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Attributional Style and the Chinese Workforce
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I wish to thank all my friends and family who took the time and care to help me spread the word out so that more than 1,000 hits were generated, and more than 400 questionnaires were filled in online.

Praise Him for his provision. His grace is always more than sufficient for me.
Abstract

An individual’s attributional style is the characteristic way a person explains the cause(s) of events. In the occupational field, an optimistic attributional style (i.e. attribute good events to internal, stable and global causes and attribute bad events to external, unstable and specific causes) correlates with job satisfaction, performance, loyalty and many other job-associated variables. Numerous studies were performed using various versions of the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ) based upon Peterson, Semmel, von Baeyer, Abramson, Metlasky and Seligman’s original ASQ developed in 1982. However, discrepancies exist amongst the studies as to which subscales are more predictive. Some researchers proposed that this could be due to cultural differences. Others proposed that this could be due to certain subscale being not relevant for a particular target group. Although attributional style and its relationship with work outcome has generated fruitful knowledge crucial to organizations in the West, knowledge in this area is far and few for a growing global workforce – the Chinese. This study seeks to develop an ASQ in the Chinese language based on positive events specifically for the Chinese population (PCASQ). It will also examine the relationship between attributional style with job satisfaction, voice and stress – three job-associated variables that are of crucial importance to the efficient functioning of any organizations. Results indicated that the new PCASQ possesses superior internal reliability, and that attributional style of the Chinese as elicited from positive events are correlated with job satisfaction and voice. It is also found that composite scoring is more predictive compared to dimensional scoring when positive events is used to elicit attributional style for the Chinese. Based upon the data generated, this study also suggests potential reasons why certain subscale might not be predictive. This paper is concluded with suggestions for further research.
Attributional Style (AS) is a cognitive personality variable first introduced by Abramson, Seligman and Teasdale in 1978 to describe how people explain bad events that happened to them (Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale, 1978). Abramson et al. (1978) speculated that people who are characterized by the tendency to view aversive events as caused by factors that are internal, stable and global are more vulnerable to depression. Later, Buchanan and Seligman (1995) further define attributional style, or explanatory style, as it is otherwise known, as “one’s tendency to offer similar sorts of explanation for different events” (p.1). Attributional style is often measured in psychological research as a personality trait that moderates the relationship between negative events and depression. In researches by Abramson, Semmel & von Baeyer (1979) and Abramson, Metalsky & Alloy (1989), it is found that an individual who has the tendency to explain negative events by factors that are internal, stable and global (i.e. a pessimistic attributional style) are not only more likely to develop depression, but that an individual with a predominantly optimistic explanatory style (i.e. one who has the tendency to explain negative events by external, unstable and specific factors) are more resilient when faced with unfavorable events.

The three dimensions of AS – Internality, Stability and Globality

Internality (Internal versus External)

Heider (1958), generally considered the founder of attribution theory, asserts that individuals are naïve psychologists who seek to explain the cause(s) of their actions and that of others. He makes a basic distinction between two perceived causal explanation of events: factors within the person (internal) and factor within the environment (external). For example, attributing the failure of an exam to one’s lack of intelligence is an internal attribution, whereas to a difficult exam is an external attribution.
Stability (Stable versus Unstable)

Weiner (1974) supports Heider and identified a second dimension of attribution called Stability. Stable factors are thought of as long-lived or recurrent, whereas unstable factors are short-lived or intermittent.

Globality (Global versus Specific)

When Abramson et al. (1978) proposed the theory of attributional style, they incorporated globality to internality and stability in a three-dimensional model. Globality refers to the extent to which the cause is perceived to recur in other situations. Global factor is broad in range and will recur even when situation changes, whereas specific factor is narrow in range and applies only in the original situation. All three dimensions exist as a continuum.

Attributional style

Attributional style as a theory and model has found numerous usage not only in the clinical realm in understanding depression, but also in industrial/occupational psychology. Research has shown that attributional style has significant predictive value to work outcomes. A study of 103 newly-appointed insurance sales agents in the United States demonstrated that those with an optimistic attributional style made higher sales than those with a pessimistic attributional style (Seligman & Schulman, 1986). Another study by Corr and Gray (1996) also found significant correlations between attributional style with job satisfaction and sales performance.

Attributional Style Measurement Tool

A lot of researches on attributional style rely on the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ) developed by Peterson, Semmel, von Baeyer, Abramson, Metalsky
and Seligman as a measurement tool (1982). The ASQ was developed in 1982, and is a well-established instrument for assessing an individual’s attributions for a number of hypothetical positive and negative events on the three-dimensions (internality, stability and globality) of attribution as proposed by Abramson et al. (1978). Six positive and six negative situations are given yielding two main measures: a composite positive attributional style score (CoPos) and a composite negative attributional style score (CoNeg). Composite measures are the mean scores across the three scales of each of the six situations. Previous work has shown that the ASQ predicted actual attributions made by subjects (Metalsky, Halberstadt & Abramson, 1987). Numerous variations based on the original ASQ that is domain specific has also been developed; for example, there is an Academic ASQ (Peterson & Barrett, 1987), an Occupational ASQ (Furnham, Sadka & Brewin, 1992), an ASQ for General Use (Dykema, Bergbower, Doctora & Peterson, 1996), a financial services ASQ (Proudfoot, Corr, Guest and Gray, 2001) and a Sports ASQ (Le Foll, Rascle, & Higgins, 2006).

Areas of Complications

Although studies on attributional style have shown predictive abilities and correlations with work outcomes, we discovered three areas of complications:

(i) discrepancies exist on the predictive ability of the subscale measures,

(ii) there might be potential differences across different cultures, and

(iii) the existing knowledge for an important growing global workforce, the Chinese, is far and few.

A review of literature reveals that different scorings are more predictive in one study versus another: for example, in Seligman et al.’s (1986) study in the United States,
it is low CoNeg score that correlates with successful insurance sales performance. In Corr et al.’s (1996) study with also insurance salesman in the United Kingdom, it is found that high CoPos score rather than low CoNeg score is more useful in the prediction of job satisfaction and sales performance amongst other work outcome variables. Furnham et al.’s (1992) study using an occupational ASQ found that attributions for positive events, rather than negative events were significantly correlated with occupational status, salary, job satisfaction and motivation. Possible cultural differences being the root of the difference has been suggested by Proudfoot et al., in 2001.

