
BI
NORWEGIAN
BUSINESS SCHOOL

Systematic attributions about attendance and/or non-attendance at lectures

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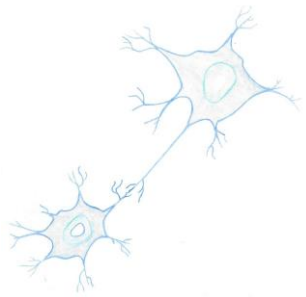
Objective

To clarify systematic attributions about attendance or non-attendance at business school lectures



Attendance

Importance for

- Learning how to learn
- Learning the curriculum
- Engaging the lecturer

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Theoretical basis – Attribution

is the process by which individuals explain the causes of behavior and events

Attributions influence upon students' decisions and behavior

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Research design

1. Survey with two open-ended questions

2. Analyzes by attributional coding (Leeds Attributional Coding System) and multivariate statistics

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Survey (electronically distributed)

1. What makes you attend lectures?

2. What makes you not attend lectures?

Additionally: educational program, class level, gender, and age

Number of respondents: 179 (67 first year, 58 second year, 53 third year, 1 did not state class level)

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Representative answers

Attends	Does not attend
Clever lecturers	Work
Inspiration, engaged lecturers, relevance, exercises during the lecture	Work, not very motiviated lecturers, lack of relevance of the lecture
That there is a subject that is dififficult and that the lecture is not so early in the morning	Dull lectures or subjects that I can read on my own
That the lecturer gives examples which make it easier to understand the curriculum. And the lecturer's engagement towards giving the students a good understanding	Due to lecturers not being engaged and only thinking of progressing through their own notes
In order to learn	Bad lecturer or known curriculum
A very engaged lecturer	Low engagement and much work with the thesis
That the lecture is not to early in the morning and that the lecturer keeps us interested. And also if the subject is difficult one has to take quite good notes which can be used to improve the marks.	That I oversleep
Because I don't want to miss anything and because I feel commitment /respect towards the lecturer	Lecturers who are not able to get to the point
Important lectures	Unidirectional presentations

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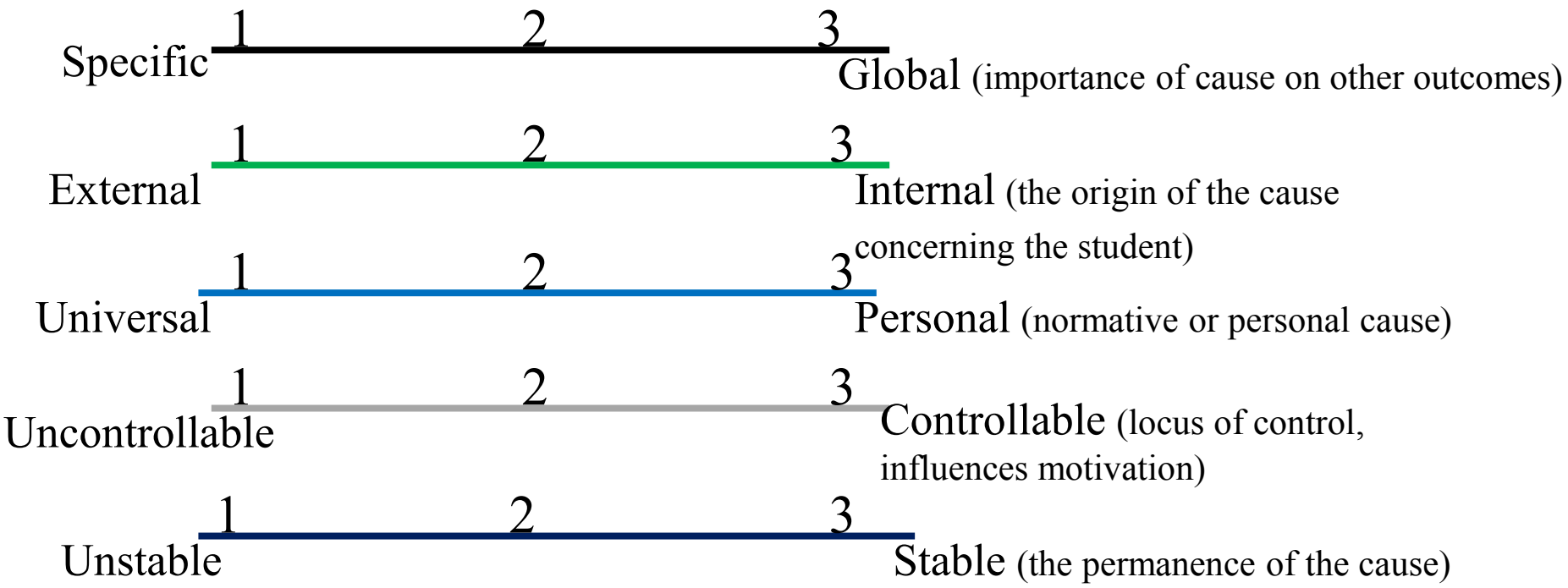
Coding along attributional dimensions

(Leeds Attributional Coding System, Sylvester (2004))



