



ISSN: 2230-9926

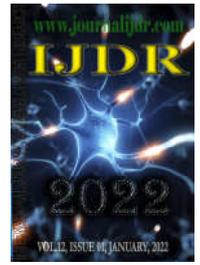
Available online at <http://www.journalijdr.com>

IJDR

International Journal of Development Research

Vol. 12, Issue, 01, pp. 53409-53412, January, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.37118/ijdr.23819.01.2022>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS

BRIEF CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT EMOTIONS

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 10th October, 2021

Received in revised form

28th November, 2021

Accepted 17th December, 2021

Published online 30th January, 2022

Key Words:

Emotions, Emotional Intelligent, Schemes.

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ABSTRACT

This study presents considerations about emotions, review some authors and definitions. The objective is to show how is so important to understand and study emotion and allow new studies in this area.

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Citation: Patrícia Maria de Azevedo Pacheco, Luis Antônio Monteiro Campos, Deodato Alves Ferreira Filho, Claudia Brandão Behar, Diogo Bonioli Alves Pereira, Beatriz Azevedo Pacheco Cardoso, Alberto Abad and Scheila Farias de Paiva. "Brief considerations about emotions", *International Journal of Development Research*, 12, (01), 53409-53412.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years the world has been going through a time of strong tension, fear, insecurity, and great losses due to the various waves of covid-19, intensely affecting both the individual and the collectivity and requiring drastic sanitary measures, combined with the great power of adaptation, and overcoming adversities that, when precarious or non-existent, can cause intense consequences from the point of view of mental health quality of life of the population. Personal reactions to environmental events are a factor of great relevance in determining the quality of life and well-being of the individual, directly influencing personal satisfaction and happiness. It is, therefore, of fundamental importance that the individual himself understands the factors and characteristics that constitute his mental functioning, because not knowing the dynamics of this functioning would allow cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions to become automatic and incomprehensible, making it impossible to properly develop them. Automatic reactions would put the individual at a disadvantage at a time as difficult as the pandemic, still ongoing.

Automatic reactions to environmental demands include a high risk of emotional avalanches, accompanied by intense and dysfunctional behavioral reactions, intensely compromising the quality of life, and increasing the risk of causing severe psychopathologies. In this context, resilience – understood as the ability to overcome adversity – and tolerance to frustration are important factors for maintaining mental health and for a happy and productive life (Del Prette, 2017). It is a fact that human beings have an intense emotional experience, and this adds color to everyday life. Emotions add an important tone to interactions, helping both social and work life. Even memories are marked by the emotion that presents itself as a powerful catalyst for everything we have stored in our mental files and are powerful assistants to the processes of encoding, storage, and evocation of information (Izquierdo, 2018). Situations of strong emotional tone, both positive and negative, are more easily stored by memory, precisely because of the importance that such an event presents, causing, often, to form the memories in flash, characterized by perfect and detailed records of the moment lived. Emotions are complex phenomena that encompass biological and cognitive aspects

(Gazzaniga, 2018), serving as mediators of social interactions. They give indications – although often mistaken if the individual is unaware of his own functioning mental – of how to interact with others daily. In this context, it is important to make a good reading of the social environment, the interlocutors and d, and their own emotional state to maximize the chances of success in achieving the objectives proposed in these interactions. These factors make the emotional experience of the individual, self-knowledge, and ability to elaborate and respond emotionally are extremely important factors at all times and in all spheres of life, becoming even more important in times of crisis as those crossed by humanity today. Emotions are powerful forces that help in maintaining our own lives. Important evolutionary theorists, such as Darwin (2019), saw them as a genetically programmed function in animals for survival purposes. One can take as an example such a statement of Darwin's own fear. It is important to be afraid, since several things can hurt physical integrity and endanger the survival of the individual, thus making protective measures. In daily life emotions prepare for action, initiating responses due to environmental stimulation. (Gazzaniga, 2018).

An example of such a function of emotions is when you experience an emergency such as a robbery, a ferocious animal loose, an accident, or even a group of people running as if you were running away from something. Immediately emotions prepare the organism for the fight or flight reaction and orchestrate various physiological changes that will allow reactions for such purposes – to escape or fight. The occurrence of situations like these during life allows learning patterns of responses to similar situations in the future, shaping behavior. It is important to emphasize that such a function, which is highly adaptive and aims at protection can lead to dysfunctional reactions, when, by traumatic experiences, the individual develops unnecessary emotional and behavioral reactions, both in terms of location or object and in terms of intensity. This is the case, for example, of phobias, which are disproportionate fear reactions to their object, and which have developed at some point in the subject's history due to dysfunctional learning that lasts to the present day in the life of the individual (Gazzaniga, 2018; Lombard-Platet, 2015). Often such learning is replaced by others more adaptive and stronger than them, other times, however, the problem is so intense and compromises both the quality of life and mobility of the person who is necessary to seek professional help. Resorting to professional assistance to overcome the damage caused by traumatic learning, which evokes intense emotional reactions, is a wise and appropriate decision of those who care about their own well-being and quality of life.