As mainland China becomes the defacto “production house” of the world, another area of recent research interest is the growing Chinese workforce. In recognizing the insufficient knowledge in the area of attributional style with work outcomes of the Chinese working population, Kwan, Pak, Chao and Hui (2007), developed a Chinese version of ASQ based on Peterson et al.’s well established ASQ in their working paper. Prior to Kwan et al.(2007), all ASQ studies of the Chinese used student samples rather than the working population samples (Kwan et al. 2007). They called it the Chinese Measure of Attributional Style (CMAS). Specifically, the CMAS is developed in the Chinese language to explore the relationship between the Chinese attributional style and their work outcomes. It is found that a pessimistic attributional style as measured with negative events is indeed correlated with lower job satisfaction, higher work-family conflict, and a few other work outcome variables.

Two issues arise however, from Kwan et al.’s (2007) study: Firstly, only negative events were used in the construction of the CMAS. Recall both Furnham et al.’s (1992) and Corr et al.’s (1996) study of attributional style and its relationship with work outcomes show that it is CoPos scores rather than CoNeg score that is more useful in the
prediction of job satisfaction and sales performance, i.e. attributional style as elicited from positive events is more predictive. Proudfoot et al. (2001) in their development and evaluation of an occupational ASQ also show that attributional style from positive events have a stronger relationship with job associated outcome variables than that from negative events. Proudfoot et al. suggested that perhaps cultural differences determines whether CoPos or CoNeg is more predictive, and calls for further investigation of attributional style as elicited from positive events. No research, however, has yet been performed on attribution for positive events on work outcomes specifically for the Chinese workforce. If positive events are indeed more predictive for the Chinese, future ASQ measures can use only positive events to obtain a higher degree of clarity in understanding attributional style and its relationship with various job-associated outcomes.

Another area of controversy from Kwan et al.’s (2007) working paper concerns dimensional versus composite scoring. Kwan et al. (2007) speculated that internality does not measure a ‘pessimistic’ vs. an ‘optimistic’ style of attribution for the Chinese as it does for non-Chinese.

Purpose of this study

In light of the limitations and issues arising from the existing knowledge on attributional style discussed above, this study seeks to develop an ASQ in the Chinese language that prompts for attribution of positive events to show how attributional style elicited from positive events is also predictive of work outcomes for the Chinese working adults. This study will also test whether internality as a standalone dimension is indeed non-predictive of work outcomes for the Chinese working adults. We hypothesize that for the Chinese working adults:
(i) Attributional style elicited from positive events are predictive of work outcomes, and

(ii) Internality as a standalone dimension is not predictive of work outcomes of the Chinese workforce

Dependent variables

Job satisfaction, voice and work-stress are work outcome variables investigated for the purpose of this study. One of the most important themes in the history of researches in organizational behavior has been the study of employee’s job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as “the degree of pleasure an employee derives from his/her job” (Muchnisky, 2006, p.313). Weiss (2002) has argued that job satisfaction is an attitude but points out that one should distinguish the objects of cognitive evaluation which are (i) affect, (ii) beliefs, and (iii) behaviors. An individual forms attitude(s) towards his/her job by taking into account his/her feelings, beliefs, and behaviors. Hulin and Judge (2003) clarifies Weiss’s definition further and asserts that this affective reaction is based upon a comparison of actual outcome derived from the job with a person’s expected outcome (Muchnisky, 2006), resounding arguably the most famous job satisfaction model of Locke’s Range of Affect Theory (1976). Dawis (2004) added that such feelings of job satisfaction can change over time and circumstances, as what is important to a person changes (Muchnisky, 2006 cited in Dawis, 2004). Numerous models of job satisfaction has been developed due to its importance in an organizational setting: this includes Judges Dispositional theory (1998), Herzberg’s Two-factor theory of motivation and hygiene factors, Hackman & Oldham’s Job Characteristics Model (1976)
and many more. Job satisfaction-dissatisfaction is a critical variable linked with absenteeism, turnover, and employee-dissent (Staw, 1984). Correlation of job satisfaction with turnover is high at an average of -0.40 and with absenteeism (-0.25) (Muchinsky, 2006), thus an important concern to organizations and employers. Amongst the many models of job satisfaction, Brief’s (1998) model of job satisfaction seems to incorporate many of the ideas from the previous works and proposes two components leading to job satisfaction: “Positive affect”, a personal disposition, and “Objective circumstances”, such as pay, promotion etc. Positive affect refers to how people view life, their general disposition and attitude. A person high in positive affect is optimistic about life, tend to interpret failure as a temporary setback caused by external circumstances, are likely to persevere, and have higher job satisfaction versus a person low in positive affect (Muchinsky, 2006). Attributional style, the object of this study, incorporates much of Brief’s idea. We hypothesize that a person high in optimistic attributional style as defined earlier, shall experience higher job satisfaction whereas a person low in optimistic attributional style (or a pessimistic style) will experience lower job satisfaction.

Voice

“Voice” as a work outcome was first introduced by Hirschman in 1970. He proposes that some deterioration in the efficiency and functioning of organizations is inevitable, but there are activities and behaviors that employees engage in as responses to dissatisfaction. These activities and behaviors are signs and routes that are valuable to management to prevent further decay in the firm, and to improve overall organizational effectiveness. Hirschman identified the ‘voice’ option to job dissatisfaction. He defined voice as “any attempt at all to change rather than to escape from an objectionable state of affairs” (Hirschman, 1970, p.30 ). In the field of organizational behavior, voice is a key
concept for the repair of deteriorating conditions and the strive for an efficient functioning of a business. Farrell (1983) in his study on worker’s response to job dissatisfaction identified voice as the most constructive response to job dissatisfaction. Later, Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers and Mainous III in their work which identified factors that contribute to the encouragement of voice, they further define voice as “actively and constructively trying to improve conditions through discussing problems with a supervisor or co-workers, taking action to solve problems, suggesting solutions and seeking help from an outside agency” (1988, p.601). Thus, voice is an important work attribute that is useful for organizations to identify with their employees. Kwan et al. (2007) has shown that attributional style as measured with negative events is predictive of voice. For example, a person with a pessimistic attributional style as measured with negative events is more likely to suppress voice behaviors. We hypothesize that attributional style as measured with positive events is also predictive of voice.

