

The Social Psychology of Intimate Relationships (2): Functions of Attributions in Marriage

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Fincham and colleagues (e. g., Fincham & O'Leary, 1983; Fincham & Bradbury, 1993) examined the relation between attributions and marital satisfaction in a series of empirical studies. The following hypotheses were tested in their studies. (a) Distressed spouses will make attributions for negative events that accentuate their impact, while they will make attributions for positive events that minimize their impact. (b) In contrast, nondistressed spouses will exhibit adaptive attributions. Experimental and correlational data documented the attribution-satisfaction association in marriage.

Fincham and Bradbury (Fincham & Bradbury, 1988; Bradbury & Fincham, 1990) proposed a comprehensive framework for integrating attributions, behavior and marital satisfaction. The framework emphasized the interpersonal expression of attributions. The relevance of the framework for future research and for marital therapy is discussed.