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THE PROCESS OF SIGNIFICATION OF EMOTIONS IN A SOCIAL-CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVE: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

IL PROCESSO DI SIGNIFICAZIONE DELLE EMOZIONI IN UNA PROSPETTIVA SOCIO COSTRUTTIVISTA: IMPLICAZIONI PER LA PRATICA EDUCATIVA

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Abstract
The socio-constructivist approach is the mainstream theoretical framework orientating the institutional mandate of most education and training organizations. Many aspects of analysis, design, intervention, and evaluation currently refer to the ecological model, the construction of meanings and intersubjectivity. According to a socio-constructivist perspective, emotions represent an aspect strictly connected to the social life of individuals and are the result of a complex process that involves biological, psychological, behavioural, and socio-cultural factors. Understanding emotional processes should therefore focus on the relationship between emotion and culture, considering how cultural factors and social experience can influence the way emotions are expressed, encoded, and interpreted. However, in educational contexts, the social dimension of emotions is often framed within a precise framework of meanings and interpreted using rigidly applied emotion categorization schemes. Starting from these premises, the present work aims to investigate through an exploratory survey, the process of emotional signification from a socio-cultural perspective. The results show reveal that the semantic field of emotions is highly heterogeneous, and that there is a considerable subjective and cultural component in their process of signification. Finally, it highlights the critical need to deconstruct the concept of emotional categorization in educational practices.

L'approccio socio-costruttivista si costituisce come framework teorico nei mandati istituzionali delle organizzazioni che operano nell'area dell'educazione e della formazione. Molti aspetti di analisi, progettazione, intervento e valutazione fanno oggi riferimento a modelli ecologici, alla costruzione di significati e all'intersoggettività. Secondo una prospettiva socio-costruttivista, le emozioni rappresentano un aspetto strettamente collegato alla vita sociale degli individui e sono il risultato di un processo complesso che implica il coinvolgimento di fattori di tipo biologico, psicologico, comportamentale e socioculturale. La comprensione dei processi emotivi si dovrebbe dunque focalizzare sul rapporto che intercorre tra emozione e cultura, considerando come i fattori culturali e l'esperienza sociale possono influenzare il modo in cui le emozioni sono espresse, codificate e interpretate. Tuttavia nei contesti educativi la dimensione sociale delle emozioni spesso viene inquadrata all'interno di una cornice precisa di significati e interpretata attraverso l'utilizzo di schemi di categorizzazione delle emozioni applicati in maniera rigida. Partendo da queste premesse, il presente lavoro si propone di indagare attraverso un questionario esplorativo il processo di significazione delle emozioni, in una prospettiva socio-culturale. I risultati evidenziano come il campo

[1] Il saggio è da intendersi quale esito del lavoro congiunto dei due autori. Tuttavia a Caterina Bembich vanno attribuiti l'introduzione, le conclusioni ed i paragrafi 1 e 2; ad Andrea Gaspardo il paragrafo 3 e i relativi sotto paragrafi.

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semantico delle emozioni sia molto vario e come vi sia nel loro processo di significazione una notevole componente soggettiva e culturale e mettono in luce la necessità di rileggere in chiave critica il concetto di categorizzazione delle emozioni nelle prassi educative.

Keywords
Emotions, Cognition, Education, Socio-Constructivism, Processes of signification
Emozioni, Cognizione, Educazione, Socio-Costruttivismo; Processi di significazione