To explain how an attribution of negative events is predictive of voice is rather straightforward. When an unpleasant situation occurs, a person with a more optimistic attributional style will tend to view the cause(s) as relating to another person or to the situation (external). He/she also views that the cause(s) to the situation need not appear again (unstable). With a positive outlook, these factors provide motivation for the person to try to improve the condition through discussing problems with others so as to change the other person(s) and/or the situation(s). A person with a more pessimistic attributional style however, thinking that the negative outcome is due to self (internal), that it is likely to remain the same in the future (stable), that it can also apply to other situations (global), would have little motivation to discuss personal ‘inabilities’ to protect self image and job security.
The logic applying to the attribution of positive events might be less straightforward. A person with a more optimistic attributional style will tend to view success as due to self (e.g., ability, internal), that the cause(s) will apply again (stable), and that the cause(s) will translate to other situations as well (global). This thinking style elevates his/her self-esteem and gives the person energy and motivation to contribute: An “I can” attitude. There is always room for improvement even with success stories: To make the good better, the better best, and the best exceeding expectation. When a person with a more optimistic attributional style notice potential areas of improvement from a positive situation, he/she is likely to discuss with supervisor or co-workers and suggest actions to strive for an even better functioning of the organization. A person with a more pessimistic attributional style however, even with positive events, will tend to view success as due to factors outside of the self, that the cause may not happen again, and that it is not applicable to other situation. There exist much less motivation to discuss. Even if he/she see areas of improvement from successes, this person has little or no personal credit to take, his/her self-esteem is not enhanced, and he/she does not see similar cause(s) to apply and thus tend to communicate less.

**Stress**

Workplace stress leads to increased health care cost, higher rates of absenteeism, turnover, accidents and lower levels of organization productivity. However, the actual scientific investigation of work stress goes back only about 60-70 years to the work of Selye, who is considered the “Father of Stress” (Steve, 1998). Selye researched the effects of unpleasant stimuli to animals and found that all animals react with a similar series of responses. He described this universal response to stressors as the General Adaptive Syndrome (GAS). According to Steve (1998), occupational stress can be
defined in one of three ways: a stimulus definition, a response definition and a stimulus-response definition. As a stimulus definition, stress refers to the stressors in the environment that may require some adaptive response of the employee (e.g., layoffs are imminent such that John responds by reading the classifieds more often). As a response definition, stress refers to the feelings that the demand of job is more than one’s ability to cope (e.g., John is feeling stressful because of a deadline). As a stimulus-response definition, stress refers to the overall process which job demands impact employees. In this definition, stressors are job conditions that may require adaptive responses from employees, and strain refers to a multitude of negative ways employee may respond when faced with the stressors. Strains can be psychological (e.g., job dissatisfaction and anxiety), physical (somatic complaints), or behavioral (absenteeism and turnover).

Like job satisfaction, numerous models of occupational stress exist. The ISR model is one of the first occupational stress models (Steve, 1998 cited in French & Kahn, 1962 and Katz & Kahn, 1978). This model describes a process of six elements. Starting with the (i) objective environment, a person first (ii) perceives the objective situation, i.e., psychological environment, then (iii) response occurs which could be psychological, physical or affective in nature. This in turn leads to (iv) strain, which are mental and physical health diseases such as heart disease or depression. The other two elements are individual characteristics in nature which acts as moderators to the relationship between the stressors and the strains. Later, there is Beehr and Bhagat’s (1985) model which focuses on the performance implications of stress. They propose that many stressors in an organization are due employee’s uncertainty: Uncertain with (i) whether their effort will lead to high levels of job performance and (ii) whether high performance will lead to valued outcomes. There are also models that focus on the ‘person-environment’ fit, such
as, whether one’s skills and abilities or one’s moral value matches that of the organization (Steve, 1998 cited Beehr & Bhagat, 1985 and Kristof, 1996).

Despite the numerous stress models and their focuses, one clear implication is that an element of perception exist in all models of work stress. In fact, Lazarus (1966) argued that in order for a psychosocial stimuli to be stressful, it must be appraised as such. Perception mediates the impact of the objective environment: Appraisal by the employee is always necessary. Another implication from these models is that individual differences impact both the perception and the reactions to the stressors.

This study seeks to examine the relationship between attributional style and stress. We hypothesize that a person’s unique attributional style of appraisal is correlated with the response definition of stress. That is, a person who has a more optimistic attributional style will feel relatively less stressful when faced with the same stressors in an organizational setting versus a person with a less optimistic attributional style. As noted, the appraisal process is key to understanding stress. Attributional style, being the way a person assigns cause(s) to events, is a crucial element for the better understanding of stress. Brewin and Furnham found that attributional style is correlated with self-esteem (1986). We propose that a person with a more optimistic attributional style will tend to view positive outcome as internal, stable and global, which enhances his/her self esteem, which in turn helps to balance out his potential negative reaction to negative stimuli in the work setting.

To summarize, this study seeks to:

(i) Develop a positive attributional style scale for the Chinese workforce,
(ii) Establish the relationships between attributional style as elicited from positive events for the Chinese workforce with job satisfaction, voice and stress, and

(iii) Show that internality as a dimensional measure is not predictive of attributional style for the Chinese.
Methodology

Participants

Participants were 401 Chinese working adults recruited from the internet through email and Facebook. They included Chinese who live in different countries such as Hong Kong, Mainland China, North America and Europe. More than 1,000 hits were generated, with 401 questionnaires completed. Upon reviewing the working status, it is found that twenty-one of them are employers, thirty-one self-employed and twenty-four having retired or are unemployed. As the job satisfaction, voice and stress measurement scales include questions in relation to situations involving employers and subordinates, only the data from the employee categories (N=325) was used for studying the relationship between attributional style and work outcomes.