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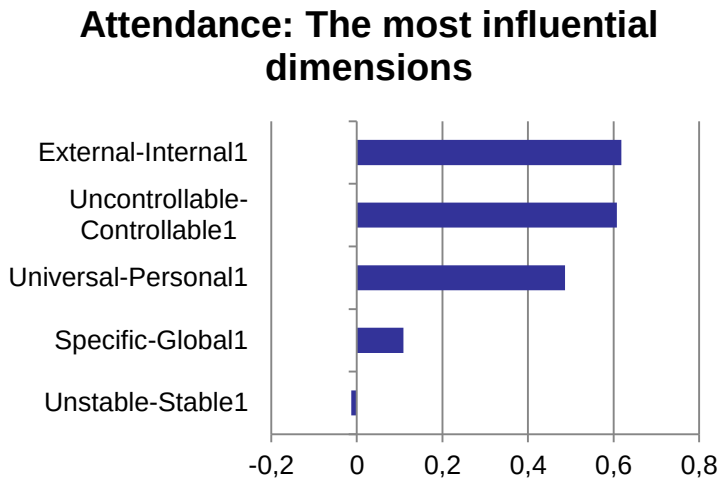
Organizing of data to prepare for regression analyses

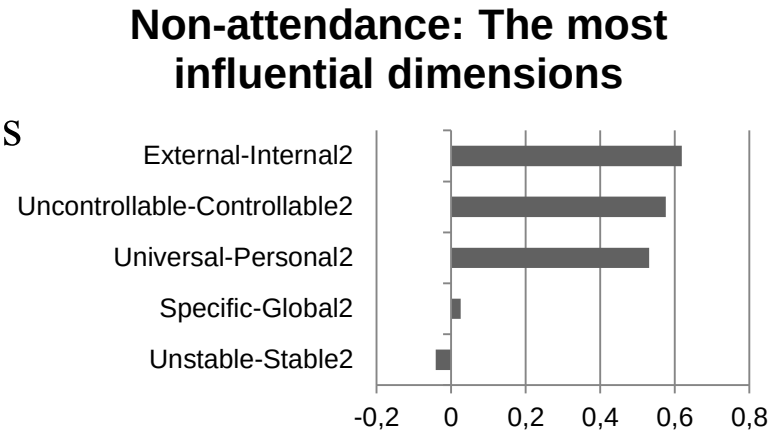
Respondents	Agent1 (0=other, 1=self)	Ustable-Stable1	Specific-Global1	External-Internal 1	Universell-Personlig1	Uncontrollable-Controllable1	AI	Agent2 (0=other, 1=self)	Unstable-Stable2	Spesific-Global2	External-Internal2	Universal-Personal2	Uncontrollable-Controllable2	NAI	Class level	Gender (1=Kvinne)	Age
1F32M	0	3	2	1	2	1	26	0	3	2	1	2	3	51	2	1	3
2M13M	0	3	2	2	2	1	38	0	3	3	1	2	1	33	3	2	1
3F11Ø	0	3	2	2	2	1	38	0	3	2	1,5	2,5	2	50	1	1	1
4F13Ø	0	3	2	1	2	1	26	0	2	2	1	3	1	36	3	1	1
5F11M	1	3	2	3	2	3	76	0	3	2	1,5	2,5	2,5	57	1	1	1

An index is a single, composite variable calculated from several other variables. We calculated two indexes:
Attendance Index (AI) and Non-Attendance Index (NAI) which were used as dependent variables in regression analyses

50% of the students attributed to themselves



20 - 30% of the students attributed to themselves



First year students

Attendance Index (AI)*			Non-attendance index (NAI)*		
1. Year**	2. Year	3. Year	1. Year*	2. Year	3. Year
58%	50%	51%	37%	32%	34%

* The index scales are constructed to vary from 0 to 100% with 100% meaning exclusively attributing to oneself; the higher the percentage the more self-attribution

** The correlation between AI and NAI was higher and stronger for First Year Students (.368) than for Second and Third Year students (.266 and .293 respectively)

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Theoretical framework

Attribution theory

The way students explains an event influence upon their decisions and behavior (among others H. Kelley)

Locus of control (originally Julian B. Rotter)

- **Refers to the extent to which students believes that they can control events affecting them (internal or external locus of control)**

Perceived self-efficacy (Albert Bandura)

Refers to judgement of own capability (universal – personal, uncontrollable – controllable)

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Conclusion

- **With respect to attendance, about 50% of the students attributed to themselves while only 20 – 30% attributed to themselves for non-attendance**
- **The results indicate that First Year Students attribute more to themselves (Personal, Internal, and Controllable) for both attendance and non-attendance than Second and Third Year Students**
- **Due to comparatively high attributions to themselves combined with lack of systematics (patterns) concering the dimensions of stability and importance, we think it is feasible to influence First Year Students to increase their attendance and thereby their academic achievements**
- **Based on the theoretical framework of this study, our hypothesis is that the attribution patterns concerning attendance and non-attendance can be transferred to students' attribution tendencies in general**

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What to do

1. Mind-set interventions:

a) Growth of mind when struggling (Walton et al. 2015)

b) Sense of purpose with studying (Walton et al. 2015)

c) Last but not least: Grades as a function of attendance and participation

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Summary

Systematic attributions made by Bachelor business school students about their attendance and/or non-attencance at lectures were investigated. The survey included first, second and third year students. Data were gathered electronically by open-ended questions analyzed by attributional coding and both multivariate and univariate statistics. With respect to attendance and in particular non-attendance, the students extensively attributed to causes external to themselves. Due to lack of systematic stability of expressed causes and lack of systematic importance of expressed causes on other outcomes, it should be possible to influence students to take more control over their studies.

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