

The Influence of Affects on Attitude Formation and Change and Its Implications on Teaching and Learning

Zhang Shuyang^{1,a}

¹*The faculty of educational studies, University Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia*

^a *shuyangzhang111@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

Attitude is a paramount part of educational psychology. The formation and change of individuals's attitude will be affected by a slice of matters. Emotion as a high-level expression of individuals has a paramount impact on attitudes. On the basis, starting from previous related theories and studies, the author discusses the relationship between emotions, moods and attitudes, combined with the current teaching and learning process in Malaysia, and puts forward a slice of feasible suggestions.

Keywords: *educational psychology, emotion and mood, attitude, psychological health*

1. INTRODUCTION

Attitude is defined as “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour.” according to Alice Eagly and Shelly Chaiken (1993)[1]. Richard Petty and John Cacioppo (1981, p. 7) defines attitude as “a general and enduring positive or negative feeling about some person, object, or issue.” [2] According to an article on Psychology Net (2021), stated that an attitude is a positive or negative opinion or feeling about any person, thing, or problem that is general and sustaining. Attitude development takes place in an individual through several components. Many attitude researchers will argue that evaluation is the primary component of the definition of attitude. The day we are born attitudes and behaviours begin to develop and our environment is the primary influence from which we experience. On the other hand, attitudes summarise various kinds of knowledge about a problem, object, or subject also including all our related feelings, emotions, and life lessons wrapped together in a single summary evaluation. Thus, we can say that the core principles for attitudes are the affect or feeling, behaviour, and cognition.

It makes sense that behaviour is driven by attitude. Some survey study found that there is a relationship between attitudes and behaviours. A study found that attitude towards political candidates is closely influenced by voting behaviour (Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes, 1960)[3]. Our thoughts and feelings take shape into attitudes as we encounter the world, and these then

shape our behaviour. The component of attitude towards an attitude object comprises of behavioural, affective, and cognitive. Nevertheless, the topic of focus here is the influence of affects on attitude formation and change and its implication on teaching and learning. The discussion is how affects as variables influences an individual's attitude formation and change its implication on teaching and learning. In conjunction with the topic, there is sub discussion that is feelings and attitudes, influence of mood and emotion on attitude formation, and the implication on teaching and learning.

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

This article mainly adopts the literature reading method. Based on a large number of previous studies, the author puts theoretical knowledge into the actual process of teaching and learning, and derives feasible suggestions.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1. AFFECTS ON ATTITUDE CHANGE AND FORMATION

Affect is a specific concept that encompasses emotions as well as moods. It is an emotion that is directly reflected and experienced. When communicating about incidents with emotional word choices and sound, one may verbally convey their emotions and the nonverbal interaction, such as body language and gestures, often includes the affect of a person. It is an individual's simple emotion, the recognition that they encounter is

either fun or painful, or whether they feel relaxed or restless. Nevertheless, affects is a drive resulting in emotions. Emotion is a prevalent factor of persuasion, social influence, and change in attitude. In other words, emotions are feelings people have in response to different thoughts and situations. Besides, there is a profound effect of thoughts on emotion as it can trigger emotions. For example, a student worrying about an upcoming public examination may cause fear.

Emotional ambivalence does occur sometimes, where an individual is experiencing two emotions at the same time. It consists of positive and negative emotions, for instance, the attitude of procrastinating. One will be anxious and enthusiastic to start the task, but at the same time stirring up concern about not being able to successfully achieve it. The emotions last for seconds to a minute and can sometimes be predicted through distinct facial expressions. They seem to happen either immediately or very quickly after a situation occurs. For example, feeling happy for scoring the quiz in class. Emotions tend to be strong also accompanied by facial gestures, physical reaction, and body language. They have the power to transform, change, or develop moods.

In contrast, moods are not as strong as emotions and may have a trigger that is less clear, immediate, or visible. They normally last hours or days longer than emotion. Moods are not recognizable by their trigger; therefore, one can just wake up being in a bad mood without reason or triggers. The unknown triggers may be seen from biological factors such as hormonal change during the menstruation cycle for women. In general, they can be classified into 'positive' and 'negative' groups, meaning a 'bad' or 'good' mood. For example, one is aware of being in a good mood when there is an incline positive emotion such as being happy and cheerful and being in a bad mood when there is an incline of negative emotions such as being sad and grumpy.

