

THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONS IN CULTURAL CONSTRUCTIONS

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Annotation: *This paper of "the importance of emotions in cultural constructions" explores the role of emotions in shaping and defining cultural norms, values, and behaviors. It delves into how different cultures perceive and express emotions, and how these emotional constructs influence social interactions, relationships, and identity formation.*

It also examines the impact of cultural diversity on emotional experiences and the ways in which emotions are used to convey meaning, establish power dynamics, and maintain social order within specific cultural contexts. Additionally, it may address the influence of cultural constructions of emotions on mental health, communication styles, and conflict resolution strategies. Overall, this theme highlights the significance of emotions in shaping cultural identities and societal norms, and the need for cross-cultural understanding and empathy in navigating emotional differences.

A large body of anthropological and psychological research on emotions has yielded significant evidence that emotional experience is culturally constructed: people more commonly experience those emotions that help them to be a good and typical person in their culture. Moreover, experiencing these culturally normative emotions is associated with greater well-being. In this coursework, we summarize recent research showing how emotions are actively constructed to meet the demands of the respective cultural environment; we discuss collective as well as individual processes of construction. By focusing on cultural construction of emotion, we shift the focus toward how people from different cultures 'do' emotions and away from which emotions they 'have'.

Anthropological and psychological research on emotions has yielded sample evidence suggesting that emotional experience is culturally constructed. First, The most frequent and intense emotions differ by cultural context And in each context central emotions are those that help individuals to be a good personal and act in desirable ways. For instance, anger help individuals to achieve personal goals and therefore tends to be more frequent in cultures that collectively value individual goal pursuit compared to cultures that are organized around interpersonal harmony. Similarly, the contents and connotations of particular emotions fit cultural meanings and help to achieve cultural goals. For instance, happiness is a personal hedonic experience in the U.S., Where it signals and helps to achieve success; in comparison, happiness has social and ambivalent elements in Japan, Rendering it more conducive to harmony-focused relationships. In addition, the patterns of emotional experience appear to be culturally normative: when people reported their

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Emotion signal flaws in the person's anticipation systems, or in other words, in aspects of models of how the world works. As these models are essentially shared in society, emotional challenges experienced by any individual are of relevance to the community of others. Emotions emerge at the heart of the individual experience, the only place where collective knowledge can be tested against the world. Once felt, emotions generate a cascade of psychological facts: compelling concern, cognitive work, social sharing, and propagation of the social sharing. The larger the fault detected, the more intense the emotion, the more intensive the cognitive work it generates, and the broader the social sharing of the episodic information. Through the social sharing of emotions, common knowledge is updated and enriched. Whether emotion is universal or social is a recurrent issue in the history of emotion study among psychologists. Some researchers view emotion as a universal construct, and that a large part of emotional experience is biologically based. However, emotion is not only biologically determined, but is also influenced by the environment. Therefore, cultural differences exist in some aspects of emotions, one such important aspect of emotion being emotional arousal level. All affective states are systematically represented as two bipolar dimensions, valence and arousal. Arousal level of actual and ideal emotions has consistently been found to have cross-cultural differences. In Western or individualist culture, high arousal emotions are valued and promoted more than low arousal emotions. Mechanism of these cross-cultural differences and implications are also discussed. Whether emotion is universal or social is a recurrent issue in the history of

emotion study among psychologists. Some researchers view emotion as a universal construct and that a large part of emotional experience is biologically based. However, culture also influences emotion in various ways. Culture constrains how emotions are felt and expressed in a given cultural context. It shapes the ways people should feel in certain situations and the ways people should express their emotions. In a large number of studies, some aspects of emotion have been shown to be culturally different, because emotion is not only biologically determined, but also influenced by environment, and social or cultural situations. The role of culture in emotion experience has also been stressed in sociology theories. For example, Shott argued that to experience emotion, people first experience physiological arousal and then they label this arousal as emotion. In this process, culturally defined and provided emotion words are used. Some other examples of emotional aspects that have cultural differences are ways of emotion expression, ways of facial expression and recognition of emotions, nature of emotions commonly experienced, and affect valuation. Cultural differences in various aspects of emotion have been studied and reported.

Now, what is culture and how is it defined? In cross-cultural psychology, culture is referred to as "shared elements that provide the standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, communicating, and acting among those who share a language, a historic period, and a geographic location." Since Markus and Kitayama published a monumental paper on comparisons of the self between the West and the East, most cross-cultural studies have compared Western versus Eastern cultures. Eastern culture commonly indicates culture of East Asian countries such as Korea, Japan, and China. Western culture includes the culture of North American and Western European countries.

