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Instrumentalizing Cognitive Dissonance Emotions

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ABSTRACT

Many psychologists think that there are few basic emotions, and most emotions are combinations of these few. Here we advance a hypothesis that the number of principally different emotions is near infinite. We consider emotions as mental states with hedonic content, indicating satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Basic emotions correspond to bodily signals, and there are relatively few of them. Our hypothesis is that a large number of emotions are related to the knowledge instinct (KI, or a need for knowledge). KI drives the mind to fit mental representations to cognitive experiences and to resolve mental contradictions. Discomfort due to holding contradictory knowledge elements are known as cognitive dissonances. We emphasize that cognitive dissonances involve specific emotions. The number of cognitive dissonances is combinatorial in terms of elements of knowledge. Correspondingly, the number of these knowledge-related emotions is very large. We report experimental results on measuring these emotions and indicating that emotions of cognitive dissonance exist. We also make a step toward proving that these emotions are different from basic emotions in principle, and outline future research directions toward proving that their number is large.

KEYWORDS

Cognitive Dissonance Emotions; Basic Emotions; Instrumentalizing; Basic Emotions

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