Amongst the 325 participants, 64.90% are female versus 35.00% male with 63% with over 10 years of working experience. The mode of the participants’ age falls between the 36-40 age group at 23.70%. In terms of tenure and occupational ranking, 63.10% of the participants have worked for ten years or more; 42.50% works in the frontline, 48.00% in middle management and 9.50% in senior management (see Table 1).
Table 1
Demographics of participants (N=325)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>35.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>64.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 or below</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>13.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>21.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>23.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 or above</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupational Ranking</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontline</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>42.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle management</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>48.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior management</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years of working experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 10 years</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>36.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 10 years</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>63.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Development of the Questionnaire

Attributional style measure

Based on Peterson et al’s (1982) ASQ and Kwan et al’s (2007) CMAS, a five-items scale is developed. Several considerations led to the format employed. Firstly, the questions need to measure the degree in which subjects used the dimensions of internality, stability and globality as defined by Abramson et al. (1978). However, on the one hand, it seemed a poor idea to provide the subjects with possible causes as these causes might not be the causes in their mind. On the other hand, previous researches such as Elig and Frieze (1979) reported that open-ended attributional measures are not as reliable as fixed-format procedures (Peterson et al., 1982 cited Elig & Frieze, 1979). Secondly, since the questionnaire is to be administered on-line on a voluntary, no-name basis, i.e. no rewards given for completing the questionnaire, user-friendliness (i.e. easy
to understand, easy and quick to perform) is key. In the measurement scale development phase, we came up with five favorable situations (see Table 2) that probe an individual’s cross-situational style of causal explanation of everyday life events, and asked ten adults of different demographics to come up with as many reasons as possible of why each situation might occur.

Table 2
The hypothetical positive events used in this study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Conflict with family member(s) is successfully and gracefully resolved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Bought something I really like with a bargain price.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>An experience of success at school or in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>A happy/good experience with friend(s) or colleague(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>On-time completion of an assignment in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result is a ready stock of seven to eight explanations plus an additional “other reasons” explanation for each situation. Upon reading the situation, participants are free to choose as many explanations as they perceive to be the cause(s) of the situation, and then to rate the cause(s) along a 7-point Likert scale corresponding to the internality, stability and globality dimensions. Such design allows for a reasonable compromise between a completely open-ended measure and a reliable fixed-format procedure (see Table 3). It also alleviates the participant’s cognitive effort and the burden of typing many different inputs as they complete the questionnaire on-line.
Table 3
Format of the attributional style measure scale

Listed below are several different situations. Please try to vividly imagine yourself in the situations that follow. If such a situation happened to you, what would you feel would have caused it? Please choose what you perceive as the most plausible cause(s) to the situation from the items given. Then, based on what you have chosen, please answer three follow up questions about the cause.

1) Conflict with family member(s) is successfully and gracefully resolved

A. Please select the most important reason(s) that you feel have caused the above to happen

- Luck
- Emotional state influence
- A third party assistance
- Both parties have strong desire to resolve conflict
- Passage of time
- Suitable communication
- Mutual understanding
- Differences was resolved
- Other reason(s)

B. Is/are the cause(s) you have selected due to factors within/about yourself, or factors within/about the environment?

Due to the other(s) or the environment: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Due to me: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

C. In the future when facing a similar event, will this/these cause(s) again be present?

Will never be present: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Will always be present: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

D. Is/are the cause(s) only applicable to the above event, or does it/do they also apply to other situations in life?

Only applicable to the above event: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Applies to other situation(s) as well: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Scoring

The three attributional dimension rating scales associated with each event description are scored in the directions of increasing internality, stability and globality. Composite scores are created simply by summing the appropriate items and dividing the sum by the number of items in the composite.

Job satisfaction measure

Eight items measuring various aspect of job satisfaction were taken from Kwan et al.’s 2007 study. They include whether the work itself brings a sense of achievement, whether colleagues are selfish, whether superiors are fair, whether company management is improving, whether promotion prospect is good, whether one’s income is considered sufficient, whether subordinates trust one’s instruction and whether the company can fulfill its commitment and obligation to the individual. Job satisfaction was measured on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree).

Voice measure

Ten items measuring a person’s various aspect of voice based upon Kwan et al.’s (2007) CMAS were used. Voice is operationalized using questions such as whether one has discussed salary issues recently, whether one has an intention to understand the company’s strategy and policies, whether one would seek for opportunity to express dissatisfaction etc. Like job satisfaction, voice was also measured on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree).

Stress measure

Six items assessing a person’s work-related stress were taken from Holmgren, Hensing and Dahlin-Ivanoff’s (2009) study. They include whether one has time to finish
one’s assignments, whether one has the possibility to influence decisions at work, whether supervisors consider one’s views, whether one can decide his work pace, and whether one has find it hard to find time to be with friends and for other recreational activities due to work. Like job satisfaction and voice, stress was also measured on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree).

Administration

The questionnaire was administered on-line. Participants are given a link to click onto the website containing the questionnaire. A consent form briefly explaining the experiment and procedure is shown on the first screen in both the English and Chinese languages. Participants are then asked to click the “agree” box if they agree to participate and the questionnaire pops up upon the clicking of the agree box. An in-built prompt is added so that participants had to answer all the questions asked before he/she can move onto the next sets of questions. Participants are free to navigate backwards and forwards to change their response in case there is a typo. A submit button pops up at the end of the questionnaire. The questionnaire is considered complete upon clicking of this button and participants will not be allowed to go back to the questions at this stage. A debriefing form explaining the research in greater detail concludes the experiment and is shown upon submission of the data (see Appendix A).
Results

Internal reliability

The first requirement of any self-report measure is that it is shown to be reliable. The internal reliabilities of each dimension of attributional style as well as their composite are estimated using Cronbach’s (1951) coefficient alpha. Table 4 shows the means, standard deviations and alphas for the seven scales (Composite positive, internality, stability, globality, job satisfaction, voice and stress). All scale items show respectable alphas except for internality as a standalone dimensional measurement. The composite attributional style scale (CoPos) has the highest alpha of 0.83. The alphas for the three item subscales reflecting separate attributional dimensions of internality, stability and globality are 0.55, 0.74 and 0.77 respectively. The internal reliabilities of job satisfaction, voice and stress scales achieved Cronbach’s alphas of 0.67, 0.79 and 0.66.

