RESEARCH ARTICLE

Social Representations about the Concepts of Emotion and Culture According To Student Teachers

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The research was initiated out of concern for the lack of knowledge that education students have regarding the concepts of emotion and culture. The specific objective was to investigate the social representations of education students in the region of La Araucanía, Chile, regarding the concepts of emotion and culture. The method is based on the theory of social representations, so it is descriptive with a non-experimental cross-sectional design. The participants were 129 higher education students from a university in the Araucanía region, selected under a non-probabilistic and intentional criterion. The results indicated that the words with the highest semantic weight in the core of emotion were feeling, joy, happiness, and calmness. In the case of culture, the highest semantic weight was given to custom, tradition and diversity. It is important to note that most students showed an understanding of the links between culture and emotion in their social representations, the former being a mediating element in the processes of emotional regulation. These findings support the potential of intercultural education to deconstruct the instrumental discourse of education in Chile.

INTRODUCTION

Mental health is a state of mental wellbeing that allows people to cope with moments of tension or stress, develop skills, learn and work appropriately (World Health Organization: WHO, 2022). This becomes fundamental during childhood, when aspects associated with development, such as a positive sense of identity, the capacity for emotional regulation, social relationships or skills to play an active role in society, become a priority (Leiva et al., 2015).

Worldwide, around one billion people suffer from a mental disorder, 50% of whom start at the age of 14 (Fusar-Poli et al., 2021). Internationally, in the UK school education setting, it was found that approximately one in five adolescents report symptoms of mental and emotional disorders (Deighton et al., 2019). Furthermore, the East Asia and Pacific and South Asia regions had the highest rates of adolescent mental disorders, with higher prevalence also found in the Middle East and North Africa, North America and Western Europe (UNICEF, 2022). Meanwhile, countries that stand out in terms of success in mental health policy include Australia and New Zealand with considerable resources devoted to building institutional frameworks for action to treat and prevent potential mental health disorders (Library of National Congress [NCB], 2018).

Furthermore, according to data provided by UNICEF (2022), as a result of the same mental health disorders, suicide has become one of the five leading causes of death among children and adolescents aged 15-19, ranking third in Latin America and the Caribbean. Thus, in Chile, the Ministry of Health formulates the National Mental Health Plan that arises from the collective analysis to combat the fact that mental problems and disorders constitute the main source of disease burden in Chile, particularly affecting and impacting people of indigenous peoples (Ministry of Health [MINSAL], 2017).

In this context, a dimension directly linked to mental health is emotional regulation (ER), understood as the intrinsic and extrinsic processes that allow the control, maintenance and modification of emotional reactions (Thompson, 1994). Also, ER is considered as a transdiagnostic element in psychotherapy, becoming the central objective for the treatment of internalised and externalised problems associated with mental health problems (Caqueo-Urízar et al., 2020). Emotional dysregulation can be linked to substance use, anxiety disorders, panic attacks, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and self-harm (Pérez and Guerra, 2014; Fuentes-Vilugron et al., 2022). For this reason, the assessment and promotion of SR is a way to encourage people to engage in behaviours that promote mental health (Menefee et al., 2022).

The problem of mental health and emotional dysregulation permeates the school context and in response to these problems in the child and youth population, the concept of school mental health (SMH) was born, considering the school as a priority context for action in this area (Rojas-Andrade and Leiva, 2018). It is for this reason that mental health literacy becomes a relevant component in educational processes, since the knowledge and beliefs associated with it help in the recognition, management and even prevention of various mental disorders at the individual, community and institutional levels (Macaya and Parada, 2019; Zabaleta et al., 2023). Therefore, when analysing the risk factors that affect mental health in childhood and adolescence, the following stand out: a) academic failure; b) failure of establishments to provide an appropriate environment to support school attendance and learning; and c) inadequate provision of the required education (BCN, 2022).

