

## Exploring Subjective Simultaneous Mixed Emotion Experiences in Middle Childhood

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**Abstract :** Background: Evidence is mounting that mixed emotions can be experienced simultaneously in different ways across the lifespan. Four types of patterns of simultaneously mixed emotions (sequential, prevalent, highly parallel, and inverse types) have been identified in middle childhood and adolescence. Moreover, the recognition of these experiences tends to develop firstly when children consider peers rather than the self. This evidence from children and adolescents is based on examining the presence of experiences specified in adulthood. The present study, therefore, applied an exhaustive coding scheme to investigate whether children experience types of previously unidentified simultaneous mixed emotional experiences. Methodology: One hundred and twenty children (60 girls) aged 7 years 1 month - 9 years 2 months ( $X=8$  years 1 month;  $SD = 10$  months) were recruited from mainstream schools across the UK. Two age groups were formed (youngest,  $n = 61$ , 7 years 1 month- 8 years 1 months: oldest,  $n = 59$ , 8 years 2 months - 9 years 2 months) and allocated to one of two conditions hearing vignettes describing happy and sad mixed emotion events in age and gender-matched protagonist or themselves. Results: Loglinear analyses identified new types of flexuous, vertical, and other experiences along with established sequential, prevalent, highly parallel, and inverse types of experience. Older children recognised more complex experiences other than the self-condition. Conclusion: Several additional types of simultaneously mixed emotions are recognised in middle childhood. The theoretical relevance of simultaneous mixed emotion processing in childhood is considered, and the potential utility of the findings in emotion assessments is discussed.

**Keywords :** emotion, childhood, self, other

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