In light of the low internal reliability of the internality scale, it is decided that internality as a standalone dimension cannot be analyzed with meaningful results. The composite score however, has a high Cronbach’s alpha. This study has successfully created a version of positive ASQ specific for the Chinese working adult (PCASQ).

Table 4
Means, standard deviations, Cronbach’s alphas and inter-correlations of attributional style and work outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Int</th>
<th>Stab</th>
<th>Glob</th>
<th>CoPos</th>
<th>JS</th>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internality</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>(.55)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>(.74)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globality</td>
<td>6.34</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>(.77)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoPos</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>.75**</td>
<td>.82**</td>
<td>.84**</td>
<td>(.83)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.05**</td>
<td>.13**</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>(.67)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>(.79)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.47*</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td>(.66)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. **p<0.01; Int=Internality, Stab=Stability, Glob=Globality, CoPos = Composite positive, JS=Job satisfaction
Relationships amongst the attributional dimensions and the work outcome variables

Inter-correlations of the variables are also shown in Table 4. Job satisfaction has a high correlation with stress \((r=-.47, p<0.01, \text{two-tailed})\) and voice \((r=.40, p<0.01, \text{two-tailed})\): A more satisfied person at work experiences less work stress; alternatively, the higher the level of work stress, the less job satisfaction a person experiences. With voice, the more satisfied a person is with his/her job, the more likely he/she is going to engage in voice behavior and vice versa. Stress and voice is also correlated with each other \((r=-.25, p<0.01, \text{two-tailed})\). The more work stress the person is experiencing, the less likely he/she is going to engage in voice behavior.

Relationship between attributional style with job satisfaction, voice and stress

As hypothesized, our composite positive attributional style score (CoPos) significantly correlated with job satisfaction \((r=.19, p<0.01, \text{two-tailed})\) and voice \((r=.27, p<0.01, \text{two-tailed})\) (see Table 4). Further, CoPos as a composite measure shows the highest correlation with job satisfaction and voice compared to that of stability with job satisfaction \((r=.15, p<0.01)\) and with voice \((r=.26, p<0.01)\); and globality with job satisfaction \((r=.13, p<0.01)\) and with voice \((r=.22, p<0.01)\). However, neither CoPos, stability, nor globality are correlated with stress; results are not significant.

Linear regression analyses are also carried out (see Table 5). After controlling for age, gender, organizational ranking and tenure, results show that CoPos accounted for an additional 2.90\% of the variance with job satisfaction \((\beta=.17, F= 9.72, df=1,319, p<0.01)\) and an additional 0.60\% of the variance with voice \((\beta=.25, F= 21.79, df=1,319, p<0.001)\). Results also show that the relationship between organizational ranking and job
satisfaction, as well as organization ranking and voice are significant. ($\beta = .15, p < 0.05$), ($\beta = .23, p < 0.001$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work outcome</th>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$R^2$ Change</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Organization ranking</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Years of working experience</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>CoPos</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.07**</td>
<td>.03**</td>
<td>9.75</td>
<td>1,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Organization Ranking</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Years of working experience</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>CoPos</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.12***</td>
<td>.06***</td>
<td>21.79</td>
<td>1,319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $\beta =$ standardized $\beta$; $R^2$ = $R^2$ unadjusted; $R^2$ Change = unadjusted $R^2$ Change; *$p<0.05$, **$p<0.01$, ***$p<0.001$
Discussion

The aim of this study is essentially threefold. Firstly to develop an ASQ for the Chinese workforce based on positive events (PCASQ). Secondly, to establish the relationship between attribution style as measured by positive events with job satisfaction, voice and stress. Finally, to test whether internality as a standalone dimension is useful in understanding work outcome of the Chinese workforce.

*Development of a Positive ASQ for the Chinese workforce (PCASQ)*

As shown from the results, objective number one is achieved. Our PCSAQ not only shows acceptable internal reliability, it has achieved acceptable alphas much higher than Peterson’s original ASQ in both the composite score as well as the three dimensional scores (see Table 6). The reliability of the composite positive score from the new PCSAQ also surpassed that from Corr et al.’s ASQ (1996) and Kwan et al.’s CMAS (2007). This could due to the fact that the questions from the PCSAQ is more homogenous compared to that of the others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoPos</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internality</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globality</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoPos</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internality</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globality</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relationship between attributional style for positive events with work outcomes

In this section of the study, we try to establish the relationship between attributional style as elicited from positive events of the Chinese working adults with that of job satisfaction, voice and stress. Specifically, we hypothesize that such style is:

(i) Correlated with job satisfaction

(ii) Correlated with voice, and

(iii) Correlated with stress.

The composite positive score (CoPos) as an attributional style measure was used for the purpose of our analysis versus the dimensional score because CoPos showed the highest reliability compared to that of stability and globality (see Table 4). In fact, Peterson et al., (1982) who developed the original ASQ has cautioned researchers not to make a distinction between the dimensional items because “prediction from the ASQ is likely to be improved by using the composite collapsed.” (p.294, 1982) Kwan et al. (2007) in their working paper however, suggested that dimensional scoring is more predictive compared to the composite collapsed. However, we propose that Kwan et al.’s speculation (2007) is true only for negative events. As seen from Table 7, internality, stability and globality are much highly correlated with one another in the positive events scale of the PCASQ versus that of the negative events from the CMAS. In fact, internality showed no correlation with stability in the CMAS: There is much less discrimination amongst the internality, stability and globality dimensions of the positive events ASQ compared to that from the negative events ASQ.
Table 7
Comparison of $\alpha$ and inter-correlations of the dimensional scale between the PCASQ and the CMAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inventory</th>
<th>Internality</th>
<th>Stability</th>
<th>Globality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PCASQ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internality</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globality</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMAS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internality</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globality</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. CMAS from Kwan et al (2007); **p<0.1

It has been suggested that perhaps people make fewer distinction among good events “since they may not spend as much time ruminating over them as they do over bad events” (Peterson et al., 1982 cited Langer, 1978, Peirce, 1995 & Ryle, 1949). Further, Vagg and Spielberge (1998) has also shown that under stress, a person will make more causal attributions than when one is not as to regain a sense of control. Negative events are very likely to increase a person’s stress level. Under stress, this person will make more causal attributions per Vagg et al. (1998). It is likely that this person will need to spend more time making them, and in doing so, possibly further differentiating them.