By contrast, Easterners construe self as fundamentally connected to, and interdependent on, others. This is called interdependent self-construal. For those who have interdependent self-construal, the core unit of society is the group. In addition, individuals must adjust to the group so that society's harmony is maintained. For this reason, Eastern culture is identified as collectivist culture. In a collectivistic cultural atmosphere, individuals try to modify themselves and not influence others to fit in the groups they are in. Although, in both individualist and collectivist cultures, all individuals have both independent and interdependent self-construals, each culture normally encourages to more strongly cultivate its promoted self-construal than the other. Emotions with different arousal levels have different purposes or functions. Moreover, high arousal emotions such as joy or anger are known to amplify the nervous system in various ways. By contrast, low arousal emotions are enervated states that prepare inaction or rest. Cross-cultural differences in emotional arousal level have consistently been found. Western culture is related to high arousal emotions, whereas Eastern culture is related to low arousal emotions. These cultural differences are explained by the distinct characteristics of individualist and collectivist cultures. In Western culture, people try to influence others. For this purpose, high arousal emotions are ideal and effective. By contrast, in Eastern culture, adjusting and conforming to other people is considered desirable. To meet this goal, low arousal emotions work better than high arousal emotions.

In fact, in terms of positively valenced emotions, the arousal level of ideal affect differs by cultures. Ideal affect, or "affective state that people ideally want to feel" is important

because people are motivated to behave in certain ways so that they feel the emotions they want to experience. Therefore, people in certain culture tend to experience the emotional state that are considered to be ideal in their culture. Tsai argued that Westerners value high arousal emotions more than Easterners, so they promote activities that elicit high arousal emotions. Even children of the West learn through storybooks that high arousal emotions are ideal, and the opposite is true for children of the East. Conception of happiness is also different in arousal level by culture. Owing to the cultural difference in the norm about emotional arousal level, differences in the actual arousal levels of emotional experience also emerge. In fact, Kacen and Lee conducted a cross-cultural study comparing Caucasians and Asians. Researchers used an arousal scale composed of four bipolar items, which consists of emotion adjectives representing different arousal levels. Emotion items in the arousal scale were stimulated-relaxed, calm-excited, frenzied-sluggish and unaroused-aroused. The result showed that Caucasians were more likely to be in high arousal emotional states than Asians, whereas Asians were more likely to be in low arousal emotional states. In addition, Tsai and colleagues reported that the closer the participants to American rather than Chinese cultural orientation, the higher their cardiovascular arousal level during interpersonal tasks.

Furthermore, cultural differences are also found in physiological and behavioral aspects of emotion. Research conducted by Scherer at all showed that Japanese participants, compared with American and European participants, reported significantly fewer physiological symptoms. Mesquita and Frijda suggested that one possible explanation is that their physiological reactions in emotions are actually different. In addition, behaviors corresponding to emotional arousal level differ by culture.

In conclusion, while emotions are universal, the experience of emotion is highly idiosyncratic. We are not made angry by the same experiences, we do not feel anger to the same intensity, and we do not express anger in the same way. We are shaped by our culture, our peer groups, and our individual experience. It is also difficult to define emotions that are "normal" or "socially acceptable" - which itself is a redundancy as what is "normal" is determined in a social context. What is acceptable in one culture or group is not acceptable in another. To be accepted as normal, or to avoid being shunned as abnormal, requires patient observation to learn the norms of a group and tailor one's behavior accordingly.

And it is largely because of this group normalization and the tailoring of individual behavior that emotion is a social phenomenon rather than an individual one. We seldom express what we truly feel without considering whether it is acceptable in a group setting - and those that express their genuine emotion at all times may find it difficult to integrate into any society.

This works both ways: a social group who finds the emotional expression of an individual to be unacceptable may shun that person, but a person who finds the demands of a group in regard to emotional expression to be uncomfortable may decide not to become a member of that group. There is a quick summary so some of the major points from previous chapters, which may be superficial and redundant. Emotions are often perceived as something that happens to us, but is not chosen by us - but they are by products of things

we choose to believe. We are generally not aware of our emotions until we have begun experiencing them, and the lag may between feeling an emotion and being aware of it may be significant. Most emotions have an evolutionary basis - they evolve from personal interests first, and from societal interests second. We learn to be emotional from our peers, first in the family and then in greater society.

Feeling an emotion is individual. Expressing an emotion is social: it signals others how we are feeling to influence their behavior. Because emotions have the capacity to affect the behavior of others, we have learned to falsify emotions in order to influence others to act in our interest. People are generally good at detecting the emotions of others, but not as adept at detecting when another person is sending false emotional signals.

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