The important function of emotions is to help and interact more effectively with others (Gazzaniga, 2018). Communicating to our interlocutors what we are feeling is fundamental to the quality of our social relationships. This communication occurs both through verbal behavior - what we say - and through nonverbal behavior - characterized by the tone of voice; body posture; speech speed; silences; look or deviation of the gaze; pauses in speech, etc., making emotions visible to others. These behaviors can serve as a signal to peers, promoting a more effective and appropriate social interaction. Emotions are complex elements that include subjective, behavioral, and physiological components (Reeve, 2019). The experience of emotion has great cultural influence, requiring subjective components to be contextualized culturally. Such components involve the experience of emotion that can be classified as pleasant, neutral, or unpleasant. In addition to the influence of culture, individual characteristics also influence the experience of emotion. The same emotion can be classified as being pleasant to one person and unpleasant to another. Thus, when dealing with someone's emotional experience we should always consider the particularities of this person when experiencing emotions. This is an area in which there is no right or wrong but the experience of each one, the result of their genetics, their history, their learning, and the relationships established in the present moment. This experience, the way each one

experiences emotion, activates another factor of emotions that is the behavioral factor, involving the individual's reactions to the emotion experienced. Reactions include the individual's facial expressions, gestures, and actions. In most cases these reactions are good indicators of the subjective experience of emotions although there are people who can intensely disguise what they feel, giving no indication to their interlocutor how to react and, thus, hindering the good progress of social relations. Although some individuals can voluntarily change the behavioral component of emotions, they are rare to do so with the physiological component. Emotions activate the autonomic nervous system causing intense organic reactions (Reeve, 2019). Even in this area, the subjective component is present, considering that some consider such organic reactions pleasant and even desirable while others consider them unpleasant trying to avoid them to the fullest. A good example of this phenomenon is people's reaction to adventure sports, which evoke strong emotions, or to the radical toys of an amusement park, such as roller coasters or other toys that challenge the laws of physics. Many consider them wonderful and go several times in search of the emotional activation they provide, and others consider them terrifying avoiding them to the fullest. Emotional activation causes the autonomic nervous system to change intensely to supply the energy that the individual may need now to deal with the situation that caused the emotion. It is important to consider here that not only bad or radical events promote all this emotional and organic change that we refer to.

Although it is difficult to identify and name emotions this is a task of fundamental importance to deal properly with them (Goleman, 1996). Emotional education is a task for parents to help their children name their feelings and adequately express all emotional states. A big mistake is trying to suppress an emotion by deeming it less noble or even harmful as often happens with anger, fear or jealousy. Emotion is an important constituent factor of our nature and, as such, cannot and should not be neglected, on the contrary, it must be properly identified and channeled. Due to problems in emotional education, some people have great difficulties in recognizing and dealing with their own emotions, having a very poor vocabulary to identify them and, consequently, presenting difficulties in naming what they are feeling now, which has been causing great problems in the affective coping of days as difficult as those experienced in the current pandemic. Although childhood is a timely time for emotional education, it can be performed at any stage of life (Goleman, 1996), if it did not occur satisfactorily in childhood. Often parents cannot realize such an important activity because they have disabilities in this area themselves or because they are so overwhelmed and stressed by everyday activities that they cannot have the time to perform it, leaving it to third parties or understanding that the school will be able to do so, which does not occur. Emotional education occurs in everyday life, in everyday situations, from within the home, requiring time, attention, and a lot of patience.

Given the complexity of the theme, defining what emotions are is not an easy task. For this reason, there is still no consensus definition of emotions, and the various existing theories generate warm and passionate debates, well conducive to the theme in question (Reeve, 2019; Gazzaniga, 2018). Scholars in the area try to differentiate emotions, affections, and mood states. They characterize emotions as intense and brief states; the mood states as longer-lasting, diffuse, and bland, and affection as an emotional tone of pleasure or displeasure. Studies in the area also differentiate emotions in primary and secondary to investigate all the richness of this area of our life. Primary emotions are those shared among people all over the world regardless of culture, being easily identifiable. Secondary emotions are those found in one or more cultures, but not in all. They can be subtle blends of primary emotions and unfold in many emotional states. Although there is no consensus between the relationship of primary and secondary emotions a currently accepted pattern was the cross-cultural studies conducted by Ekman and Izard that advocates the existence of six primary emotions (happiness, surprise, sadness, fear, disgust, and anger), some psychologists include love on this list