Introduction

Each of us, during our life and growth paths, experience through our emotional lives the deepest sense of our own subjectivity: a significant flow of experiences that are sometimes intimate, sometimes social, pleasant, unpleasant, intense, involving. With regards to their intrinsic subjectivity, Russell stated that "everyone knows what an emotion is until they are asked to define it" (Fehr, Russell 1984, cit. in De Marco, Raviolo, 2012, p. 22).
Although emotion is perceived today as a fundamental part of the personality, it partially overlaps with the concept of "passion", which has the same root as "passive" and "pathos". The idea behind passion– and thus behind emotions – is that it is something that happens to us, not something we do (Averill, 2017).
Although we currently recognize a strong social connotation in emotional experience, for a long-time emotions have been interpreted mostly in the light of their biological and physiological functions, as a response given by external stimuli: thus, they have been described in terms of facial movements, hormonal, biochemical, and physiological responses (Hahn, Kleinman, 1983). These approaches did not consider the social and intentional aspects that link emotions to their context, ignoring de facto the intersubjective dimension that determines the process of the meaning of emotions.
This view, however, evolved towards new conceptual paradigms. Already in the 1980s in the context of the study of emotions, new investigative scenarios began to open: consideration began to be given to "social objects", deriving from a complex intertwining that connects individual, cultural and relational aspects. Scholars began to posit emotions as socially constructed processes, the expression and understanding of which occurs through processes of exchange, interaction, and discovery within a cultural fabric (Bruni, 2021).
Research on emotions therefore began to move towards a socio-anthropological perspective: emotions being understood as a complex aspect of the social and personal life of individuals, which can consequently be comprehended only through assuming a complex and systemic perspective. In fact, they derive from a complex interweaving of factors, which include both individual aspects linked to cognitive functioning, and social, cultural, and relational factors (Lutz, & White, 1986).
Understanding emotional processes therefore passes through the analysis of the relationship between emotion and culture, and how social experience and cultural influences can affect the way in which emotions are expressed, codified, and interpreted. Emotions therefore become the subject of anthropological research that focuses attention on the cultural significance of the emotional experience.
The concepts that express emotions represent a bridge between the internal emotional and the social worlds, and are expressed through a language that defines and negotiates the social relations of one's self (Lutz, 1987; Harré, 1986). Emotion is therefore understood as a process of social construction in which a particular value and meaning is attributed through acquired cultural models. Social contexts,

over time structure systems of beliefs and social norms that affect the way emotional language is expressed and understood. It follows that emotions can be understood if contextualized and read as social phenomena.
The conceptualization of emotions encodes specific social information, that reflects the cultural representation and social situations that the individual has built up through their own experiences. Research has highlighted how there are cultural ways of thinking and consequently experiencing emotions that affect the way they are acted out in different contexts (Lakoff & Kövecses, 1986). Emotions can act as social mediators, as they emerge in social situations and influence both thinking and actions. Thus, the comprehension of emotions is a phenomenon that implies a continuous intertwining between the abstract component of thought and social situations.

1. The socio-constructivist perspective on emotions

Around the middle of the twentieth century, Young defined emotions as "dysfunctions that interfere with daily activity" (Young, 1943, cited in Robert et al., 2008, p. 322). During the second half of the century, some psychologists once again read emotions through a functional and evolutionary lens: viewing emotions as mediating between the body and the environment, capturing the relevance of environmental stimuli for the organism; providing information suitable for regulating the state of activation; connecting to the motivational system; shaping future behaviour; and intervening in non-verbal and paraverbal communication (Robert et al., 2008, p. 322).
However, already in 1980, James Averill had paved the way for a socio-constructivist view on emotions (Averill, 1980). At the end of that decade, the modular vision of the mind collapsed: research gradually became part of the complexity paradigm – beyond the input/output perspective – overcoming the isolation of systems, variables, and states. And in this sense, new models of the mind were constructed on which new research and theories have been developed that influence the way emotions are conceived (Frijda, 1986; Damasio 1995; Russell, 2003).
Averill (1980) viewed emotions as a social process involving a set of interdependent biological, psychological, behavioural, and sociocultural responses, which vary together in a systemic and polythetic way. Emotions are acquired during the socialization process: for example, children *play at being angry* (even if they are not) and their emotional experience is subjectively endowed with meaning only the first time they experience that emotion. This meaning is, therefore, the result of a negotiation between social expectations and subjective experience.
While not denying the contribution of physiological factors, Averill affirms that emotions can only be explained within a level of social analysis. For this reason, they are comparable to "transitory social roles"; that is, socially prescribed responses in certain situations, mediated by shared expectations. When a person attributes an emotion to themselves, they enter a transitory social role symbolized by the label they have applied to their behaviour. Quoting the father of social psychology, G. H. Mead, Averill highlights how the attitude of the entire social community – understood as the *generalized other* – also plays a considerable role in this labelling process (Mead, 1934, cited in Averill, 1980).
Russell (2009) underlines how emotions are the result of a complex process of construction, in which psychological, somatic, and social factors intervene:

> […] what gets psychologically constructed is not emotion as a generic process or anger, fear, etc., as generic kinds; rather, what gets psychologically constructed are individual token events, which may (or may not) then be classified as emotion, fear, anger and the like by means of a folk concept […] no one specific mechanism explains all, or even a good number, of cases called emotion. (Russell, 2009, p. 1267)

Therefore, Russell points out that there is no general or generalizable mechanism around the phenomenon of emotions. Rather, emotional episodes derive from a process of continuous construction, in which the sequence of events that compose them is reformulated each time, to adapt to the specific contextual situation.

