

Can we trust our emotions in the pursuit of knowledge?

[Life](#), [Emotions](#)



Mankind shares psychological phenomena known as emotion that is a natural state of mind deriving from a person. By means of this special ability, trusting our emotions in the pursuit of knowledge can be questioned, as it is a circumstance that involves only an individual, there might be an increasing chance of being invalid. This generalization can be countered by the fact there can be influences of emotion in pursuing knowledge in many cases such as in two particular Areas of Knowledge: History and Natural Science.

As such, the knowledge issues rose: To what extent does emotion hinder our acquisition of knowledge? This question examines what role emotion play in the pursuit of knowledge and whether or not emotion is a source of knowledge or otherwise, an obstacle to knowledge. In history, the sense of trusting emotions in the process of knowledge acquisition in History as a discourse is rarely ideal. The explanation for this is that emotions can wrongly paint our perceptions for proofs to prop historical facts and events.

When referring to emotions, it is possible to develop a negative attitude from the evidence presented. There can be of a lot of benefits of the study in history discourse. History aids in understanding what is being studied, give insight of who did it and the approximate or the actual period a study or event occurred. Emotions restrain and influence rationality and thereby leading to distorted history and false facts.

An example of emotion is probable forces involving the trial David Irving Vs. Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin publishers. David was accused of being a racist and anti-Semitic by claiming that Holocaust never happened. During a trial, he came up with the evidence to prop his claim that Holocaust never

happened. In his evidence, he claimed that there was no official plan or policy to put the Jewish race into termination though there was a proof of the Wannsee conference where the Nazis met to plan against the Jews.

In the trial, the court was also notified that he used to sing a racist song to his daughters² and based on this fact therefore, one can deduct that he had confirmation biasness owing from his emotions (hatred), towards Jewish race. This biasness therefore, masked the facts of the Holocaust causing the defendant to see things from one dimension which impacted on his judgment and reasoning. Irving was even consistent in his bias by claiming that the gas chambers were not met to exterminate humans but was for delousing. This claim was then discredited by doctors and remained as a conflictive issue.

From this point therefore, emotions are not trustworthy in the process of acquisition of knowledge in history. Whilst emotions may negatively impact the history leading to distortion, some emotions can have a positive impact on history as a discourse. These emotions of liking and enthusiasm towards an event, thing, place or group may make one develop the sense of searching for more knowledge concerning the subject and therefore this leads to one quest for unearthing the deep hidden facts on the subject and hence producing facts require in History.

Example here is: it is the deep sense of belonging and deep feeling of enthusiasm that led to the Egyptians Hussein Bassir, Ahmad Faschri, Sami Gabra, Zakaria Goneim, Labib Habachi among others venture into Egyptology (Study of ancient Egypt). That affection gives these individuals

challenges for unearthing more artifacts for ancient history that helps articulate the pieces of Ancient Egypt history and hence an example of positive contribution of emotion to history. In natural science, emotions also may impact the acquisition for knowledge to a great extent.

In pharmacology for example, a negative attitude of a researcher in determining the medicinal value, toxicity and the dosage of a certain physiologically active compound (P. A. C.) from a given herbal might lead to biased research. This has the potential to lead to wrong administrations of bioassays and test of the very same dosage that may lead to negative result even if the P. A. C. is present in large quantities, the result are then pre-set to read negative due to the attitude of the researcher that is likely to affect his dexterity, carefulness and also perception.

This finally leads to a wrong conclusion that in the real sense lacks scientific approval or disapproval as the biasness brought about by emotions led to successive blunders in the following of scientific syntaxes and therefore wrong conclusion and results at the long run. A perfect example to this is a certain Biology class in High Ridge High school where, students were asked to observe different cells in blood samples under a light microscope.

The students first perceived that one could not visualize blood cells since it was their first time to do so and more so did it against their wish of using the new microscopes as opposed to the old ones they were obliged to use. Due to the inbuilt feeling that the old microscopes were not as efficient as the new ones therefore, the students smeared their specimen on a slide and

then mounted it on a microscope without staining the specimen and hence could not visualize blood cells.

In their report to the respective tutor, the students wrote that there was absence of blood cells and the test was negative. The truth of the matter was the negative emotion of being denied the chance to use new microscope outflanked the result orientation in the minds of the students to the extent that they forgot the most crucial step that could lead to success of their scientific activity. Emotions, i. e. attitude, love, hatred, happiness, moods, affection and all others are not worth trust in the process of knowledge acquisition be it in History as a field of discourse, philosophy, natural sciences and even language since the perception of emotions occurs in brain and the knowledge acquisition still occurs in brain and therefore, negative conception of a certain idea might lead to biasness that might distort the much required fact either in history research or in natural science.

Emotions mask one's rationality to reason as per the expectations and therefore in that sense impair ones judgment. In the two cases that we have examined, Irving failed to acknowledge the eventuality of Genocide in Germany by the Nazi regime and went further to claim that the murderous gas chambers used were for delousing and not killing humans. Secondly, due to the preset emotions of the students, they fail to stain their specimens and this leads them to wrong results and subsequently conclusions owing to their negative attitude towards using old microscopes as opposed to new ones.

The error that occurs is not as attribute of the microscopes but students' ignorance and negative attitude. It is worth a note also that emotions are not

always detrimental to acquisition of knowledge but at times beneficial to the process of knowledge acquisition if at all they are positive as per the case of patriotic Egyptians in their careers as Egyptologists.