(Reeve, 2019). Anxiety, which is also often mentioned, is, in turn, characterized by an anticipation of the danger that generates fear, with a tendency to dodge or escape. Secondary emotions, according to Damásio (2012), are influenced by society and culture, such as shame, jealousy, guilt, compassion, sympathy, pride, envy, admiration, contempt, and gratitude, these are considered social and resulting from learning. Damásio's studies also include a third category of emotions, background emotions such as well-being or malaise, calm, or tension. These background emotions are mainly perceived through non-verbal communication, also called paralanguage, such as body posture, speed and contour of movements, minimal changes in the amount and speed of eye movements, and the degree of contraction of facial muscles that characterize the facial expressions of emotions. For a long time, psychology has been dedicated to the study of negative emotions to take care of the consequences generated by them, however, a few decades ago this scenario has gradually changed with the development of Positive Psychology (Seligman, 2019) a movement of researchers to focus on the potentially healthy aspects of the person, the study of human strengths and virtues with special attention to subjective well-being and happiness. According to Seligman, one of the main authors of this area of psychology, well-being can be measured through five factors: positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships, and achievement. One of the main objectives of positive psychology is to develop human potential and well-being, helping the individual to build a pleasurable, engaged, and senseless life. This goal certainly involves, among other things, the recognition of emotions and the development of emotional intelligence.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence is the term coined by D. Goleman (1996) and used to jointly name the intra- and interpersonal intelligence proposed by H. Gardner in his theory of multiple intelligences developed in 1985 as an alternative to the concept of intelligence as an innate, general, and unique ability. In his research Gardner initially identified linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligence. According to this author, no one is fully well developed in all types of intelligence, but no one is totally devoid of them, and there are areas where we would, of course, have further development. The good news of this theory is that one can, at any time, develop any of the types of intelligence identified by him. In the current pandemic context, the interest falls on personal intelligence, called together, of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1996) and that comprises the ability to deal with everyday conflicts, the volume, and control of their anxieties and anxieties, understanding and understanding others, characteristics necessary for overcoming moments as difficult as those faced today, even if sometimes you face very adverse situations involving very intense losses. Psychology, especially cognitive behavioral therapy, has long emphasized the intimate relationship between thought, emotion, and behavior. Important theoretical cognitive therapy, such as Albert Ellis and Aaron Beck, state that the emotional and behavioral reactions of the human being are responses to the way we interpret the situations we go through in our daily life (Rangé, 2011). In this way it is thought, the way one interprets, and not the situation itself, which is the trigger for emotional and behavioral activation that so often surprises everyone.

All the time the individual attributes meaning to his immediate reality, to the situations and events that occur in his day today. This interpretation of reality, and not reality itself, is the key piece for understanding the emotional experience and behavioral reaction of the subject (Rangé, 2011). To understand the nature of such interpretations it is important to consider that the individual builds a complex cognitive structure during his development, from an early age. The world must be chaotic for a baby, an avalanche of incomprehensible and simultaneous stimuli. An important function of

mental development is to gradually attribute order to chaos. Transforming the once incomprehensible stimuli into family members to deal with them. In this development process the baby is constructing mental images, also called mental schemes (Piaget, 2018), relationships, people, objects, and developing ways to interact with these elements. This construction is a continuous process that begins with birth and lasts throughout life, however long it may be. All the time are built the most and most mental schemes to account for the complex reality that we find ourselves inserted. Such schemes function as mental shortcuts (Gazzaniga, 2018) that help traffic in the world because, in this way, it is not necessary to analyze situations by situation lived. Thus, relatively stable forms of representing and interpreting the environmental stimuli and events to which we are routinely submitted are constructed, using as a sieve of interpretation such schemes already formed previously. It is important to emphasize here that the schemes can be created, modified, expanded, or extinguished due to the process of social interaction to which we are continuously submitted, which can gradually also change the interpretations we make of situations and, consequently, our emotional and behavioral reactions (Rangé, 2011).

Schemes: The schemes, in turn, are formed by various beliefs, characterized as extremely strong ideas, as truths developed by the subject and that guide all their relationships in the world (Beck, 2013), including ideas about the self itself, about others, and about the world in general. It is noted, therefore, that the development of beliefs is highly adaptive because it helps to deal with reality more economically and quickly, the problem is that, often, due to adverse experiences during life, dysfunctional beliefs develop, which go against the adaptation function they have and create difficulties for the individual since they will influence emotions and behavior not in the most adaptive way possible but in a maladaptive way, creating difficulties and suffering. These beliefs can be called dysfunctional beliefs or dissipative beliefs, generating reactions of the same content. Albert Ellis, the cognitivist author is emphatic in stating that much of the afflictions of the human being are generated by himself and that, is necessary to recognize this tendency as being a personal characteristic (Lipp, 2019). Personal characteristic does not mean that it is pathology or that it is typical of a person inferior to others, on the contrary, Ellis states that this is a natural characteristic of the human being. He also says that it is possible to re-educate this way of thinking, feeling, and acting, developing a solid personal philosophy that helps us to believe that we can face all situations, however terrible, inconvenient, or unfair they may seem.

Final Consideration

Life rarely offers shortcuts or magical solutions and often, as in today, puts us in limited situations. This way, efforts must be made to achieve the changes and life that are desired. Suffering and discomfort are inherent to human existence but can be faced constructively, using all the knowledge generated by science, committed to offering means for a better quality of life.

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