> Regarding the *experience of having an emotion*, "persons sometimes feel afraid, angry, sad, and so on. […], I characterised this feeling as a meta-experience because the raw data on which it relies include other experiences: core affect, somatosensory feedback, appraisal of the eliciting event, attribution, beliefs, desires, plans, and behaviour. Similarly, Lambie and Marcel (2002) characterised the experience of having an emotion as a second-order experience - that is, an experience that emerges out of first-order experiences". (Russell, 2009, p. 1271)

Russell also introduces the concept of "*core affect*", defined as a kind of inner state that moves in a two-dimensional space of pleasure/displeasure and activation/deactivation. Although it is subjectively experienced as an emotion, it does not arise from emotions nor always influence what we call emotions. Instead, it responds to internal (diurnal cycles, hormones, immune responses, imagined or remembered events) and external (real-world events) states:

> There are too many such influences for a person to track them all and hence to know what caused his or her current core affect. So, although we often have a good idea of why we feel the core affect we do, we sometimes don't, as in free-floating emotions and moods and everyday feelings. For this reason, attributions and misattributions often play a role in emotional episodes (Neumann, 2000; Weiner, 1985 in Russell, 2009, p. 1266).

2. Processes of constructing the meaning of emotions and educational practice

Educational practice must consider emotions as an aspect intrinsically interconnected both with educational objectives and to the relational aspects that exist between the educator and the individual. Educational work therefore implies a reflection on the processes of constructing the meaning of emotions, that influences the way in which emotions are interpreted and manifested.

Debates that arose around the genesis of emotions divided the scientific community. Even today, although there is almost universal agreement on many basic assumptions, there are many unresolved issues that leave us far from generating an exhaustive explanation of all the phenomena related to different emotions (Cagol, 2019).

In the last thirty years, the educational sciences have accepted this complexity from a theoretical point of view, introjecting the most accredited and most recent theories, as well as part of the unanimously agreed assumptions, and in doing so integrating a sociocultural perspective on emotions.

This theoretical framework has deep implications for the design of educational activity. Indeed, if we consider emotions as the implementation of transitory social roles, we must be aware that to live the emotional experience, possessing the social capacity to enter into the role is necessary so that, from a social point of view, we can say that we're experiencing an emotion (Averill, 1980).

However, often in educational contexts the social dimension of emotions is located within a precise framework in which sometimes implicit rules are built; and this process defines what are the accepted forms of expression to which people must adhere. This choice sometimes results in a simplistic and superficial application of the theories underlying the models, in which the very subjective experience of emotions seems to result in a further request for a socially desired behaviour. The designs of pedagogical paths that aim at developing emotional skills often refer to emotion categorization schemes and a rigid labelling system, which render the intervention into a request for performance, rather than a learning or metacognition process (Cagol, 2019). To propose an educational alternative to this model, it is necessary to run through the most recent theories on emotions and the contributions

of constructivism that embrace a social vision of emotions, to try to develop a new perspective on the process of signification of the experiences and emotions that arise from them (Rezzonico & De Marco, 2012).
The construction of meaning around the experience of one's emotions, operates within a perspective in which there must always be awareness that the path of learning and emancipation is walked together (Freire, 1970), by investigating networks of shared meanings and cultures (De Giorgio, 2020, p. 147). The education of the person should be understood as facilitating and supporting the possibility that that person can become themselves and promote their culture (De Giorgio, 2020), in the deep conviction that we are all born with the curiosity to experience the world, ourselves and others, to also be part of the experience and experimentation of others. Emotions in this sense can guide us so that we can – within our social context – remain owners of our experience.
Under the socio-constructivist perspective, the processes of emotional regulation must therefore be investigated in a way that connects emotion, cognition, social context, giving space (physical, temporal, mental and relational) to the individual to have the opportunity to regain the deep experience of being in dialogue with one's internal state, experiencing one's feeling, expressing it and sharing it when they feel the pleasure of doing so (Rezzonico & De Marco, 2012). Educational practices should therefore restore that interrupted dialogue between subjectivity and sociality, where one can gradually return to gain direct experience of one's self in a context without demands, in which roles are loose, and educational asymmetry lies only in the responsibility of the setting and facilitates self-expression of experience.
Starting from these premises, the present work aims to investigate the processes of constructing the meaning of emotions in a socio-cultural perspective, problematizing the concept of the categorization of emotions. The survey thus poses the following research questions: how much do emotion categorization schemes reflect an attribution of meaning that is truly shared between people and how much does the subjective component affect the attribution of meaning to emotions? What are the consequent possible implications for educational practices?
To answer these questions, a sample of participants were asked to complete an online survey to classify a list of emotions and evaluate their degree of pleasure/displeasure and activation/deactivation associated with each of them.

