

Name of Measure: Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ) (Peterson, Semmel, von Baeyer, Abramson, Metalsky, & Seligman, 1982)

Purpose of Measure: To describe individual's characteristic and habitual patterns of causal interpretation (i.e., attributional style).

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Reference: K. S. Crittenden (1991). Asian self-effacement or feminine modesty? Attributional patterns of women university students in Taiwan. *Gender & Society*, 5(1), 98-117.

Description of measure: Attributional style involves two aspects of an event: the valence (i.e., where the outcome is experienced as positive or negative) and whether the event involves individual achievement or affiliation (i.e. relationship to others). The perceived cause of the event is a function of a) the extent to which the individual believes that the causes of the event are internal or external and b) whether the causes are seen as stable or variable. There are four attributional patterns:

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Self effacing | External attributions for good events and internal attributions for negative events |
| External | External attributions for good events and bad events |
| Self Enhancing | External attributions for good events and internal attributions for negative events |
| Internal | Internal attributions for good and bad events |

The ASQ asks respondents to make causal interpretations for 12 hypothetical situations that might happen to a college student. There are 6 affiliation events involving relationships with other people and 6 achievement events; half of each subset is positive in outcome and half is negative. Individual respondents are asked to imagine of the outcome if it were to happen to them. Respondents indicate their perception of the major cause for the event on 7-point scales representing locus (from 1=totally due to other people or circumstances to 7=totally due to me) and stability (from 1=will never again be present to 7=will always be present).

Locus for events (i.e., the overall tendency to attribute events to internal causes) is computed by averaging the internality ratings for all 12 events. Differential locus (i.e., tendency to perceive the causes of positive events as more internal than the causes of negative events) is computed by subtracting mean locus ratings for negative events from those for positive events. Positive scores indicate a self-enhancing pattern, a negative score indicates a self effacing pattern. Stability of causes is computed in a similar fashion. A positive score on differential stability indicates that good events are attributed to more stable causes than bad events (i.e., optimism). A negative score indicates that good events are attributed to more variable causes than bad events (i.e., pessimism).

Language Availability: Not described

Translation Comments: Not described

Description of Asian population: 1,175 university freshmen (60% female) in Taiwan were contrasted with 260 university students in the United States (62%).

Norms:

Locus of Attributional Style

| | Taiwanese | | American | |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| | Women N = 703 | Men N = 451 | Women N = 154 | Men N = 97 |
| Internality M (sd) | 4.60 (.51) | 4.57 (.58) | 4.69 (.62) | 4.73 (.60) |
| Self Enhancing M(sd) | .30 (.86) | .52 (1.09) | .82 (1.01) | .70 (.96) |

On a scale of 1-7. Higher scores on Internality indicate greater tendency to attribute all events to internal causes. Higher scores on self enhancing indicate greater tendency to attribute positive events to internal causes. Negative scores would indicate a self-effacing attributional pattern. Taiwanese students were found to prefer external and self effacing patterns slightly more than the internal and the self enhancing patterns in comparison to the American students

Stability of Attributional Style

| | Taiwanese | | American | |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| | Women N = 703 | Men N = 451 | Women N = 154 | Men N = 97 |
| Overall Stability M (sd) | 4.63 (.53) | 4.66 (.57) | 4.57 (.58) | 4.58 (.61) |
| Optimism M(sd) | 1.13(.97) | 1.10 (1.05) | 1.20(.97) | 1.15(1.07) |

On a scale of 1-7. Higher scores on Stability indicate greater tendency to attribute all events to stable causes. Higher scores on Optimism indicate greater tendency to attribute positive events to stable causes. Negative scores would indicate a pessimistic attributional pattern. Taiwanese students were found to be similar in their tendency to attribute all events and positive events to stable causes.

Reliability: See Peterson et al., (1982)

Validity: See Peterson et al., (1982)

Original reference for instrument: Peterson, C., Semmel, A., von Baeyer, C., Abramson, L., Metalsky, & Seligman, M. (1982). The Attributional Style Questionnaire, *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 6, 287-300.

How to obtain a copy of the instrument: see Peterson et al., 1982.