(i) Attributional style from positive events of the Chinese vs. job satisfaction

In line with the results from Furnham et al. (1992), attributional style as elicited from positive events of the Chinese workforce showed significant correlation with job satisfaction. This study shows that such relationship stands for workforce in both the United Kingdom as well as the Chinese population. Further, as we control for age, gender, organizational ranking and tenure, our results show that occupational ranking has a significant correlation with job satisfaction: The higher the ranking, the more satisfied the person is on the job. Recall Brief’s (1998) model of job satisfaction as presented earlier, the two components leading to job satisfaction are “positive affect” and “objective
job circumstances”. Based upon the model, a person’s attributional style is essentially the input to the “positive affect” component. A person high in positive affect is optimistic about life, tend to interpret failure as temporary setback caused by external circumstances, and are likely to persevere. i.e. an optimistic attributional style.

Organizational ranking on the other hand, serves as the input to the objective job circumstances. Higher organizational ranking implies more autonomy, higher degree of control, higher salary etc. which essentially are the objective job circumstances of one’s work environment.

(ii) Attributional style from positive events of the Chinese vs. voice

Kwan et al. (2007) has shown that pessimism is predictive of voice behavior. This study has successfully shown that the relationship remains even when attributional style is measured from positive events for the Chinese, and optimism is also predictive of voice behavior. In addition, data from this study shows that organization ranking is predictive of voice. Future research can be performed with different population to assess if such relationship exists across cultures.

(iii) Attributional style from positive events of the Chinese vs. stress

The results did not show significant correlation between attributional style and stress. The Cronbach’s alpha of the stress scale is moderate at 0.66, showing a fair level of internal reliability of the instrument. However, there are reasons to doubt the overall validity of the scale used: The questions of the present stress scale are extracted from an established work-stress questionnaire by Holmgren et al. (2009). Although the instrument has shown to have good test-retest reliability and face validity, it is possible that in extracting just six questions from the instrument sacrificed the construct validity. Stress is an extremely complicated psychological variable. There are “no agreed upon
definition of stress or how to conceptualize it” (Muchinsky, 2006, p.352). Because of it’s complexity, the most widely used and established stress questionnaires such as the Occupational Stress Inventory, the Work Environment Scale, and the Occupational Stress Indicator all contain a lot more questions to tap different aspects of stress compared to our stress scale (Vagg et al., 1998). In fact, the most cited Occupational Stress Indicator comprises seven questionnaires with a total of twenty-five subscales! The much simplified stress scale used in this study may not be able to capture thoroughly all the necessary aspects of stress in such detail that compromises the effectiveness of measuring stress appropriately, thus leading to an insignificant result.

A second reason why no relationship can be established could be due to the fact that attributional style is indeed not an independent variable that has a main effect on stress, but only a moderator to the relationship between stressors and stress. Studies and models has shown how attributional style is a moderator directly and indirectly. Firstly, recall Abramson et al.’s finding that a person with a pessimistic attributional style is more likely to develop depression (1979): This finding has indirectly established a relationship between attributional style and stress. From the many models of stress discussed, depression is clearly considered a possible consequence of stress. Depression is one of the possible “strain” outcome of physical illness per the ISR model. From Kahn and Byosiere (1992)’s framework of work stress, depression is also one of the possible “Health and illness” outcome of stress. (Muchinsky, 2006). Directly, Jackson, Sellers and Peterson (2002) has shown that pessimistic attributional style moderates the relationship between stress and physical illness. No relationship however, has yet been established between that of an optimistic attributional style and stress. The relationship between attributional style and stress exist no doubt, but it might be more complicated that no existing models currently capture the full relationship.
This study is not able to shed additional light on whether internality as a standalone dimension is useful or not for the Chinese workforce due to the low reliability of the scale. Internality as a standalone dimensional measure seems to always have a lower Cronbach’s alpha compared to other dimensions in a lot of the existing ASQs. For example, Peterson et al.’s original ASQ has alphas of 0.50 and 0.46 for the positive events and negative events on internality respectively. Kwan et al.’s CMAS has 0.60 for internality after discarding one of the original items to improve it’s reliability. The same scale has 0.76 and 0.80 respectively as alphas for stability and globality. Furnham et al.’s occupational ASQ has alphas of 0.64 vs. 0.79 and 0.75 for internality, stability and globality respectively. Internality as a standalone dimensional measure for attributional style possibly exhibit something interesting that the other two dimensions do not, and thus lead to low reliability of the scale.

This study proposes that internality is affected not only by a person’s general style of attribution (more optimistic or more pessimistic), but also by the phenomenon of self-serving bias. Self-serving bias occurs when people attribute their successes to internal or personal factors but attribute their failures to situational factors beyond their control. The self-serving bias can be seen in the common human tendency to take credit for success but to deny responsibility for failure (Miller and Ross, 1975). When negative events such as failure occurs, a person with a more optimistic attributional style will attribute the cause to external factors in the internality continuum, while a person with a more pessimistic style to the internal factors. However, forces of the self-serving bias actually work in the opposite direction with the more pessimistic attributional style person. Self-serving bias predisposes both persons to blame the environment, possibly countering the
effect of the person’s unique attributional style. When a positive event such as success occurs, the attributional style phenomenon predisposes a more optimistic style person to explain the outcome with internal reason(s) and a more pessimistic style person to external reasons. However, the self-serving bias which is common to all human will predispose both the ‘pessimist’ and the ‘optimist’ to take credit for the self, i.e. internal reasons. The other dimensions of stability and globality, on the other hand, are not affected by this bias.