3 Method

3.1 The survey

The research implied the generation of a survey to explore the processes of constructing the meaning of emotions. Through the proposed questions, we investigated how much homogeneity there is in the attribution of the meanings of emotions from a semantic point of view, and how much agreement there is in relation to the subjective meaning attributed to emotions in terms of pleasure and activation. The survey aims to explore the participants' point of view on the following two areas of investigation:

a. classification of emotions

Participants were asked to rank a list of emotions based on four choice categories (emotion, behaviour, mental state, and appraisal). The categories were identified by analysing the definition that the Italian dictionary *Devoto Oli* gives of every single emotion while identifying the terms used in a recurring manner to define them.
For the present research, 32 emotions present in the "Plutchik Flower" model, commonly considered useful and exhaustive, were extrapolated to investigate the categorization of emotions from a semantic point of view (Plutchik, 2001). The model organizes eight main emotions in graphic form

(joy, sadness, trust, disgust, anger, fear, surprise, and anticipation). Around them it specifies different grades of the same emotion, in a more or less intense way (*e.g.*, *ecstasy → joy → serenity*). From these eight emotions, it derives another eight that are formed from the combination of different basic emotions. For example, "love" comes from the sum of "joy" and "trust" (Plutchik, 2001).

b. assessment of the degree of pleasure/displeasure and activation/deactivation

Participants were asked to rate the emotions listed on a 5-point scale, for the level of pleasure/dis pleasure (1 = Fully unpleasant; 2 = Slightly unpleasant; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Slightly pleasant; 5 = Fully pleasant) and activation/deactivation (1 = Fully lethargic; 2 = Slightly lethargic; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Slightly energized; 5 = Fully energized); the option "I don't know how to answer" has been added.
The dimensions of pleasure/displeasure and activation/deactivation are identified in Russel's theory of "core affect"; which identifies a continuous two-dimensional space that problematizes every type of categorization on emotions. Precisely because it offers the possibility of identifying two numerical variables, this model is useful for investigating the degree of subjectivity around emotions (Russell, 2009).
The survey was set up using Google Modules, and propagated via e-mail, messaging and social media (Facebook and Instagram posts) among personal contacts, groups of educators and teachers. The survey was introduced through a brief explanation of the purpose of the research and the theoretical background of reference.

3.2 Participants

The survey was completed by 95 participants. More than half of the sample were aged between 41 and 60 years, and the entire sample was resident in Italy with 95% also born there. 87% of those who replied to the survey were women (there are only 12 men), while 52% of respondents work in the social area[2], and 63% had at least completed a three-year degree[3] (Table 1).

Gender (%)		Age (%)		Profession		Education years	
F	87,37%	20-30	8,42%	Social work	52,63%	10-12 years	4,26%
M	12,63%	31-40	14,74%	Not a social work	31,58%	13-15 years	31,91%
		41-50	25,26%	Retired	11,58%	16-18 years	34,04%
		More than 50	51,58%	Student	4,21%	19-21 years	24,47%

Table 1: descriptive data of the sample

3.3 Data analysis

The following data analysis were conducted:

a. classification of emotions

For each emotion identified in the list, the percentage of participants who categorized it as "emotion" (and not as behaviour, mental state, appraisal) was calculated.

[2] In this category have been included educators, psychologists, teachers, nurses.
[3] The level of education was calculated in years of education.

b. assessment of the degree of pleasure/displeasure and activation/deactivation

The indicators of pleasantness and activation originated two categorical variables ordered with five choices (plus a "no response" category). Each choice has been associated to a value ranging from -1 to 1 as shown in Table 2.