In consideration of the above, it is argued that the main risk factors for mental health are related to the decontextualisation of educational processes, especially in contexts of social and cultural diversity. Historically, schools in predominantly indigenous contexts have had an exogenous origin under a Eurocentric educational model, created to colonise (acculturate) indigenous students (Torres and Friz, 2020). This schooling process spans a lifetime and the educational goals are based on a monocultural, centralised and homogenising model that does not consider the students' own knowledge and wisdom in their development (Quilaqueo et al., 2016; Quintriqueo and Arias-Ortega, 2019; Quintriqueo et al., 2022).

Among the processes of monocultural schooling, educational institutions establish an emotional ideal anchored in the colonial past, which is based on the Western, hierarchical and hegemonic Eurocentric social and cultural framework, affecting both Mapuche and non-Mapuche students, through the visibilisation of attitudes of school discrimination, by excluding vernacular educational and cultural knowledge (Riquelme et al., 2016). In this sense, it is argued that culture mediates ideal affective states and forms of emotional behaviour, with the family, school, parents and teachers being the main agents of socialisation responsible for aligning and maintaining the beliefs associated with emotion, with the cultural characteristics of the student body (Riquelme et al., 2019). However, if the cultural framework in which emotional beliefs have been developed is lost, it can lead to overdiagnosis and/or exclusion, which has been a common aspect in indigenous and/or migrant children (Riquelme et al., 2019).

In this sense, emotional education is fundamental in schools, since it is a continuous process that integrates an ideal knowledge of feeling and particular social contexts (Riquelme et al., 2016). This also includes pedagogical practices in terms of education associated with RE, which requires a high level of sensitivity to one's own and the students' emotions and which facilitate the processes of interpersonal relationships in the classroom (Costa et al., 2021). However, there is a lack of teacher training on emotional education for mental health, which has resulted in the possible impossibility of transmitting aspects linked to SR, affecting the comprehensive education of their students (Martín and Jiménez, 2020). In summary, for the development of an education focused on the comprehensive education of students, teachers must recognise and make visible the diverse knowledge associated with the socio-cultural characteristics of students, not only considering universal knowledge regarding emotion, but also the cultural knowledge associated with the emotional ideal and appropriate emotional behaviour of all students according to the culture to which they belong (Riquelme et al, 2016).

From the above background, the need arises to recognise the social representations that student teachers in the Araucanía region have regarding the concepts of emotion and culture. In this regard, social representations are considered as the collective knowledge and interpretation that considers information, beliefs, experiences, opinions and attitudes about a given object (Abric, 1994). Thus, these elements form and/or give meaning to a community's behaviour or practice (Fuentes et al., 2023; Olivares-Donoso, 2015). This would allow people to orient themselves in their social-material world and facilitate communication between the members of a community to obtain a mastery of the social environment (Farr, 2003; Jodelet, 1986). Since, as Abric (1994) indicates, social representations focus on the functions of: knowledge, to understand and explain reality; identity, to safeguard the characteristics of groups; for the orientation of social practices and behaviours; and justifying the thinking and behaviours of the members of a collectivity.

Materials and Methods

In consideration of the stated objectives, the methodology to be used is based on educational research (McMillan and Schumacher, 2005) and from a socio-critical paradigmatic approach (Horkheimer, 2003; Giroux and McLaren, 1998; Freire, 2005). In this regard, this research is descriptive, with a non-experimental and cross-sectional design, since, through its interpretative approach, it will allow us to identify, describe and understand the social representations that students in the process of initial teacher training have in relation to the concept of emotion and culture and how these are linked.

Data collection instrument

A survey of social representations on emotion and culture was used as a data collection instrument. This instrument will be applied to students who are in the process of training in pedagogy, and consists three parts: a) 5 questions of a personal nature; b) 2 questions associated with the social representation of the central nuclei, in which the students listed 10 words, with the number 1 being the one they considered to have the greatest association with the central nucleus and 10 the one with the least association; and c) 2 questions of justification about the link between emotion and culture.

