COMMUNICATING/EXPRESSING EMOTIONS IN ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract: *Emotion formation, expression, and control in organizations / workplaces has been examined less than emotional expression in adults and children, less than emotional expression and alexithymia, anxiety, autism, music, or parent-child relationship, and less than emotional (non)-expression and health. This study presents primary, secondary, and tertiary emotions and the few approaches of emotional expression in organizations, thus aiming at improving organizational communication through better knowledge of work feelings – from different perspectives – as an integral part of organizational life.*

Key words*: communication, expression, emotion, organization*

INTRODUCTION

The expression of emotions in man (and animals) was first studied by English naturalist, geologist, and biologist Charles Darwin (1809-1882) [11].

Shaver et al. (1987) identified 6 primary emotions, 25 secondary emotions, and 135 tertiary emotions (Table 1).

Table 1.

Primary, secondary, and tertiary emotions

Emotions		
Primary	**Secondary**	**Tertiary**
Anger	"**Disgust**"	"Contempt, disgust, revulsion"
	"**Envy**"	"Envy, jealousy"
	"**Exasperation**"	"Exasperation, frustration"
	"**Irritation**"	"Aggravation, agitation, annoyance, grouchiness, grumpiness, irritation"
	Age	"Anger, bitterness, dislike, ferocity, fury, hate, hostility, loathing, outrage, rage, resentment, scorn, spite, vengefulness, wrath"
	"**Torment**"	"Torment"
"**Fear**"	"**Horror**"	"Alarm, fear, fright, horror, hysteria, mortification, panic, shock, terror"
	"**Nervousness**"	"Anxiety, apprehension, distress, dread, nervousness, tenseness, uneasiness, worry"
Joy	"**Cheerfulness**"	"Amusement, bliss, cheerfulness, delight, ecstasy, elation, enjoyment, euphoria, gaiety, gladness, glee, happiness, jolliness, joviality, joy, jubilation, satisfaction"
	"**Contentment**"	"Contentment, pleasure"
	"**Enthrallment**"	"Enthrallment, rapture"
	"**Optimism**"	"Eagerness, hope, optimism"
	"**Pride**"	"Pride, triumph"
	"**Relief**"	"Relief"
	"**Zest**"	"Enthusiasm, excitement, exhilaration, thrill, zeal, zest"
"**Love**"	"**Affection**"	"Adoration, affection, attraction, caring, compassion, fondness, liking, love, sentimentality, tenderness"
	"**Longing**"	"Longing"
	"**Lust**"	"Arousal, desire, infatuation, lust, passion"
"**Sadness**"	"**Disappointment**"	"Disappointment, dismay, displeasure"
	"**Neglect**"	"Alienation, defeat, dejection, embarrassment, homesickness,

		humiliation, insecurity, isolation, insult, loneliness, neglect, rejection"
	Sadness	"Depression, despair, gloom, glumness, grief, hopelessness, melancholy, misery, sadness, sorrow, unhappiness, woe"
	"**Shame**"	"Guilt, regret, remorse, shame"
	"**Suffering**"	"Agony, anguish, hurt, suffering"
	"**Sympathy**"	"Pity, sympathy"
"**Surprise**"	"**Surprise**"	"Amazement, astonishment, surprise"

Source: [38]

In the last decades, researchers focused on emotional expression in adults, [12,15,18] and in children [3,4,6,34,39]; on the relation between emotional expression and alexithymia ("the inability to recognize or describe one's own emotions" – Oxford Languages) [1,2,5,7,13,17,21,22,23,24,26,27,28,30,32,33,41], emotional expression and anxiety ("a mental condition characterized by excessive apprehensiveness about real or perceived threats, typically leading to avoidance behaviours and often to physical symptoms such as increased heart rate and muscle tension" – Oxford Languages) [35,39], between emotional expression and autism ("a neurodevelopmental condition of variable severity with lifelong effects that can be recognized from early childhood, chiefly characterized by difficulties with social interaction and communication and by restricted or repetitive patterns of thought and behaviour" – Oxford Languages) [4,34,36], between emotional expression and music [4,20,34], between emotional expression and parent-child relationship [16,29], and between emotional (non)-expression and health [31].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The material used in this study consists in the most searched articles and books on the Internet dedicated to the communication / expression of emotions in organizations. These articles and books present the communication / expression of emotions in organizations from a double perspective – theoretical (classification) and practical (analyses of emotional expression in adults and children, of emotional expression and alexithymia, anxiety, autism, music, or parent-child relationship, and of emotional (non)-expression and health).

The research method used is bibliographic (it consists in the revision of existing bibliographical material with respect to the communication / expression of emotions in organizations).

RESEARCH RESULTS

References to the expression of emotions in organizations are rather scarce.

Cherniss et al. [9], promotes emotional intelligence in the workplace and conclude the following: "It is possible for people of all ages to become more socially and emotionally competent. However, the principles for developing this type of competence differ greatly from those that have guided much training and development practice in the past. Developing emotional competence requires that we unlearn old habits of thought, feeling, and action that are deeply ingrained, and grow new ones. Such a process takes motivation, effort, time, support, and sustained practice, as the guidelines presented in this article make clear."