Activation/deactivation	Values	Pleasure/displeasure	Values
Fully lethargic	-1,0	Fully unpleasant	-1,0
Slightly lethargic	-0,5	Slightly unpleasant	-0,5
Neutral	0,0	Neutral	0,0
Slightly energized	0,5	Slightly pleasant	0,5
Fully energized	1,0	Fully pleasant	1,0

Table 2: Values assigned to choices' options

The average of the values was calculated for each emotion and for each dimension of the *core affect*. The average values position the emotions within the space defined by the *core affect*. In addition to the average, it was considered useful to calculate the standard deviation of the values to obtain the agreement's degree regarding the pleasure and activation of each emotion.

3.4 Results

a. classification of emotions

The participants classified the emotions identified in the survey in the category "emotion" in 37.14% of cases; in 24.57% as "behaviour"; in 25.10% as mental state and a residual percentage (11.05%) as "appraisal" (Table 3).

Category	%
Emotion	37,14%
Mental state	25,10%
Behaviour	24,57%
Appraisal	11,05%
N/A	2,14%

Table 3: Percentage of responses on the total set of emotions

As for the "emotion" category, the results show that not all the emotions identified in the survey were classified as such by a large percentage of participants. In fact, there was a lack of homogeneity in the attribution of meanings: only a low percentage of emotions (8 specifically) found broad agreement in participant responses, who in a good percentage classify them in the same category. On the other hand, the categorization of the remaining emotions found low agreement among the participants (Table 4).

Percentage of agreement	Number of emotions	Type of emotions identified
Less than 25%	18	acceptance, submission, vigilance, distraction, disapproval, interest, trust, pensiveness, admiration, awe, anticipation, optimism, aggressiveness, contempt, remorse, loathing, serenity, apprehension
Between 25% and 50%	6	annoyance, ecstasy, disgust, grief, boredom, amazement
Between 50% and 75%	8	love, surprise, sadness, rage, fear, terror, anger, joy
More than 75%	0	none

Table 4: Percentage of agreement in the categorization of emotions

b. assessment of the degree of pleasure/displeasure and activation/deactivation

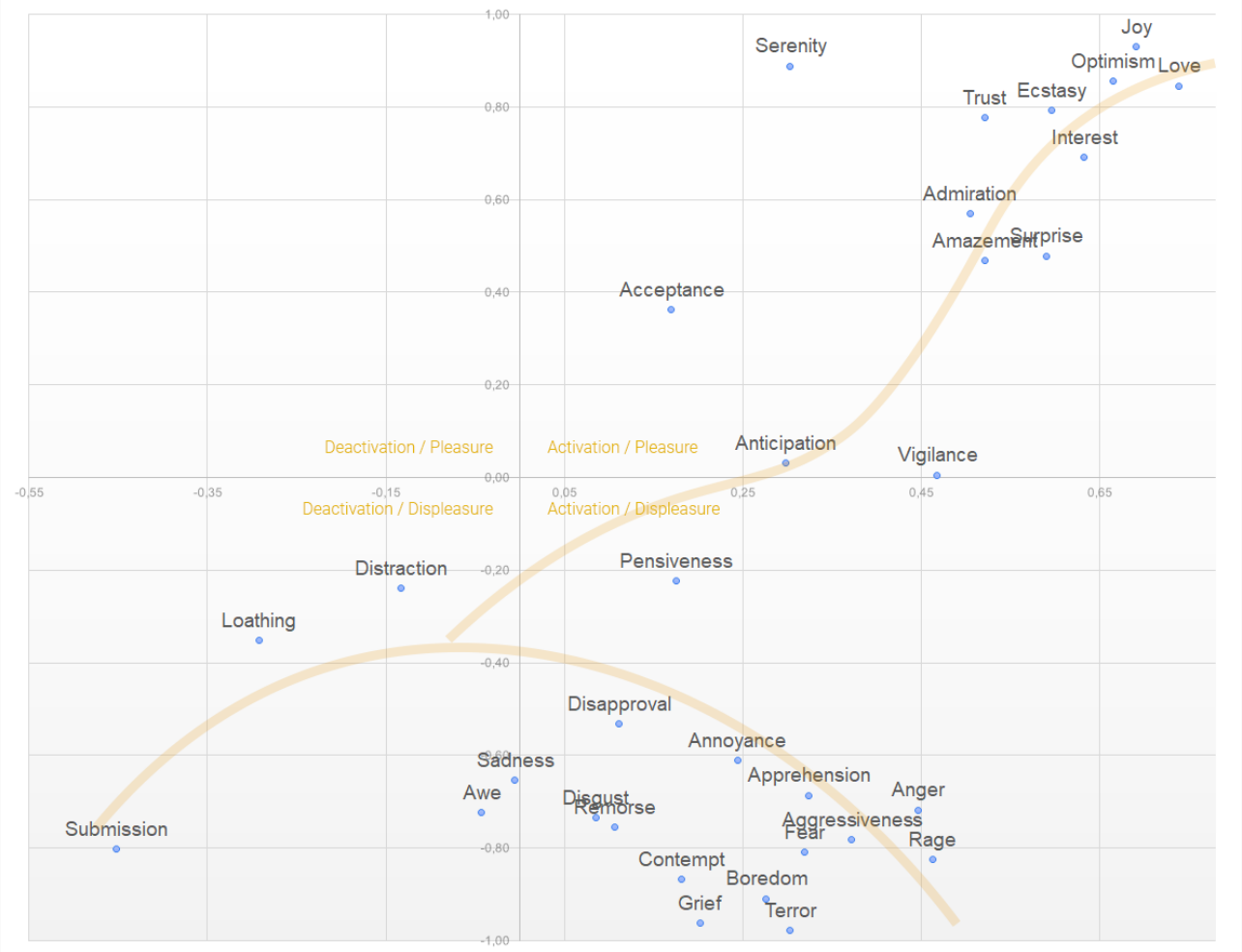
The average and standard deviation were calculated for each emotion (Table 5): the average scores were represented in graphical form – on the *x* axis the values that identify the degree of activation were identified, on the *y* axis the values that identify the degree of pleasure.