Participants

This research is composed of 129 participants, which corresponded to students in the process of initial teacher training enrolled in higher education institutions in the region of La Araucanía (Survey of Social Representations). In this regard, the sampling technique to be implemented is non-probabilistic by convenience based on ethnic characteristics, training career and geopolitical and territorial belonging (table 1).

Table 1. No. of participants by pedagogical careers

RACE	QUANTITY	%
Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education	44	34,1
Pedagogy in Special Education	27	20,9
Pedagogy in History, Geography and Social Sciences	23	17,8
Pedagogy in Physical Education	10	7,8
Pedagogy in Spanish Language and Communications	9	7,0
Secondary Education in Natural Sciences and Biology	6	4,7
Pedagogy in Intercultural Basic Education in a Mapuche Context	5	3,8
Pedagogy in Basic Education with special mention	4	3,1
Pedagogy in Mathematics	1	0,8
Total	**129**	**100**

Of the 129 participants, 79 (61.2%) belong to the commune of Temuco; 9 participants (7%) to the commune of Padre las Casas; while the other 41 students (32.2%) belong to other communes in the region of La Araucanía. Regarding the gender of the participants, 92 (71.3%) belong to the female gender, 1 (0.8%) to the fluid gender, 33 (25.6%) to the male gender, 2 (1.6%) to the non-binary gender and 1 (0.8%) to the transfemininity gender.

Analysis procedure and technique

For the analysis of social representations, the results obtained were first tabulated in a spreadsheet. Then, using SPSS statistical software, a frequency analysis of the questions was carried out prior to the analysis of the semantic weight. Subsequently, for the semantic weight analysis, the values and scores of each word were inverted, i.e. the first word had a value of 10, the second of 9, the third of 8 and so on. In this way, the M-value and the FMG value were identified in order to subsequently carry out the interpretative analysis according to the results obtained.

RESULTS

The results obtained from the application of a questionnaire to 129 students in the process of initial teacher training in nine teaching degree courses, among which we will present the following results: a) Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education; b) Pedagogy in Differential Education; c) Pedagogy in History, Geography and Social Sciences; d) Pedagogy in Physical Education; e) Pedagogy in Spanish Language and Communications; f) Secondary Pedagogy in Natural Sciences and Biology; g) Pedagogy in Intercultural Basic Education in Mapuche Context; h) Pedagogy in Basic Education with mention; and i) Pedagogy in Mathematics, belonging to three higher education institutions located in the commune of Temuco in La Araucanía (Table 1).

Analysis of the semantic weight of the concept of emotion

Based on the answers given by the 129 participants, a total of 220 words were identified. In this respect, the first 20 words with the highest semantic value (M-value) were analysed together with the semantic distance in terms of the central core (FMG-value) (Table 2).

Table 2. Words with the highest semantic weight of the core Emotion

CONCEPT	VALUE M	GFM (%)
Sentiment	703	100,0%
Joy	420	59,7%
Happiness	415	59,0%
Peace of mind	204	29,0%
Anger	186	26,5%
Love	185	26,3%
Sensation	185	26,3%
Expression	179	25,5%
Sadness	166	23,6%
Reaction	138	19,6%
Fear	132	18,8%
Affection	111	15,8%
Courage	111	15,8%
Empathy	85	12,1%
Passion	82	11,7%
Shock	79	11,2%
Communication	76	10,8%
Sensitivity	74	10,5%
Regulation	70	10,0%
Moment	61	8,7%
J=20		

In the list of words shown in table 2, it can be seen that the concepts with the greatest semantic weight (m-value) with respect to the central nucleus (Emotion) correspond to: Feeling (100%), Joy (59.7%), Happiness (59%), Tranquility (29%) and Anger (26.5%). In this respect, with regard to the social representations of student teachers, it can be interpreted that the concept of Emotion is directly linked to feelings, considering that feelings become the subjective response or interpretation of the emotional experience. That is, the interrelation between emotion and thought. Likewise, there is a noticeable decrease in the semantic weight of the following words (table 2).

