

In was that reason
and perception are



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In 1889, Vincent Van Gogh once said, " Let's not forget that the little emotions are the great captains of our lives and we obey them without realizing it (Carnegie 2003 p. 298). The stereotype assumption held for long by the rationalists was that reason and perception are the only reliable ways through which we acquire knowledge. Emotion was thought to hamper decision making as it created confusion and hindered objectivity. Emotions were believed to be disorderly powers capable of interfering drastically with sensible thinking. Thus, it was believed that in order to arrive at lucid judgments, emotions should be completely separated from the process. Focus was more on cognition and logic (Bernstone et al. 1993).

This paper seeks to determine how emotions help influence the actions we make through analytical thinking. It seeks to assert that judgment does not abound in isolation. Rather that it is arrived at by people who not only reason but also feel. It seeks to highlight the role played by emotion in our day to day judgments and to ascertain the fact that our decision making processes are highly influenced by our emotional disposition. As Dale Carnegie sums it up, we are not creations of reason but of conscience (Carnegie 2003 p. 298). Yet time after time, we encounter situations in which even the most rational beings make decisions whose nature defeats all logic. What makes people inexplicably fall in love with one person over another? How do we explain when a man of sound mind engages in sexual crimes like rape? While some may attribute this behavior insanity, personal preference, circumstances or provocation, the underlying fact remains that these two categories of people are never forced at gun point to do what they do or act as they do.

If it were all about reason, then the people have the mental capacity to stop themselves from falling in love or committing these crimes. The belief by rationalists failed to hail the fact that we are humans, thus emotional in nature and even the most 'rational' of all beings can err. They failed to accommodate the fact that emotions do play a role in the decision making process. Emotions are part of human nature as we all instinctively react to phenomena even without being conscious of the fact. That implies that, not all human actions are solely based on thinking and evaluating using our brains.

Even without being conscious of it, our feelings do affect the way we perceive things around us (Ansoff, 1965). As human beings, we experience sensations that vary in degree or perception. Nevertheless, we could be unaware of those feelings or how to interpret them. This is largely because some feelings are hard to observe and interpret. However, emotions affect the way we think much as they may not be perceived to directly influence behavior and the way we act towards others.

The word emotion refers to powerful or compelling sensation or attitude geared towards something or someone. It is commonly connected with mood, individuality, predispositions, temperament and provocation (Plutchik, 1980). came up with a classification of emotions which was made up of eight progressive emotions and their basic ones. Among the major basic emotions according to him are happiness, confidence or trust, fear, wonder or astonishment, sadness, repugnance, ire and expectancy. These emotions coexist in opposites. Feelings like love, disappointment, aggressiveness, guilt, optimism, contempt, awe, remorse and their opposites arise from the <https://assignbuster.com/in-was-that-reason-and-perception-are/>

basic emotions. (Parrot 2001) further created a tree structured inventory of emotions in which primary emotions like love, joy and anger give rise to secondary emotions or feelings which ultimately give rise to tertiary feelings.

For instance love as a basic emotion gives rise to affection, lust or sexual desire, longing, cheerfulness, zest and contentment from which other feelings like attraction, adoration, passion, infatuation, jubilation, euphoria, excitement, and enthusiasm and pleasure spring. Anger may cause disgust, envy, torment, suffering, sadness and disappointment. These feelings may result in loathing, envy, torment, agony, despair, grief, disappointment, shame, remorse, loneliness and humiliation. Emotions can therefore be classified into two; positive and negative emotions. Positive emotions attempt or intend to consider the whole in decision making to make things better while negative emotions tend to exclude, set aside and destroy. The feeling is enhanced more by fear.

However, we experience fewer positive emotions compared to the negative ones. This is mostly due to the fact that most feelings are geared towards self preservation. They warn us and make us act by avoiding others, steering away and retaliating. Damasio (1994) in *Descartes Error* establishes that feelings do enhance rational acts in instances where there is indecision. He illustrates that failure to make correct decisions in patients with brain problems was as a result of lack of emotions.

