Which Emotion is Preferred by Indonesian People?

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Abstract: Emotions are part of being human. One of the prime reasons that emotion has likely evolved is to monitor and negotiate our social relations. An emotion can be defined as subjective feelings. Emotions have two types. Positive emotion and negative emotion. The aim of this research was to describe positive and negative emotion based on culture. This was a cross sectional study. The technique of sampling used is accidental sampling. The subjects in this research were 145 Javanesse students and 52 non-Javanesse students of Psychology Faculty University of Muhammadiyah Malang. The research was conducted using Positive Activation Schedule (PANAS). The results showed that the javanese people have no preference on positive or negative emotion. While, non-javanese people have low preference on positive emotion (59,6%), and high preference on negative emotion (57,7%).

Keywords:Positive emotion, negative emotion, javanese, non-javanese

Introductions

Emotions are part of being human. One of the prime reasons that emotion has likely evolved is to monitor and negotiate our social relation. When we meet someone we love, we become happy. These social relations vary across cultural contexts. Human beings do not live in uniform worlds. Therefore, their emotions are not, or not most of the time, responses to universal emotional events. Human emotional behavior is not aimed at achieving general, universal goals. Rather, human beings always live in specific environments (Mesquita & Leu, 2010).

An emotion can be defined as subjective feelings. It is characteristic by patterns of psychological arousal thought and behavior. Emotions tend to focus on a specific event or circumstance in the past, present or future. However, emotions are likely to be short lived and we are aware of them at the time of occurrence (Hefferon & Boniwell, 2011).

Emotions have two types. Positive emotion and negative emotion. Positive emotion is the extent to which someone experiences joy, contentment, and so on, whereas negative emotion is the extent to which someone experiences feelings such as sadness or fear. From decades of research across many positive emotion in daily life, we have ten positive emotions which include joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love (Fredrickson, 2009).

Positive emotions make us feel less as two and more as one. This inclusion side effect has tremendous impact on personal relationships with others. Not only do we see others as part of our self-concept but we are also more likely to understand other people's complexities and perspectives, which in turn will enhance the relational bond (Waugh & Fredrickson, 2006).

Negative emotion is not to be polar opposite with positive emotions. Although, negative and positive emotions are inversely correlated as expected, the relationship are quite weak and indicative of independence of the two types of emotion. The range of these relationships, may increase when people are taxed by daily stressors. The content of negative emotions can be described best as general distress (Snyder & Lopez, 2007).

In other words, human beings always function in a specific cultural space, and emotions, while helping navigate this cultural space. Both the particular relationship arrangements and the meanings that animate and justify this arrangements vary across cultures. Successfully navigating the cultural space means specifically engaging in relationships with other people. Therefore, emotions have to signal culturally relevant relational opportunities and problems, and motivate a culturally appropriate and effective course of action (Mesquita & Leu, 2010).

Cross-cultural research shows that feeling positive emotions is not a selfish endeavour. In fact, by experiencing positive emotions we are able to take a broader perspective, recognizing others viewpoint and not just our own, thereby developing stronger relationships with others. Furthermore, there is also evidence that suggests that positive emotions can affect cross-cultural perspective taking, with people who feel higher level of positive emotions being able to take a larger perspective and exhibit greater feelings of sympathy and compassion for someone from a dissimilar cultural context (Nelson, 2009).

Based on the background, the aim of this study was to describe positive and negative emotions based on culture. There are several benefits from this study. First, to inform others about positive and negative emotions and culture background of students. Second, inform other about cross tabulation of positive and negative emotions within background cultures.

Method

This research was cross sectional study design. It means, the participants are measured for outcome and exposure at the same time. The investigator can study the association between these variables. It is also possible that the investigator will recruit the study participants and examine the outcomes in this population. The investigator may also estimate the prevalence of the outcome in those surveyed (Setia, 2016).

This research used accidental sampling. Subjects in this research were 197 Students of Psychology Faculty University of Muhammadiyah Malang. The subjects in this research were 145 Javanese students and 52 non-Javanesse students. Non-Javanese participants include students coming from many cultures like Bugis, Banjar, Padang, Sasak, and Bali.