Table 3. Words with less semantic weight of the nucleus Emotion

CONCEPT	VALUE M	GFM (%)
Amygdala	1	0,1%
Rapture	1	0,1%
Kindness	1	0,1%
Quality	1	0,1%
Body	1	0,1%
Indifference	1	0,1%
Trial	1	0,1%
Remorse	1	0,1%
Resilience	1	0,1%
Affective responsibility	1	0,1%

Stir	1	0,1%
Sincerity	1	0,1%
Event	1	0,1%
Suffering	1	0,1%
J=14		

With regard to some of the words that had less semantic weight (m) in relation to the central nucleus, being mentioned on only one occasion, we find: Affective responsibility (0.1%), Suffering, Amygdala (0.1%), Resilience (0.1%) and Quality (0.1%), among others (table 3). Undoubtedly, some of these words were less represented despite having a close relationship with the central core, as is the case of amygdala, which is linked to emotional learning, or affective responsibility, which is often considered indistinct from emotions and feelings. However, knowing the differences allows for greater clarity of internal experiences. In this case, emotions are specific responses to certain stimuli that occur individually, while affects are more general responses that arise from the link with others.

Analysis of the semantic weight of the concept of Culture

Based on the answers given by the 129 participants, a total of 243 words were identified. In this respect, the first 20 words with the highest semantic value (m-value) were analysed together with the semantic distance in terms of the central core (FMG value) (Table 4).

Table 4. Words with the highest semantic weight of the nucleus Culture

CONCEPT	VALUE M	GFM (%)
Custom	400	100%
Tradition	393	98,3%
Diversity	375	93,7%
Language	349	87,3%
Beliefs	274	68,5%
Identity	260	65,0%
Society	260	65,0%
History	231	57,8%
Community	155	38,8%
Art	146	36,5%
Knowledge	146	36,5%
Values	137	34,3%
Education	119	29,8%
Ethnicity	105	26,3%
Ideology	103	25,8%
Respect	100	25,0%
Religion	96	24,0%
Territory	83	20,8%
Food	76	19,0%
Life	74	18,5%
J=20		

In the list of words shown in table 4, it can be seen that the concepts with the greatest semantic weight (m-value) with respect to the central nucleus (Culture) correspond to: Custom (100%), Tradition (98.3%). With regard to the social representations of the participants, it can be interpreted that the concepts of custom, tradition and also the concept of beliefs can be associated with the

central core due to the definition given by the Royal Spanish Academy, which states that culture is the set of customs, traditions and beliefs that characterise a people. Likewise, the representativeness of these concepts is also linked to the discursive use at university academic and school level through the curricular bases, as is the case of unit four in the subject of History, Geography and Social Sciences.

Not so distant from the previous words are the concepts of Diversity (93.7%) and Language (87.3%). In this regard, the concept of diversity could be linked due to the context to which the participants belong, considering that the region of La Araucanía is characterised by its cultural diversity, mainly associated with indigenous peoples, with 34.3% of people declaring themselves to belong to an indigenous people (National Institute of Statistics [INE], 2019). On the other hand, the concept of language is also highly representative, as it is the main tool for generational transmission and cultural expression.

Table 5. Words with less semantic weight of the nucleus Culture

CONCEPT	VALUE M	GFM (%)
Attention	1	0,3%
Flag	1	0,3%
Preserve	1	0,3%
Continuity	1	0,3%
Decency	1	0,3%
Entity	1	0,3%
Stereotype	1	0,3%
Exclusion	1	0,3%
Research	1	0,3%
Game	1	0,3%
Mentality	1	0,3%
Participation	1	0,3%
Particularity	1	0,3%
Translation	1	0,3%
Unit	1	0,3%
J=15		

The words with the least semantic weight are shown in table 5, which shows that, according to the social representations of the participants, they have a minimal relationship index with the central nucleus, being mentioned only once, giving them the lowest score.

Link between the concept of emotion and culture

Before delving deeper into the social representations of the students in relation to the possible link between the concepts of emotion and culture, the student teachers were asked whether they believed in the existence of a direct link between emotions and culture, with encouraging results. Of the 129 participants, 91.5% of the participants reported such a link, while only 8.5% stated that there was no link between these concepts (table 6).