Accordingly, feelings can influence one's attitude through persuasiveness. According to Gregory R. Maio and Geoffrey Haddock (2015) in their book *The Psychology of Attitudes & Attitude Change* (2nd edition) [4] stated that emotion is powerful in its persuasiveness and strength. From an early age, children were wary of approaching their parents with a request when they perceive a change of mood from their parents. They appeared to realize that at the point of time parents, teachers, or anyone for a matter of fact are likely to dislike something and that they will be better off waiting for the bad mood to change. Subsequently, persuasive messages are more successful when the message is framed to match the recipient's emotional state. Van Kleef (2009) hypothesized that people use others' emotional expressions to notify their own emotions, but only if they are sufficiently encouraged and able to process those expressions[5].

3.2. THE INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONS ON ATTITUDE FORMATION

In our study life and daily life, we will be affected by emotions. John V. Petrocelli (2017) argued that emotion plays an overwhelmingly important role in the formation, maintenance, and change of attitudes[6]. Emotion is different from the mood. On the contrary, emotions are affective reactions. For instance, anger, disgust, fear, and so on to specific affairs or events. In the field of educational psychology, specific emotions can be different from each other in a multitude of ways. An army of studies on emotions has identified different numbers of basic emotion categories. Most models tend to include happiness, sadness, anger, disgust, and fear as five basic emotions. Emotions and attitudes are closely related, they are fused and connected, different emotions will affect our attitudes differently.

In the fields of psychology, pedagogical foundation, and educational psychology, there are some studies on the influence of emotions on attitude formation. The influence of emotions on attitude formation is specificity and uncertainty. They are two paramount characteristics of the influence of emotions on attitude formation. Specificity refers to the nature that is different from other affairs that effects emotion on attitude. Besides, happiness and sadness are the most included in a great number of studies on the effects of emotion on attitudes. A study on what most affects your attitudes was initiated by Professor Chen Zhiyan from the Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, emphasizes that 32.41% of individuals harbour the idea that the death of the closest person has the greatest impact on their attitudes. This is followed by the loss of a lover or an exceedingly lousy job. Individuals have their own emotions, under this premise, the affected attitudes cannot be felt by other individuals. Besides, they are experienced as specific emotions rather than mere diffuse moods. Undoubtedly, it is harder to interpret happiness from one source. Different individuals have different life experiences and feelings, and it is difficult to explain the same emotion.

The second characteristic is uncertainty. We can understand from the following situation that the effects of emotions may also depend on a host of certainty that they elicit. In the five basic emotions mentioned above, worry and fear involve uncertainty about future or past affairs whereas happiness, disgust, and anger occur with a sense of certainty undoubtedly. Comparative qualitative research from Chuzhou University in China in 2018 regarding certainty-related emotion causes people to process persuasive information less carefully than uncertainty-related emotion. The research result is indicative of individuals experiencing a certainty-related emotion are more likely to agree with an expert or authoritative professor than a non-expert without as much scrutiny of their arguments. In other words, uncertainty-related emotion may cause deeper processing of attitude-

relevant information. Much of the research on the influence of emotions on attitude formation in the last two decades has examined how does this uncertainty affect an individual's attitudes. Timothy (2019) argued that individuals may be afraid, but they need not be their fear. If uncertainty is threatening, it will evoke negative emotions, and these are emotions we should rather not have. In contrast, uncertainty-related emotion may cause deeper processing of attitude-relevant information. Matthijs Baas (2012) argued that emotions that associate with uncertainty lead to structured ideation. In the face of uncertain and future matters, individuals are more likely to have unstable emotions that will also consume their energy.