**Limitation and future direction**

The current study developed a positive ASQ for the Chinese workforce. However, it is still unclear whether it is positive or is it negative events that are more useful for studying attributional style and it’s relationship with work outcomes for the Chinese. It would be ideal if this study had positive and negative events to obtain both the CoPos and CoNeg scores for comparison purposes. However, since the study was administered online with voluntary participants, a scale containing both items would be too lengthy to complete. In order to achieve sufficient hits, this study has sacrificed obtaining CoNeg in the same questionnaire. Future study can use only one work outcome variable, such as job satisfaction, but with both positive and negative events like that of Peterson et al.’s and many others. Once clarified, one type of events and not both can be used in future questionnaires to study other work outcome variables of the Chinese in greater depth and clarity.

This study has established how attributional style as elicited from positive events of the Chinese is predictive of job satisfaction. Welbourne, Eggerth, Hartley, Andrew and Sanchez (2007) in their recent study discovered that attributional style showed differential relationship when further broken down into intrinsic versus extrinsic job
satisfaction. Welbourne et al. defines intrinsic job satisfaction as “aspects of the job that are inherent to the nature of the work being performed and which are primarily experienced internally by the worker (eg sense of achievement, level of independence..) whereas extrinsic job satisfaction to those aspects that are not inherent to the nature of the work and which are primarily under the control of one’s employer (eg. Working conditions, compensations etc.)”. Their study showed that only intrinsic job satisfaction shows a direct relationship with attributional style. No relationship is established with extrinsic job satisfaction. Future research can focus on this differentiation to gain better understanding of such relationship with the Chinese.

In conclusion, this study has successfully added to the existing knowledge of attributional style and the growing important workforce of the world – the Chinese. This study has also provided additional insights in the relationship between attributional style and stress, as well as possible reasons why internality as a standalone dimension might not be appropriate for measuring attributional style.
References


Appendix

Consent Form/同意書

Attributional Style in Chinese Working Adults

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Cynthia Lam under the supervision of Dr. C. Harry Hui, Ph.D. in the Department of Psychology at the University of Hong Kong.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
This study examines the relationship between attributional style and work outcomes of Chinese working adults.

PROCEDURES
You will be invited to fill out a brief self-report questionnaire on-line to assess your personal attributional style and work performance. The test should take no longer than 15 minutes.

POTENTIAL RISKS / DISCOMFORTS AND THEIR MINIMIZATION
You may find recalling some of your personal experience during the procedure somewhat uncomfortable. Such discomforts, however, should be no greater than what we experience in everyday life.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS
In this study, you will be invited to reflect upon your personal experience. Such reflection may give you insights about yourself.

Furthermore, with the growing importance of China in the global economy, it is especially meaningful to gain insights into the relationship between attributional style and work outcomes for the Chinese workforce; however, the work that’s been done is far and few. This research project can provide valuable information on an important attribute of the Chinese.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Any information obtained in this study will remain strictly confidential, will be known to the researcher and will be used for research purposes only. Codes, not names, are used on all test instruments to protect confidentiality.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
Your participation is voluntary. This means that you can choose to stop at any time without negative consequences.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS
If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, please feel free to contact the Principal Investigator Cynthia Lam at Room 747, Knowles Building, The University of Hong Kong. Telephone: 852 9031-8312; Email:
歸因方式與中國人工作關係

很高興能邀請閣下參與香港大學心理學系研究員林鳳婷在許志超博士指導下的研究工作。

研究目的
這是一項關於工業心理學的學術研究，旨在探討每個人獨特的歸因方式與他的工作表現和結果的關係。

內容
你需要完成一份問卷（需時約十分鐘）。

潛在風險
在完成問卷的過程中，部分問題可能涉及閣下的價值取向。

可得益處
在完成問卷的過程中，閣下也會被邀請回想自己的個人經歷，這個過程可能會使閣下加深對自己的了解。此外，雖然歸因方式與西方人工作關係的研究甚多，針對中國人這方面的資料實在少之又少，閣下的參與將對研究歸因方式與中國人工作關係的問題提供寶貴的資料。
資料保密
參與純屬自願性質，所收集的資料只作研究用途，個人資料將絕對保密。如你對是項研究有任何問題，請與研究員林鳳婷聯絡(852 9031 8312)。如你想知道更多有關研究參與者的權益，請聯絡香港大學非臨床研究操守委員會(852 2241 5267)。

如你明白以上內容，並願意參與是項研究，請按同意。

同意
(甲) 第一部：
下面有幾個不同的情況。請試想像如果這些情況發生在你身上，原因會是什麼呢？請在已提供的原因，點擊選出你認爲重要的原因。然後，請針對你所選的原因，回答三個相關的問題。

1) 一次與家人的衝突得到妥當的解決

A.請在下列項目中，選出你認爲重要的原因 (可選多於一項)

- 幸運 / 彩數
- 情緒有關
- 有第三者介入的幫助
- 雙方也想事情得到解決
- 時間沖淡一切
- 適當溝通
- 互相了解
- 大家的分歧終有共識
- 其他

B. 你所選的這些原因是因爲你自己而起，還是因爲別人或環境而起呢？

因別人或環境而起 □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 因自己而起

C. 在將來，你所選的這些原因還會出現嗎？

不會再出現 □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 總是會出現

D. 你所選的這些原因只會幫助與家人衝突得到解決這一種情況，還是會幫助你生活的其他方面？

只會影響這種情況 □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 會影響所有的情況
2) 一次買到又心儀、又價錢合理的貨品：“好抵！”

A. 請在下列項目中，選出你認爲重要的原因 (可選多於一項)

- 自己的性格
- 對相關貨品有充份的知識
- 賣家愚蠢
- 天時地利
- 做了深入分析和研究
- 有運氣
- 對方的銷售技巧
- 有時間
- 其他

B. 你所選的這些原因是因爲你自己而起，還是因爲別人或環境而起呢？

因別人或環境而起 □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 因自己而起

C. 在將來，你所選的這些原因還會出現嗎？

不會再出現 □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 總是會出現

D. 你所選的這些原因只會幫助買東西這一種情況，還是會幫助你生活的其他方面？

只會影響這種情況 □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 會影響所有的情況
3) 一次讀書或工作成功的經歷

