Self-serving Bias in Moroccan EFL University Teachers’ Attributions of Their Students’ Success and Failure

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Abstract

A heated debate has been going on recently on the universality of self-serving bias in causal attributions. One of the main reasons behind this debate is the scarcity of studies on self-serving bias in non-Western cultures. Previous studies in the Western world have provided evidence for self-serving bias in teachers’ and students’ explanations of learners’ achievement outcomes. However, emerging evidence from the East, especially from Japan, show that Western claims about the theory may not be universal. This study investigated the effect of self-serving bias on North African university teachers’ attributions and explanations of their students’ success and failure. A causal attribution scale for teachers (CAST) was distributed to 40 Moroccan EFL teachers to rank 26 attributions of success and failure. Using locus of control as an independent variable, the independent sample t-tests showed that Moroccan EFL teachers display self-serving bias only on causal attributions of success. Reversed bias was made for failure perceptions. Interesting implications are drawn for both research and classroom practice.

Keywords: Self-serving Bias, causal attributions, University teachers, EFL