

An Investigation of Simultaneous Mixed Emotion Experiences for Self and Other in Early Childhood

Authors : Esther Burkitt, Dawn Watling

Abstract : Background: Four types of patterns of simultaneous mixed emotions have been identified in middle childhood, adolescence and adulthood. The present study applied an analogue emotion scale which permits measuring of intensity of opposite valence emotions over time rather than bipolar ratings and used an exhaustive coding scheme to investigate whether children in early childhood experience previously identified and additional types of mixed emotional experiences. Methods: To explore the presence of simultaneous mixed emotion experiences in early childhood, 112 children (59 girls) aged 5 years 1 month - 7 years 2 months ($X=6$ years 1 month; $SD = 10$ months) were recruited across the UK. They were allocated on the basis of alternation by gender on class lists to one of two conditions hearing vignettes describing mixed emotion events in an age and gender matched protagonist or themselves (other, $n = 57$ and self, $n = 55$). Findings: Distinct types of flexuous, vertical and other experiences were identified alongside sequential, prevalent, highly parallel and inverse types of experiences identified in older populations. Conclusions: The analogue emotion scale uncovered a broader range of simultaneous mixed emotional experiences than previously identified. The value of exploring the utility of the findings in emotion assessments is discussed.

Keywords : childhood, emotion, graphing, self

Conference Title : ICDPA 2025 : International Conference on Developmental Psychology and Adolescence

Conference Location : Vancouver, Canada

Conference Dates : August 05-06, 2025