Calhoun [8], notes that emotions are not only inside individuals (directly interpersonal dynamics): they are maintained "to large-scale organizations and whole fields of relationships – from our kin to business worlds and social movements" (indirectly interpersonal dynamics).

The contributors to the volume edited by Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta write about the emotional attention paid to social movements, about putting emotions in their places,

and about approaching social movement emotions from a structural perspective; about emotions and political identity and emotional culture war; about "the politics of emotion and folk constructions of emotion"; and about the emotions of conflict, emotional strategies, oppositional emotions, emotional benefits, and emotion work.

Ekman [14], writes about using the information from expressions of anger and fear in an organization and notes that "subordinates in most organizations do not enjoy the right to comment on a superior's anger": they should acknowledge anger and "show concern for feedback, while making it easy for the supervisor to defer telling [the subordinates] about it until a moment when she is not feeling angry." An employee "informed that he/she will not get a promotion, and that someone else was promoted instead" may show (intense) fear, surprise, and worry before one tells him/her the news (which would suggest he/she is anticipating failure) or after one tells him/her the news (which would suggest he/she is concerned about how this affects his future).

Ekman (ibidem, 2,17) also notes that "altruistic people [working in organizations such as Habitat for Humanity or the Peace Corps] might be seeking elevation and gratitude, and perhaps also fiero".

Writing about barriers in communication, Lunenburg mentions that, when "a very upset staff member sends an emotionally charged letter to the leader instead of transmitting her feelings face-to-face" – that is a medium barrier. In addition, "Filtering means that more often than not we see and hear what we are emotionally tuned in to see and hear" – which is a psychosocial barrier.

Côté [10], points out that, "despite the progress in understanding the role of emotional intelligence in organizations owing to more precise definitions, better measures, and more refined models that consider contextual and dispositional factors", there are still a few controversies in the research on emotional intelligence: "controversy concerning (dis)agreement about the meaning of emotional intelligence, controversy concerning how emotional intelligence relates to extant constructs, controversy about the validity of measures of emotional intelligence, controversy about the effect sizes for emotional intelligence", controversy concerning whether emotional intelligence can be taught, and controversy concerning cross-cultural variations in emotional intelligence.

In their study on the impact of emotional intelligence on communication effectiveness, Jorfi et al. [19], conclude that "if manager or employee is happy in educational organization, he/she can better communicate and make good relationship effectiveness with others. Thus, general mood has a direct impact on communication and leads to communication effectiveness."

Tracy [40], points out that, though emotional communication is central to most jobs (employees communicate anger, fear, pride, or shame; nurses communicate care; stockbrokers communicate aggression; etc.), emotion in organizations has been treated as a barrier to effectiveness since they should be rational entities. More recently, however, emotionality has no longer been seen as the opposite of rationality: it has started to be seen as part of the organizational process. Tracy (idem, 5) also points out the importance of emotional expression: "Surface acting – in which members do not change their inner feelings, but put effort into changing their outward emotional expression – may not cause estrangement, but may result in an unconvincing performance."

Sfetcu [37], cites Cherniss [9], who claims that "the workplace would be a logical framework for evaluating and improving emotional intelligence" because "1. Emotional intelligence is essential for success in most jobs 2. Many people are hired without the necessary skills to succeed in the workplace 3. Employers have the means and motivation to provide training on emotional intelligence 4. Most employees spend most of their time at work." Sfetcu approaches emotional intelligence in organizations from four perspectives

– emotional labour / work (defined as "a form of emotional regulation in which employees have to display certain emotions as part of their work and promote organizational goals" [37]; philosophy of emotional intelligence in organizations (emotional intelligence "dissolves the traditional opposition between emotionality and rationality, cognition and affect, thinking and feeling" [37]; critique of emotional intelligence in organizations (emotional intelligence is "invalid, both because it is not a form of intelligence, and because it is so broad and inclusive that it has no intelligible meaning" [37]; and ethics of emotional intelligence in organizations ("the well-socialized and self-disciplined corporate employee <is expected to have no private emotions and no respites from enthusiasm>"[37], Sfetcu's [37], conclusion is that "emotions have always played an important role in personal development and in all aspects of social relationships".

CONCLUSIONS

The bibliographic study of most searched articles and books on the communication/expression of emotions in organisations has led to the following conclusions:

- There are three types of emotions – primary, secondary, and tertiary;
- Emotion formation, expression, and control in organizations / workplaces has been examined less than emotional expression in adults and children;
- Emotion formation, expression, and control in organizations / workplaces has been examined less than emotional expression and alexithymia, anxiety, autism, music, or parent-child relationship;
- Emotion formation, expression, and control in organizations / workplaces has been examined less than emotional (non)-expression and health;
- Emotional expression in organizations has been analysed from the perspective of its promotion in the workplace, of its presence in large-scale organisations, of using the information from expressions of anger and fear in an organization, of barriers in communication, of controversies in the research on emotional intelligence, of "the impact of emotional intelligence on communication effectiveness", of its centrality to most jobs, and of its suitability as "a logical framework for evaluating and improving emotional intelligence."

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