Studies of the influence of emotions on attitude formation suggest that the effects of emotions that are incidental to the attitude are different from emotions that are integral to it. Undoubtedly, the effects of fear messages on attitude have been extensively researched to investigate whether fear messages can make individuals afraid of certain results if people do not change their actions or view toward the attitude object. According to Goldenbeld, Twisk & Houwing (2007), if the message is so extreme, instead of being influenced by it, the audience could ignore the information altogether. This is especially if they discuss the fear appeals with others. Some examples are like taking illegal drugs, speeding, smoking, failing to wear a seat belt, and drinking while driving. As an example, just like the classroom attitude, in the new semester, a student chooses a class, but before the first class, the student heard from others that the teacher in this class has a bad temper and is particularly serious and strict. This is relative to say "fear message". In this case, students may have bad attitudes, such as excessive fear. It is widely shared that fear messages that emphasize the severity of negative results so much that individuals often deny their vulnerability to avoid feeling threatened by the fear messages.

However, other studies universally acknowledged that if fear messages are useful, as result, an individual's attitudes and behaviours may have a lot of changes. Practice related to fear messages appeared in Shanghai University, the Ministry of Education and the university jointly organized a campus activity named "No Drugs, Start with Attitude". This activity allows students to be exposed to fear message-drugs. In other words, in the emotional state of students' fear of drugs, they are exposed to fear messages- drugs, with constant contact and understanding. For example, explanations by professional anti-drug officers, they already know some knowledge about drugs and there is a slice of specific, useful recommendations which may alter their attitudes and behaviours.

3.3. THE INFLUENCE OF MOOD ON ATTITUDE FORMATION

There is also an influence of mood on attitude formation. Holland (2015) argued that attitude-behaviour relations can be based on belief-based or associative processes or an individual's mood. Previous studies of mood and attitude formation had emphasized there is a clear correlation between them. Zhang Minjie (2018) and her team members selected 200 students from a certain university as a sample. One group was stimulated by unhappy things and the other group remained stable. Subsequently, 200 students took a simple test at the same time, and the study results found that the students with stable emotions scored higher and were more willing to take the test, while the other group scored lower and had a certain resistance to the later test. Undoubtedly, moods have a powerful effect on attitude formation.[7].

First and foremost, the mood affects attitude judgment. There is a multitude of characteristics of how mood affects attitude judgment. The Mood-congruence effect is the tendency for individuals to express attitudes that match their current mood, which is shaped by something unconnected to the attitude object. Individuals invariably study in a slice of quiet libraries and subconsciously, individuals like this environment. The current mood experienced is calm, happy, and even satisfied. However, when people are around, they tend to make noises and it triggers the individual's mood. This process can prove that the mood-congruence effect is the tendency for individuals to express attitudes that match their current mood. Much of the research of mood has used methods to induce including music hypnosis, watching a sad or happy TV show, gifts, and so on. People who had received gifts evaluate certain products more positively than those who had not been offered a gift. There is one more point, I should touch on that when individuals realize that the mood comes from an irrelevant source, they can treat it as useless information for their current judgment, for instance, the weather.

Another point is the effect of mood on message processing also depends on the information in the message. Message receivers in perfect mood are likely to devote significant focus to convincing messages that help them sustain their emotions on the grounds that people in perfect mood are more attuned to the hedonic effects of their behaviour. As an example, individuals in a better mood will devote greater attention and scrutiny to uplifting persuasive messages. In the contrast, they devote less attention and scrutiny to depressing messages. The perfect mood appears to lead people to think carefully about uplifting information and avoid mood-threatening information. Bless. H (2016) argued that individuals in a perfect mood are more likely to grasp the focus of matters and focus their paramount energy and crucial time on more valuable matters.

Much of the research in the influence of mood on attitude formation has examined how good and bad moods affect people's attitudes. As a slice of examples, Xuda (2018) argued that individuals in a perfect mood will improve the use and review of useful information. On the contrary, individuals in a poor mood will pay a slice of attention to paramount information. These words are demonstrated in a study conducted by Xuda and his research team in 2017. The researchers divided the 100 samples into two groups, one group was individuals in a perfect mood and the other group was individuals in a relatively negative mood. The researchers were observed through a one-month stereotype study and after one month, researchers have found that individuals who are in a perfect mood are better at receiving information and completing tasks. Besides, Chen Zhiyan (2020) argued that a poor mood perse is not the problem, and what matters is your attitude toward the bad mood. A bad mood does not hurt everyone to the same degree[8]. Those who apprehend this tend to suffer fewer ill effects from the supposedly dark sides of the psyche.