Table 6. Emotion-Culture Link

Link	Quantity	%
Yes	118	91,5%
No	11	8,5%
Total	**129**	**100%**

In this regard, several studies conducted over the last decade have linked the concepts of emotion and culture, highlighting that culture can influence the ways in which people experience, express and understand their own and others' emotions. This is corroborated by the trainees when they express that (table 7):

Table 7.Student story emotion-culture link

Student of Basic Pedagogy	Student of Intercultural Basic Pedagogy in Mapuche Context	Student of Pedagogy in Kindergarten Education
"I think so, because we construct or feel emotions according to the contexts in which we grow and form ourselves, which is directly related to culture, mainly our identity, which is permeated by culture and the context or contexts in which we live our lives.	"Emotion and culture go hand in hand because culture predetermines the emotion or how the emotion is expressed in the environment in which I am or move".	"I think these concepts of emotion and culture are linked because it influences a lot the way we live and grow up because of the environment in which we grew up, reflecting our way of being, because we adopt the ways of our social group around us.

Moreover, as Olivo-Franco (2022) points out, emotions are directly related to the formation and development of identity, which underlies the sense of belonging to a given social context, collectivity or community. Since, as Rebollo et al. (2006) state, emotions are mediated by cultural aspects of a symbolic nature provided by social contexts. Thus, these instruments are key to constructing our identity (self-esteem, affective style, etc.). As indicated by the participants (table 8):

Table 8. Students' accounts of the link between emotion and the development of cultural identity

Student of Special Education Pedagogy	Student of Pedagogy in History, Geography and Social Sciences	Student of Pedagogy in Kindergarten Education
"Emotions are the basis of every person and every culture has its own way of expressing itself, thus creating its own identity and reintegration in the social sphere".	"I believe that these concepts are linked through various sectors and relationships throughout society, understanding and comprehending the concepts of culture and emotion gives us a social identity".	"I think these concepts of emotion and culture are linked because it influences a lot the way we live and grow up because of the environment in which we grew up, reflecting our way of being, because we adopt the ways of our social group around us.

Despite the above accounts, there is also a minority of participants who found no linkage at all, stating the following (table 9):

Table 9. Students' accounts of not linking emotion and culture

Student of Pedagogy in Kindergarten Education	Student of Pedagogy in Kindergarten Education	Student of Pedagogy in Kindergarten Education
"I am unable to recognise how the concepts are connected,	"Emotions are personal, everyone experiences their	"I believe that emotions and culture are not linked,

because it is difficult for me to even associate concepts to these two words that are in my daily life but never associated to synonyms".	feelings, thoughts and those components of the soul. Culture is formed through customs, traditions and community life. Clearly this is born from the will of the people, but each individual is independent and unique in experiencing their emotions, not the culture they acquired by being born and growing up in a certain place".	because people can feel and perceive in different ways, regardless of their culture. We are all affected by the same things in different ways".

In summary, the above accounts reveal a lack of knowledge in relation to initial teacher training in areas such as emotional education in contexts of social and cultural diversity.

DISCUSSION

The social representations about the central core of emotion are directly linked to the concept of feeling, being considered by students as one and the same concept. However, despite the fact that until the 1980s research still did not allow us to define, evaluate and establish the differences between these terms (Balladares and Saiz, 2015). Over the years, it was possible to differentiate, since, currently, emotion is considered as a universally recognisable expression, which can be of short duration, as an immediate response to the environment, and which does not last over time (Buitrago, 2021; Ortony, 2022); while feeling refers to an emotional disposition that comprises a global and associative vision of intentional objects that is subject to an initial assessment of emotions, together with thoughts and memories (Balladares and Saiz, 2015; Ekman, 2012; Frijda et al, 1991; Garrido, 2020; Otero, 2006).