Emotion	Activation / Deactivation (average)	Pleasure / Displeasure (average)	Pleasure / Displeasure (SD)	Activation / Deactivation (SD)
Serenity	0,30	0,89	0,30	0,47
Joy	0,69	0,93	0,26	0,33
Ecstasy	0,60	0,79	0,40	0,55
Love	0,74	0,85	0,34	0,36
Admiration	0,51	0,57	0,40	0,36
Trust	0,52	0,78	0,35	0,43
Acceptance	0,17	0,36	0,51	0,47
Submission	-0,45	-0,80	0,35	0,57
Terror	0,30	-0,98	0,21	0,84
Fear	0,32	-0,81	0,29	0,71
Apprehension	0,32	-0,69	0,34	0,57
Awe	-0,04	-0,72	0,32	0,65
Amazement	0,52	0,47	0,37	0,39
Surprise	0,59	0,48	0,37	0,37
Distraction	-0,13	-0,24	0,33	0,50
Disapproval	0,11	-0,53	0,37	0,60
Grief	0,20	-0,96	0,13	0,81
Sadness	-0,01	-0,65	0,33	0,65
Pensiveness	0,18	-0,22	0,41	0,53
Remorse	0,11	-0,76	0,29	0,66
Loathing	-0,29	-0,35	0,38	0,53

Disgust	0,09	-0,73	0,36	0,65
Boredom	0,28	-0,91	0,24	0,78
Contempt	0,18	-0,87	0,27	0,75
Rage	0,46	-0,82	0,31	0,71
Anger	0,45	-0,72	0,39	0,65
Annoyance	0,24	-0,61	0,29	0,58
Aggressiveness	0,37	-0,78	0,34	0,76
Vigilance	0,47	0,01	0,38	0,46
Anticipation	0,30	0,03	0,41	0,48
Interest	0,63	0,69	0,31	0,36
Optimism	0,66	0,86	0,25	0,40

Table 5: average and standard deviation for each emotion identified in the survey

The graphic space was then divided into four quadrants, which represent four different forms of categorization: pleasant emotions without activation, pleasant emotions with activation, unpleasant emotions without activation, and unpleasant emotions with activation (Graph 1).



Graph 1: categorization of emotions according to the pleasure/displeasure and activation/deactivation dimensions

The results show that only five emotions (*loathing*, *submission*, *distraction*, *awe*, and *sadness*) were evaluated as inactivity (activation < 0); most emotions were instead categorized as a state of activation (84.38%). For example, being thoughtful ("pensiveness") has been recognized by many as lightly or even fully energized. No emotion falls into the deactivation/pleasure quadrant; it is possible to hypothesize that the deactivation was understood as a degree of passivity and therefore probably interpreted within negative terms (Table 6).

