, in this studied the impact of social role (actor-observer) on attribution (internal-external). It is studied in Indian culture. In this study select actor or observer as parent-child. The sample is 130 individuals (65 parents and 65 children) selected through purposive sampling method. The research measure was a type of self-made scenario questionnaire.

Findings: Social role, as an actor, used situational attributions, but as an observer, they used personal attributions ($P < 0.05$). Based on this findings, social role play an important role in attribution.

Keywords: Attribution, Internal attribution, External attribution, Actor-observer bias, Social role.

Attribution is the process through which understanding the causes of others' behavior. We are attributing two types either internal or external. **Internal attribution** is the process of assigning the cause of behavior to some internal characteristics such as character, personality, motives, belief and so on. **External attribution** is the process of assigning the cause of behavior some external events or situation such as other people, various environmental stimuli, social pressure, and so on. Individuals' attribution about their behaviors and others' has been affected by motivational and irrational bias. These bias influences on their judgment. **Actor-observer bias** or factor-inspector effect is one of the attributed errors in which actors attribute their behaviors to situational factors but observers to permanent personal characteristics in actors. In other words, an attribution bias showing that we prefer external attributions for our own behavior, especially if outcomes are negative, whereas observers tend to make internal attributions for the same behavior performed by others. **Social role** means that what a person play role in society as an

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actor or as an observer. If a person done a work then known as actor and if observing a work then known as observer.

In a research by Herzog (1994), the participants are wanted to watch a video film of a driving situation and when watching, see themselves in the driver's role (actor) or a passenger's (observer). The results showed in more accidents, those in driver's role (actor) attribute their behaviors to situational factors.

In contrast, observers attribute their behaviors to internal factors. Malle (2006) , in a meta analysis on 173 individuals, revealed that the asymmetry of actor-observer is exclusively seen when the actor is perceived as a person with noteworthy characteristics, when the supposed events has been clarified, when the actor- observer are intimate with each other, or when related clarification is coding with open responses. More ever, this asymmetry is about negative events. But reverse asymmetry is about positive events. Malle et al (2007) specified that the folk conceptual theory can explain behaviors better than attributive traditional theories.

Park and Cho (2006), in their first research, showed clearly the generalization of actor- observer bias in Korean people and in the second research, they explained differences in different situational perceptions for probable mechanism. Gioia and Sims (2006) studied 24 bosses and their employers in the similar situations and showed headmasters use personal attribution for their employers and employers use situational attributions. Hennessy and Jakubowski (2007) in a complicated study of actor- observer bias and anger on drivers in a similar driving accidents revealed that this bias is observed when the anger was high.

The crucial role of perspective in social perception situations can be seen in a creative experiment in which the perspectives of both observer and actor were altered (Storms, 1973). Using videotape equipment, the researcher had the actor view his own behavior from the perspective of an observer. That is, he showed the actor a videotape of himself as seen by somebody else. He also had the observer take the actor's perspective by showing the observer a videotape of how the world looked from the point of view of the actor. That is, the observer saw a videotape of herself as seen by the actor, the person she was watching. When both observers and actors put these new perspectives, their attributional analyses changed.

Causes of actor-observer bias

- We are quite aware of the many external factors affecting our own actions but are less aware of such factors when we turn our attention to the actions of other people. Thus, we tend to perceive our own behavior (as an actor) as arising largely from situational causes, but that of others (as an observer) as deriving mainly from their traits or dispositions.
- People motivate for enhance and maintain one's self-esteem.

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- Attentional differences leads to differences in causal perception. The actor perceives his behavior to be a response to environmental cues that trigger, guide and terminate it. But for the observer the focal, commanding stimulus is the actor's behavior, and situational cues are to a degree to ignore.
- Individual's view of his own personality differs from his view of the personalities of others.

METHOD

The population was the parents and children in Sagar city (M.P.). The sample was 130 people consist of 65 parents (mother and father, 30-40 years old) and 65 adolescents (16-23 years old). They are medium socio-economic status. In this study used purposive sampling method.

Measurement Tool

In this study using self made questionnaire with scenario. In which supposed situation is described and the participants are judge about the situation. The scenario based on parent-child relationship. After scenario gives 10 questions in which 5 questions are related from actor and 5 questions are related from observer. To study the face validity and this scenario was given to 5 experts.

Procedure

All the subjects were selected through actor and observer criteria made for each group separately. Reliable information was taken through the administration of self made questionnaire.

Statistical analysis

Obtained raw data was analyzed with the help of F-ratio.

RESULTS

In order to examine whether the mean difference of the two actor group and two observers group of the subjects are significant or not, the one way ANOVA technique for was used.

The details of ANOVA have been given in Table-1 below-

Table-1, ANOVA Table

Sources of Variance	Sum of squares	D.F.	F-ratio	Results
Between Group	727	3	3.97	Value>0.05
Within Group	32.31	256		
Total	649.69	259		

It is evident from the above table that social role effected the attribution and their F-ratio is 3.97. Obtain F-ratio is significant. This means that an actor does situational attribute and an observer dose personal attribute.

DISCUSSION

This study concern about the actor-observer biases. Based on the result, parents and children in the observer role use more personal attributions and situational attributions in actor role. These are consistent with Jones and Nisbett (1971), Herzog(1994), Park et al (2006), Gioia et al (2006), Hennessy et al (2007) but it is somehow congruent with Malle (2006) and Malle et al (2007) . Jones and Nisbett have presented two clarifications. First, information difference leads to attribution difference. Individuals in the actor role have considerable information about their actions in different situations and know that how their behaviors differ in these situations. Therefore, they attribute their actions to situational characteristics whereas they are not aware of behavioral history of the actor in observer role and attribute others' action to internal factors based on the attribution basic errors pattern. Second, the difference in the viewpoint leads to attribution differences. The observer naturally concentrates on the actor's action and it resulted in this point that observer attributes actor's behavior to his/her tendencies. The actor does not concentrate on his/her action but out of himself/herself and follows situational causes, it means, to observers view situation is important (Azarbayejani et al .2008). In this research, actor-observer bias in parents-child is confirmed.

CONCLUSION

Finding of this study indicating that actor tend to attribute the causes of their behavior to stimuli inherent to the situation, while observers tend to attribute behavior to stable personality trait of the actor. The actor-observer hypothesis was originally meant as an "actuarial proposition" (Harvey & Weary, 1984, p. 431)—a generalization about how actors and observers explain behavior. Actors and observers sometimes reach different conclusions about the causes of behavior because they often have different information available, different situations for construing behavior, different histories in the situation, different goals, different perceptual orientations, and so on. What a person assume one's role as an actor or observer for attribution analysis that affects attribution. In short, concluded that the social role do affect the attribution.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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