Emotions enable us desist from choices that may probably result in problems as we have a particular sensation that there is something about the option that does not sound right. In the absence of this feeling, one may not be

aware that something is not right about the choice or may end up being vague or take a long time to come to a decision. Emotions affect the way people perceive things and even enable them become better informed.

Negative feelings prompt people to reconsider themselves and the poor choices they make and this helps them determine ways to avoid them in the future. For instance a teenager who follows her whims and ends up engaging in damaging behavior like drug abuse or early sex and suffers the consequences is in a better position to learn to contain her impulses and consequently avoid repeating the same. Emotion assist individuals undertake counterfactual thinking. According to Roese (2000, p. 62) wishful thinking, resulting from poor choices, enables individuals reflects on their choices and focus on the outcome of the decision they did not make.

This process is crucial in reevaluating one's mind and thus affects how they make their future judgments. In addition, emotion can be an integral part of indispensable knowledge about the universe. According to the Affect-as-information hypothesis, Clore, Gasper and Garvin (2001), human beings decide whether a thing is right or wrong by contemplating how they feel about it.

Their final choice depends then on if they perceive the thing to be. For instance when confronted with a difficult situation like influence by peers to take drugs, an individual may ask himself or herself what they feel about the whole issue of substance abuse. If they feel it is wrong to do it, no matter the justifications to give in to the vice, the individual may choose not to do it and vice versa.

In earlier research by Niedenthal, Halberstadt and Innes-Ker, (1999) as cited in Barrett (2002, p. 168) demonstrated that emotions change the way people process knowledge as emotional people tend to look at the world in an emotional way. If someone is happy, they perceive the world in a positive way and if unhappy or sad, everything around them looks gloomy. Most of the times, people classify things by their feelings than by their implications. That may explain why people who are in love may not notice their partner's faults or if they do, the fact becomes of little or no consequence. Through emotions, individuals can know beforehand their reactions to future phenomena and this prepares them on the appropriate course of action. An action in the past influences future reactions.

People begin to channel their actions depending on how they anticipate to feel. They naturally begin steering away from actions that will ultimately cause them to feel bad or guilty and instead focus on those that will reward them. However, strong feelings can guide individuals to take part in risky or dangerous acts regardless of the consequences. Feelings such as sexual urges obstruct the ability to think straight. That explains why mentally stable men engage in sexual offenses like rape and incest (Barret, 2002). In addition, antagonistic feelings like guilt or fear affect normal behavior, the cognitive process, understanding and the ability to keep information. For instance the feelings that accompany the sexual act like anxiety of getting pregnant or being infected with disease fear of the consequences and the guilt of having engaged in the act may affect the way people perceive family planning information and how they practice the concept. Depression can

causes serious interference with the way people adapt to life after the feeling is through.

Emotions make thinking easier as they compose the whole mechanism that assist people in the interpretation of the universe and how they behave towards it.

Conclusion

Emotion is complimentary to reasoning. They can enhance or undermine critical thinking as they play a big role in facilitating the way people think and ultimately make up their minds. Without emotions, people can still think and arrive at a decision but fail to decide the best decision. This view is supported by Baumister and Bushman (2007 p. 205). Therefore we can conclude that arriving at judgments requires both use of the brain (reasoning) and emotions.

Rational thinking assist in bringing forth ideas while feelings enable us decide the ultimate best course of action to pursue. Emotions help us differentiate between what is necessary and what is not. In cases when one does not have enough time to analyze the correct/rational thing to do, emotions swiftly give us the right course of action as they eliminate irrational ideas. Emotions ensure that we act in a manner that is consisted to reality and the consequences. Emotions help us think over our once ' rational' ideas by giving them more contemplation aside from the logical one. However, there is need to exercise control in order to enhance our thinking. Emotions should not be left to completely rule our judgments. Situations require that we be sober minded and as much as we at times cannot stop the emotions

from coming, we nevertheless have the ability to choose those that are most beneficial to our wellbeing.

As Martensson clearly states, in (Siraj and Zaibun, 2008 p. 54), “ Feelings are much like waves, we can’t stop them from coming but we can choose which one to surf.”

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