	Activation	Deactivation
Pleasure	40,63%	0,00%
Displeasure	43,75%	15,63%

Table 6: Percentage distribution of emotions within the four quadrants

Regarding the level of agreement of the categorizations attributed by the participants, it can be observed that the activation/deactivation dimension shows a higher level of subjectivity. In fact, for this dimension, all emotions except *joy* (mainly evaluated as *slightly energized*) showed a higher standard deviation (greater than 0.33). Instead for the pleasant/unpleasant dimension, a lower number of emotions (19 out of 32, specifically: distraction, sadness, apprehension, love, aggressiveness, submission, trust, disgust, amazement, disapproval, surprise, vigilance, loathing, anger, admiration, ecstasy, anticipation, pensiveness, acceptance) exhibited greater variability in the answers given.

3.5 Discussion

The results of the survey highlight that there is a strong subjective component in the way participants interpret emotions. In fact, the data reveals how the participants did not agree in categorizing the emotions proposed and at the same time showed a wide variability in attributing the degree of pleasure/displeasure and activation/deactivation. The results highlight how the processes of categorization of emotions and the subjective processes of attribution of meaning, can also be very distinct from each other. These data, therefore, can be interpreted in the light of the socio-constructivist theories and the positions of Averill and Russell, which recall the need to problematize not only the categorization of emotions but also the importance that is placed on their process of signification in learning paths.

The Averill's perspective (1980) on the process of signification refers to the idea of the complexity of emotional world and emphasizes how a biological state can lead to more than one emotion, just as an emotion can lead to more biological states. In addition, there's no binary relationship between internal state and emotion, and thus there is a pervasive socio-cultural component that shapes the signification of individual emotions.

These results offer fruitful insights regarding educational practices and projects, that are often proposed with the aim of developing programs that improve emotional skills. Educational proposals that ignore the social, cultural, and contextual aspects of emotional processes, present limitations that propel us to move towards a standardization and objectification of the world experience, while losing sight of the subjective approach to investigating the world. And, in the same way, a context attentive to the cognition and emancipation of the individual, must expect that some extemporaneous request to "*get out of one's comfort zone*", brings the possibility that there could be healthy resistance and emotional response that could be considered as non-adaptive. It is therefore important to promote a perspective of dialogue where each person can be recognized not by his/her capability to produce a behaviour, but by the profound motivation that supports them to have an active and subjective experience of the world.

Conclusions

The approach to emotions has long been guided by the idea that they were a personal phenomenon determined by a biological and physiological response and external events. To date, this mechanical and rational vision of emotions has certainly been questioned, and over time the theories that have dealt with studying emotions have highlighted how emotional processes are determined by a complex intertwining of factors. Personal, social, cultural, and environmental factors influence the way emotions are interpreted and expressed (Russel, 2009; Averill, 1980; Rezzonico *et. al*, 2012). Emotional processes take place within an intersubjective dimension, in which intentionality and social and cultural factors contribute to define the subjective experience (Bruni, 2021).
Considering emotions as a process of social construction, implies that they take on a meaning and interpretation within the experiences and interactive processes in which we all take part. This has a profound impact for educational contexts, in which a meaning is built on experience around intersubjectivity and subjective investigation of the world. In this process of shared construction, even the use of interpretative models must be viewed in a critical and reflective way. It is thus necessary to pay close attention to simplistic and schematic readings of a model: rather it is the tools and models that must facilitate the reading and understanding of the dynamics, and not the dynamics that have to change in favour of a model in a performance manner. A model can help to identify a certain number of emotions by classifying them according to a particular taxonomy (Plutchik, 2001); the critical aspect emerges if the model is used rigidly in the design, implementation, and evaluation of actions to facilitate the reading of emotions, thus building networks of meanings in which its components are treated as emotions. In the design of educational actions, there is a need to start from a model that simplifies a multifaceted phenomenon such as emotions. Simplification, however, can lead to stereotyped meanings. Furthermore, if emotions are the *implementation of transitory social roles*, to live the emotional experience, it is necessary for social competence to be considered so that from the social point of view, it can be affirmed that the feeling of an emotion is present (Averill, 1980, p. 322). Therefore, we must avoid running the risk that the application of a model is reduced to a simple request to reproduce a socially desired behaviour, thus losing the subjective and informative value that the emotional experience brings with it. Leaving a performative model requires the search for spaces where one can gradually return towards direct experience of one's self in an educational context, in which one navigates the experience of being in dialogue with one's own body, with others and with the world.

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