However, these variations were not found for subjects in a positive affect situation. Indeed, students in the positive affect condition exhibited greater perspective-taking and feelings of compassion and sympathy for the dissimilar target. Secondly, Thomas Oppong (2018) argued that open-minded individuals see the world differently and as a result are happier, healthier, and more creative. Open-minded people may be living in a different mood and openness can even impact how you visually see the world. Thirdly, a psychological study conducted by researcher Anna Antinori, Olivia L. Carter, and Luke D. Smillie (2018) revealed that open-minded individuals may live in a completely different reality. They find that transparency and mood can influence how you physically view the world and can influence creativity. Furthermore, Anna (2017) argued that open-minded individuals appear to have a more flexible perception and let through more information than the average person. Open-minded individuals see things differently than individuals who are closed to new experiences. Openness to experience is characterized by versatile cognition-open individuals are more adventurous, imaginative, and inspired to discover the environment and connect with potential.

Therefore, mood plays a paramount role in attitude formation, especially in being open-minded towards an attitude object. Change your perspective by practicing open-mindedness. By shifting your outlook and maintaining open-minded ways to make your life great, not only do you evolve, but also inspire your peers and loved ones to become better versions of themselves.

4. CONCLUSION

Classrooms are an emotional environment. Emotional interactions of students may influence their desire to

learn, their interest in education, and their career choices. For example, students may be enthusiastic when learning, hope for progress, feel pride about their successes, be shocked to try a new approach, experience anxiety over failing tests, feel guilty of bad grades, or be bored during classes. In addition, emotions are part of the student's identity and influence the growth of personality, psychological health, and physical wellbeing, especially their attitude. From an instructional point of view, emotions are essential because of their impact on learning and progress, but the mental well-being of students can also be viewed as an educational purpose that is important.

Furthermore, teacher' emotions and mood influences students' attitude in the classroom most of the time. Teachers' emotions and mood influence students' motivation where spontaneous positive emotional expressions of teachers in classroom, provokes a greater interest in subjects and make the students to be more participatory because teachers' positive emotions produce motivation in students(Rodrigo-Ruiz, 2016)[11]. Students' motivation is a key product of their positive attitude in classroom. A qualitative study conducted by Maria J. Hernandez- Amoros and Maria E. Urrea-Solano in 2017 on the future teachers' perception and opinions about type of emotions they should be worked with their students and their opinions about emotional education in teachers training (Hernandez-Amoros & Urrea-Solano, 2017)[12]. As a result, most of the students under teachers training believe that emotional education will encourage the proper integration of students into social frameworks and emotional well- being is an important key factor of student' s achievement in classroom.

Finally, 'mood- congruence- hypothesis' is a well- known theory in the topic of emotions and mood. Based on the idea of cognitive networks, this hypothesis suggests that mood congruence can ease cognitive processes. Good information, such as feedback after a good test, can be more readily remembered in a positive mood like happiness than in a bad mood like disappointment and negative information, such as when you missed the test, is more easily remembered in a negative mood than in a positive mood. The reasons for the influence of congruence lie in the architecture of our brain, which is structured by connections and semantic similarities, where the more similar and greater the connection, the closer the detail is to the position and the simpler the activation (Hascher, 2010)[13]. So, an information that a student heard influence his or her mood in school and classroom. As the result, the mood effect the student' s attitude throughout the period in the classroom.

In a nutshell, Students feel a wide spectrum of feelings that can have significant impacts on their learning, personality growth and wellbeing. The results of these emotions can be complicated. Good emotions do not

always help learning, and negative emotions do not always discourage learning. However, for most students and academic learning activities, learning satisfaction is beneficial, while fear, guilt, hopelessness, and boredom are counterproductive. Most notably, educators could help students grow self-confidence, curiosity and the innate importance of education that encourages learning enjoyment and decreases negative emotions as this will shape their attitude positively in future.

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