PSYC 222
Motivation and Emotions

Session 9 – Culture and Emotional Expression

Lecturer: Dr. Annabella Osei-Tutu, Psychology Department
Contact Information: aopare-henaku@ug.edu.gh
Session Overview

• Are certain tribes, ethnic groups, or cultures more emotional than others? If you found yourself in a different culture, would you be able to communicate your emotions to others who do not know your culture? This session focuses on how culture and gender influence emotional expressions. It will also introduce you to emotions in Ghana, highlighting how the Ghanaian culture influences the experience and expression of emotion.
Session Outline

The key topics to be covered in the session are:

• Topic One: Facial Expressions
• Topic Two: Cultural Influences
• Topic Three: Gender Differences
• Topic Four: Ghanaian Emotions
Topic One

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS
Facial Expressions

• What emotions are these faces showing?

(From Coon & Mitterer, 2011)
Most basic facial expressions are fairly universal
  o Fear
  o Anger
  o Disgust
  o Sadness
  o Surprise
  o Happiness
Facial Expressions

Children’s facial expressions, even those of blind children who have never seen a face, are also universal.
Topic Two

CULTURAL INFLUENCES
Emotions are shaped by cultural ideas, values, and practices.
Cultural Influences

• Some aspects of emotional expressions are universal.

• *Facial expressions*, such as happiness and anger, are common the world over.
Cultural Influences

• *Display rules* for expressing emotions are also similar across cultures.

• *Display rules* are the norms and standards indicating which emotions are appropriate in a given situation and how these emotions should be publicly expressed (Ekman, 1973).
Cultural Influences

• Cultures differ in how much they express emotions.

• Some cultures encourage the expression of certain emotions more than others.

• E.g., African cultures find certain emotions (such as guilt) more desirable. Others emotions (such as pride) are less desirable (Kim-Prieto & Eid 2004).
Cultural Influences

- Some emotional expressions are unique to certain cultures
- E.g., expressions of anger differ in Western and Asian cultures
- Emotions such as amae appear to be unique to the Japanese culture
Cultural Influences

What are the appropriate ways of expressing emotion?

Emotion norms are concerned with the value of emotions and how these norms guide the emotional experiences of the members of that culture.
Cultural Influences

Some cultures value anger and believe it to be a tool through which maturity and wisdom are gained, while other cultures reject anger and believe it to be a socially disruptive force to be avoided at all costs.
Cultural Influences

Cultures differ on what might elicit anger, how that feeling state is understood, and the subsequent action that follows.

Expression of anger is more encouraged in cultures that do not promote group behavior than in cultures that do promote group behavior.
Cultural Influences

Cultures that are individualistic value emotional distance from the in-group, hold personal goals as primary, and regulate behavior in accordance with attitudes.

Cultures that are collectivistic value the integrity of the family and harmony within the in-group, define the self and regulate behavior according to in-group norms, and make strong ingroup/out-group distinctions.
Cultural Influences

Research shows that certain cultures (e.g., in Asia) express concurrent positive and negative emotions in relation to the same event than other cultures (such as those in West) (Lu et al., 2016)
Topic Three

GENDER DIFFERENCES
Gender Differences

• Many cultures believe that women are more emotionally expressive than men. In other words, men have difficulty expressing their emotions.

• What do you think; is this difference biological or social?
Gender Differences

• To a large extent, gender differences in emotional expression are influenced by socialization:
  o Women are allowed to cry more often, for longer and more intensely than men
  o Most cultures also encourage women to express sadness, fear, shame, guilt etc.
  o Early in life, men learn to suppress crying and are often encouraged to express mostly anger and hostility

• Does that mean men do not experience these emotions?
Gender Differences

• Boys are socialized to suppress their emotion. You may have heard the saying, “real men don’t cry”

• Boys respond to anger by moving away from that situation, while girls talk to their friends.
Topic Four

GHANAIAN EMOTIONS
Ghanaian Emotions

Ghanaians make more references to different body part when communicating about emotions in their local languages (Dzokoto & Okazaki 2006)

Example?
## Ghanaian Emotions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
<th>Twi Word</th>
<th>Literal Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>anigyeɛ</td>
<td>Eye-get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shame</td>
<td>animguaseɛ</td>
<td>Face-down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>abufo</td>
<td>Chest-grow/rise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>asomdwee</td>
<td>Ear-cool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Ayɛhyehye</td>
<td>Stomach-burn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Ghanaian Emotions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
<th>Dagbani Word</th>
<th>Literal Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Suhipelli</td>
<td>white heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>Suhidoo</td>
<td>heart at rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Suhiyigsili</td>
<td>agitated heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>Suhisajingu</td>
<td>destruction of the heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worry/anxiety</td>
<td>Ninimooi</td>
<td>eye-red</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Ghanaian Emotions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
<th>Ga word</th>
<th>Literal Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Miishɛɛ</td>
<td>Body-full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Hiɛnɔkamɔ</td>
<td>Eye-on-something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion</td>
<td>Hiɛɔɔɔ</td>
<td>Face-(is)-hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contentment</td>
<td>Tsui emɛ</td>
<td>Heart-(at)-rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy</td>
<td>Musunŋshaɛ</td>
<td>Stomach-burning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Dzokoto, Senft, Washington-Nortey, Kpobi, 2016)
## Ghanaian Emotions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Emotion Word</th>
<th>Ewe Equivalent</th>
<th>Literal Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>Dzidzo</td>
<td>“Heart born”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>Dzibɔbɔ</td>
<td>“Soft heart”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression/Upset</td>
<td>Dzigbagba</td>
<td>“Heart breaking”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shock/Overwhelmed</td>
<td>Dzidzifoe</td>
<td>“Heart heart beaten”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement</td>
<td>Dzidzoame</td>
<td>“Heart jumping in a person”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort (contentedness)</td>
<td>Dzidzeme</td>
<td>“Heart settled down”/ “Resting heart”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-satisfaction, fulfillment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ghanaian Emotions

Ghanaian cultural values influence the expression of emotion.

Some cultural groups in Ghana use words, gestures, and moaning to express pain (Mallam, 1966).

Ghanaians are more sensitive to identifying disgust (Skolnick & Dzokoto, 2013).
In the Ghanaian context, certain emotions are more desired than others.

**Desired Emotions**
- Trust
- Guilt
- Pride

**Undesired Emotions**
- Shame
- Dishonor
- Pride

(See Tamir et al 2015)
References