Research measured by Positive Activation Schedule (PANAS) with internal consistency is quite high (0,86 – 0,90). It consists of two dimensions represented by 20 items and each has five response options ranging from 1 as 'very slightly or not at all' to 5 as 'extremely' (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Data analysis for this research was descriptive analysis.

Result

Participants of this research were 197 students of Psychology Faculty of Muhammadiyah Malang University. This study divide them within some categories as table 1 shows.

Table 1. Subjects description

Category		F	%
Sex			
	Male	65	33%
	Female	132	67%
Culture			
	Javanese	145	73,6%
	Non- Javanese	52	26,4%

Table 1 shows that majority of the subjects are female (67%) and Javanese (73,6%). The participants who come from non-Javanese culture are numbered at 26,4%. The other cultures are Bugis, Banjar, Padang, Sasak, and Bali.

Table 2. Cross tabulation analysis

Variable	Category	Javanese		Non-Javanese	
		F	%	F	%
Positive	High	71	49%	21	40,4%
Emotion	Low	74	51%	31	59,6%
Negative	High	72	49,7%	30	57,7%
Emotion	Low	73	50,3%	22	42,3%

Table 2 show that the javanese have no preference based on percentage of level emotions that have significant difference. In positive emotion, Javanese have 49% on high and 51% on low. In negative emotion, Javanese have 49,7% on high and 50,3% on low. While, Non-Javanese have low preference on positive emotion (59,6%), and high preference on negative emotion (57,7%).

Discussion

Emotions are part of being human. Emotions have two types. They are positive and negative emotions. This study describes positive and negative emotions based on culture. There are two groups of culture in this study. First, javanese culture that have no preference on positive or negative emotion. Secondly, non-javanese cultures have low preference on positive emotion (59,6%), and high preference on negative emotion (57,7%). It means, in this research, subjects with javanese culture have close level of positive and negative emotion. Meanwhile, subjects with non-javanesse tend to have low positive emotion and high negative emotion.

Positive emotion is the extent to which someone experiences joy, contentment, and so on, whereas negative emotion is the extent to which someone experiences feelings such as sadness, anger, disgust or fear (Fredrickson, 2009). Furthermore, action tendencies generally have been associated with physical reaction to negative emotions (fight or flight), while human reactions to positive emotions often are more cognitive than physical (flexibility and creativity). This statement are relevant with many study that negative emotions are follow by physical reaction (Fida, Paciello, Tramontano, Fontaine, Barbaranelli, & Farnese, 2014; Gerhart, dkk, 2018; Adair, Fredrickson, Castro-Schilo, Kim, & Sidberry, 2018).

This study are different with the last study that people are generally better at maintaining positive emotional than they are at maintaining negative emotional (Waugh, Running, Reynolds, & Gotlib, 2018). Meanwhile, this study showed that non-javanese culture tend to lower there positive emotions. Although, positive emotion was associated with life satisfaction and closely linked to subjective well-being (Bastian, Kuppens, De Roover, & Diener, 2014).

Cross-cultural research shows that feeling positive emotions is not a selfish endeavour. In fact, by experiencing positive emotions we are able to take a broader perspective, recognizing others viewpoint and not just our own, thereby developing stronger relationships with others. Furthermore, there is also evidence that suggests that positive emotions can affect cross-cultural perspective taking, with people who feel higher level of positive emotions being able to take a larger perspective and exhibit greater feelings of sympathy and compassion for someone from a dissimilar cultural context (Nelson, 2009).

Conclusion and Implication

The study shows that, in Students of Psychology Faculty of Muhammadiyah Malang University, javanese have not preference on positive and negative emotion. In different situation, non-javanese have low preference on positive emotion, and high preference on negative emotion. Thus, emotion preferred have only show in Non-javanese culture.

There are some implications from research to students. First, it informs to them that javanesse have not preference on positive and negative emotion. Second, it informs to them that non-javanese have low preference on positive emotion, and high preference on negative emotion. Third, non-javanese people can take more affect to be positive. This study has implication for the next researcher too. They can be developed in this research with predict positive and negative emotions with people behavior. They also make specific ethnicity for the same variables.

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