A. 請在下列項目中，選出你認爲重要的原因（可選多於一項）

- [ ] 自己勤力，盡力而為
- [ ] 有運氣
- [ ] 時間和機會的配合
- [ ] 身體狀況
- [ ] 在自己的能力範圍之內
- [ ] 有別人的幫助配合
- [ ] 自已有信心
- [ ] 自己有好好計劃
- [ ] 其他

B. 你所選的這些原因是因為你自己而起，還是因為別人或環境而起呢？


C. 在將來，你所選的這些原因還會出現嗎？


D. 你所選的這些原因只會幫助讀書或工作成功的經歷這一種情況，還是會影響你生活的其他方面？

4) 一次與朋友/同事的愉快經歷

A. 請在下列項目中，選出你認為重要的原因 (可選多於一項)

- 性格關係
- 情緒關係
- 自己的社交技巧
- 有共同的目標和價值觀
- 有運氣
- 利益一致
- 對方友善和關懷
- 其他

B. 你所選的這些原因是因爲你自己而起，還是因爲別人或環境而起呢？

因別人或環境而起  1  2  3  4  5  6  7 因自己而起

C. 在將來，你所選的這些原因還會出現嗎？

不會再出現  1  2  3  4  5  6  7 總是會出現

D. 你所選的這些原因只會幫助與朋友/同事有愉快經歷這一種情況，還是會影響你生活的其他方面？

只會影響這種情況  1  2  3  4  5  6  7 會影響所有的情況
5) 一次準時完成工作的經歷

A. 請在下列項目中，選出你認為重要的原因 (可選多於一項)

- 有時間，不忙碌
- 有其他事或人的幫助
- 懂得分配時間
- 努力，用功
- 勇於面對挑戰
- 良好的身體狀況
- 良好的情緒
- 對工作量或進度，預計準確
- 其他

B. 你所選的這些原因是因為你自己而起，還是因為別人或環境而起呢？

因別人或環境而起 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 因自己而起

C. 在將來，你所選的這些原因還會出現嗎？

不會再出現 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 總是會出現

D. 你所選的這些原因只會幫助準時完成工作的經歷這一種情況，還是會影響你生活的其他方面？

只會影響這種情況 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 會影響所有的情況
請分析下列句子的同意程度。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>句子</th>
<th>絕不同意</th>
<th>不同意</th>
<th>一半一同意</th>
<th>同意</th>
<th>十分同意</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 我的工作讓我有一種成就感。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. 我的同事很自私。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. 我的上司對下屬一視同仁。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. 公司的管理制度在不斷的改變和進步。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. 我的晉升機會非常有限。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. 我的收入足夠我目前的消費。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. 我的下屬都相信我的指導。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. 公司大抵都能實踐對我的承諾。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. 我最近曾和上司商討有關待遇的問題。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. 我不想去了解公司的政策。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. 我會找機會向公司提出不滿。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. 我不會去改變公司的決定。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. 溝通可增加和公司之間的彼此了解。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. 我會向上司提意見來改善現況。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. 我會向上級指出公司處事不當的地方。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. 我會與上司商討管理上的問題至達共識。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. 我會說明自己的要求至上司答應。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. 我會以不同的方法向上級說明自己的觀點。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. 我有足夠時間完成我的工作。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. 我能夠影響工作上的決定, 如自己的工作方法。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. 我的上司會考慮我的意見。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. 我可以決定我的工作進度。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. 我會因工作而缺乏時間給朋友。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. 我會因工作而缺乏時間給空閒活動。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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</table>
(丙) 個人資料

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>性別：</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ 男  ☐ 女</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>年齡：</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ 20 歲或以下 ☐ 36 – 40 歲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ 21 – 25 歲 ☐ 41 – 45 歲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ 26 – 30 歲 ☐ 46 – 50 歲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ 31 – 35 歲 ☐ 51 歲或以上</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>現時職級：</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ 前線執行</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ 中層管理</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ 上層管理</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>工作年資：</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ 1 年以下 ☐ 7 - 8 年</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ 1 - 2 年 ☐ 9 - 10 年</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ 3 - 4 年 ☐ 10 年以上</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ 5 - 6 年</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>在職情況：</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ 雇主</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ 雇員</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ 自雇人士</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ 待業/退休</td>
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</table>
Debriefing Form

Thank you for your participation in this research effort. In the beginning of the research, I did not explain what Attributional style is, and what relationship attributional style has with a person’s work experience and performance. The following provide more details should you be interested!

Attributional style is a term first introduced in 1978 to describe how people explain bad events that happened to them. Attribution is usually seen as being made up of three dimensions: perceived internality, stability and globality of the cause to an event. Internality refers to the extent to which the cause of the event is due to oneself. Stability refers to the likelihood that the cause of the event will occur again in the future. Globality refers to the extent to which the cause of the event will affect other areas of one’s life. It is found that individuals who attribute uncontrollable bad events to internal, stable and global factors (i.e. more pessimistic) are more likely to experience depression when compared with people who make them to external, unstable and specific factors. On the other hand, people who attribute favorable events to internal, stable and global factors (i.e. more optimistic) are likely to be more adaptive and resilient in different areas of their lives.

Many studies in the West have demonstrated that attributional style predicted work outcomes. It is found that sales personnel with a high positive score (i.e. more optimistic) were more successful in making sales, more motivated and more adaptive. A positive attribution style was also positively related with job satisfaction in nurses. Research evidence and studies on the Chinese population however, is very scant. With the growing importance of China in the global economy, your participation will significantly add to evidence and knowledge in this area.

If you have any questions with regards to the questionnaire you have filled in, please contact the Principal Investigator Cynthia Lam (Email: hkuattribution@gmail.com). or her Advisor Dr. Harry Hui (Email: huiharry@hku.hk).

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact the Human Research Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Faculties, HKU (852. 2241-5267).

If you have friends, family or colleagues who might be able to help in this research effort, it would be greatly appreciated if you can kindly forward them the link: http://s1.polling.com.hk/survey-2009-psych

Thank you!