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Categorization of Emotions

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The categorization of emotions has long been a hot subject of debate in different fields of psychology, affective science and emotion research. Some theorists approach the categorization of emotions in terms of discreteness while others come up with the groupings on a dimensional basis.

The banner features the Explorable logo and the text 'Quiz Time!' in a white, handwritten-style font. Below this, there are three quiz cards arranged horizontally. Each card has a white border and a central image. The first card shows a pair of red roller skates on a wooden deck, with the text 'Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2' below it. The second card shows a fan of colorful pencils, also with the text 'Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2' below it. The third card shows a Ferris wheel at sunset, with the text 'Quiz: Flags in Europe' below it. To the right of the cards is a white button with the text 'See all quizzes =>' in red.

Basicity Approach

Emotions that are categorized according to their discrete attributes often fall into two opposing groups: basic emotions and complex emotions. Deemed as biologically fixed, basic emotions are those emotions that are common to all human beings, as well as in many animals. Complex emotions emerge from basic emotions [1] and are the “refined versions” of such. They are more distinctive and culturally specific than basic emotions. However, it is still a matter of debate as to how emotions could be categorized as either basic or complex. Researchers rely on common labels among various languages, characteristic physiological symptoms and facial expressions in identifying basic emotions.

In 1972, Paul Ekman proposed that there were six basic emotions: anger, fear, disgust, happiness, surprise and sadness. After conducting more research studies, Ekman expanded on his list of basic emotions, proposing that the following are also universal to all people: contentment, amusement, embarrassment, contempt, guilt, excitement, relief, pride in achievement, satisfaction, shame and sensory pleasure.

Dimensional Approach

The father of modern psychology, Wilhelm Max Wundt proposed in 1897 that there were three dimensions of emotions: (1) strain versus relaxation, (2) arousing versus subduing, and (3) pleasurable versus unpleasurable. Several years later, psychologist Harold Schlosberg built on the work of Wundt by proposing his own three dimensions of emotions: (1) level of activation, (2) attention-rejection, and (3) pleasantness-unpleasantness. PAD emotional state model is another three-dimensional approach by Mehrabian and Russell. It makes use of scales to measure emotions in three dimensions: (1) pleasure versus displeasure, (2) arousal versus non-arousal, and (3) dominance versus submissiveness. Yet another popular dimensional model was proposed by James Russell in 1977. Unlike the earlier three-dimensional models, Russell's model features only two dimensions which include (1) arousal and (2) valence (or pleasantness).

While the four aforementioned models are well-cited in the field of psychology, the three-dimensional model of Robert Plutchik is one of the most popularly used models today. The model shows emotions being represented by concentric circles that are divided into two kinds: inner or basic circles and outer or complex circles.

A physiologic approach to emotions, the Cube of Emotion was recently proposed by Lövheim in 2011. According to this model, the different levels of noradrenaline, dopamine and serotonin directly influence the eight basic emotions. The combination of these signal substances lead to the emergence of a specific emotion. For instance, the combination of high dopamine, high noradrenaline and low serotonin levels lead to anger.

Source URL: <https://explorable.com/categorization-of-emotions>

Links

[1] <http://subcortex.com/WhichEmotionsAreBasicPrinz.pdf>