In this sense, representations are not far from reality, since there is a link between emotion and feeling, because one cannot be separated from the other. Ekman (1992) who during his research established a list of emotions that are considered primordial and can be simply distinguished through facial expression: happiness, anger, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust and contempt. In this context, the students' social representations indicated that, together with feelings, the concepts with the greatest semantic weight correspond to joy, happiness, calmness and anger. In this sense, these concepts are related to the central core, since some of these are basic emotions (joy and anger) (Cossini et al., 2017); while joy (a stronger form of happiness) and calmness, although not basic emotions, are states that can become more complex responses to basic emotions.

These results are comparable and have certain similarities with Mendieta-Izquierdo et al. (2021), who states that the concept of emotion is mainly associated with basic emotional expressions such as joy, sadness and anger. These emerge as reactions to significant stimuli with complex behavioural patterns involving multiple modalities: facial muscle movements, vocal signals, body movements, among others (Keltner et al., 2019).

With regard to the central core of culture, five concepts were identified as having the greatest semantic weight: custom, tradition, diversity, language and beliefs. This is directly related to the definition of culture provided by Héau (2020) when he states that "culture is the social organisation of meaning" (p.491), since, in this definition, organisation refers to culture as the articulation of diverse elements (diversity); that it is social, the product of the interrelation of collectivities or communities (language); and meaning is the mental activities that allow us to understand objects, ideas, attitudes, among others (custom, tradition, beliefs).

On the other hand, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) defines culture as the spiritual and material, intellectual and emotional characteristics of a social group, encompassing the arts and literature, lifestyles, ways of life, value systems, traditions and beliefs (Fuentes and Riquelme, 2023; UNESCO, 2001), which shows that the answers provided by the participants in this research are in line with the definitions of culture in recent decades.

Thinking about the central cores of this research (emotion and culture), a large majority of the participants indicated that there is a link between culture and emotions. This is also stated by Fuentes (2020) when he states that the society and culture to which they belong becomes fundamental in the lived experiences that can influence the development of beliefs, values and principles that are directly related to the emotional and affective dimension. Likewise, Riquelme et al. (2016) indicate that the development of emotional competences is linked to family and cultural scenarios or contexts, where the expected guidelines for expressing and interpreting emotion are delineated. This highlights the link of culture as a mediating aspect in the processes of emotional regulation (Fuentes et al., 2023; Halberstadt et al., 2020; Liddell and Williams, 2019; Matsumoto et al., 2008; Matsumoto and Sung, 2011; Qu and Telzer, 2017; Riquelme et al., 2019; Riquelme et al., 2023; Tsai et al., 2006).

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Students in the process of initial teacher training have constructed their social representations regarding emotion and culture in accordance with their training in a higher education context that has taken inclusion and emotional education as part of its ethical and moral discourses and practices. Even so, there is also confusion regarding concepts that have historically been omitted from the social and educational reality of the country. Since emotions have only been taken into consideration to a greater extent in the last two decades, and from the cultural aspects, Chilean education has historically been marked by the reproduction of hegemonic and monocultural practices. In other words, students have only known one way of educating emotions and understanding diversity.

However, the growing understanding of social and cultural diversity has made it possible to make visible the different ways of representing the educational reality, which consequently contributes to the contextualisation of the ways of educating emotions according to the cultural characteristics of the students. In this context, and based on the results of this study, needs and challenges arise to educate trainee teachers in contents associated with emotional education and the contexts of social and cultural diversity, considering a break with the monocultural view that allows the understanding and recognition of cultural diversity.

This would allow future teachers to modify their teaching practices according to the contextualisation of the contents of the national curriculum and the hidden curriculum. For this, it is necessary for teachers to know and make use of the students' own knowledge and wisdom and their ways of regulating, expressing and educating emotions according to their own cultural beliefs and customs. In this respect, intercultural education emerges as a possible response to the lack of knowledge of the central nuclei (culture and emotion) in educational contexts at all levels, as a form of dialogue of socio-cultural knowledge for the comprehensive development of students.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST. The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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