

Individuals' Kind of Crying as a Predictor of their Reaction to Others' Crying

Ali Pakizeh^{1*} and Bahman Dashtinejad²

¹. Assistant Professor, Persian Gulf University, Boushehr, Iran.

². Psychology Student, Persian Gulf University, Boushehr, Iran.

*Corresponding author's e-mail: Pakizeh1392@chmail.ir

ABSTRACT: Crying is a universal expression of extreme emotion and also a natural emotional response to certain feelings, usually sadness and hurt, but sometimes under other circumstances and occasions, such as joy. Crying has an impact on others and the social environment. In other words, emotional tears determine how others perceive and react to a person. The current study investigated the relations between individuals' kind of crying (the reasons behind their crying) with their reactions to others' crying. For this purpose, 200 individuals (120 females and 80 males) were selected among Persian Gulf University students using multistage cluster sampling. They were requested to fill out Pakizeh Scale of Crying Reasons and Pakizeh Scale of Reaction to Adults Crying. The findings showed that individuals' crying as an indicator of mental weakness is the best predictor of attitudinal, affective, and behavioral reactions to others' crying as an indicator of mental weakness. The results also revealed that, individuals' crying as an indicator of mental strength is the best predictor of attitudinal, affective, and behavioral reactions to others' crying as an indicator of natural emotions and mental strength. The findings of the present research provided a new perspective on reactions to others emotional tears and indicated that the reasons behind individuals' crying are important factors in their reactions to others' crying.

Key words: Kind of Crying, Predictor, Reaction.

INTRODUCTION

Crying is the excretion of tears in response to emotional stimuli, and occurs in various emotionally charged settings. The act of shedding emotional tears is exhibited only by humans and it is an important communication device. Therefore, Crying may best be described as a typical human emotional expression, with as its main characteristic the production of tears. In other words, Crying is a universal and uniquely human way of expressing emotions, and it is typically accompanied by alterations in facial expression, vocalization, and respiration [1]. It can be elicited in a variety of situations, often with negatively evaluated situations related to separation, loss of beloved persons or cherished goods, and failing at important events, but also with positive events, such as reunions, weddings, the birth of a child, or winning a sports game [2, 3]. The human beings, regardless of any ages or cultures, cry on certain occasions to express their emotions [1]. In other words, all important emotional events are typically associated with the shedding of tears. Throughout our lives we find ourselves and those around us crying for a multitude of reasons: personal suffering, physical pain, separation, loss, failure, anger, guilt, and joy [4].

Crying, also is considered as a powerful signal in communication [5-7]. Bowlby [8] considered child crying as attachment behavior, securing the proximity of the caregiver. Other researchers, also suggested that people are most likely to cry in the presence of family and friends, in present of someone with whom they share a close relationship or at home, where intimates are usually present [9]. The findings, also shows that People may find it less appropriate when a stranger cries in their presence than when a friend or family member does [1, 10]. According to Kottler [6], crying is of the most effective ways to stop intimidation by aggressors. He also, suggests that crying is a nonverbal language that functions when words fail or are inadequate. According to other researchers, crying is an effective mean to discharge negative affect and to reduce internal tension, to discharge tension in situations in which an individual is unable to cope effectively [11], to bring people closer and strengthen the bonds between them [12], to convey emotional support and empathy [13], to plea for support when attachment bonds are broken [14], or to reduce tension and facilitates physiological recovery after having been in distress [15].

Some researchers have investigated reactions to people's crying and have found that a crying person generally receives comfort, attention, and sympathy [16-18] and, that observers tend to cry along with a crying person [19]. Research also, has shown that crying individuals elicit more feelings of sadness in observers than did individuals with a neutral, angry, or fearful face [17], and that observers try to remove a particular source of discomfort and show their empathy, and support to a crying person [1, 12]. Many observers also see crying individuals as more depressed, emotional, and sad than non-crying individuals [20]and believe that crying

communicates the message that someone wants help, comfort, or care [16, 21]. In spite of the vast attention to infants crying, surprisingly little research has been devoted to adults crying specially people's reaction to adults crying. So this study was conducted to investigate the relations between the individuals' kind of crying (or in other words, the reason behind individuals crying) and their attitudinal, affective, and behavioral reactions to others' crying.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This is a descriptive correlational research, which investigates the relationship between individuals' kind of crying (or in other words, the reason behind individuals' crying) and their reactions to others' crying.

Participants: The statistical population includes all the Persian Gulf University students at 2013-2014 academic year. As the first step of multistage cluster sampling, 3 out of the 7 colleges were selected randomly. As the second step, four majors were selected from each college. Finally, one of the classes from each major was selected as the final cluster. After giving a general, non-directive explanation on research by the researcher, the participants were asked to fill out the scales.

Instruments

Pakizeh Scale of Crying Reasons (unpublished): This scale includes 30 items and measures three different reasons for crying and specifies three types of crying, namely; crying as an indicator of mental strength, crying as an indicator of natural emotions, and crying as an indicator of mental weakness. This scale provides a series of situations and respondents are requested to specify how much the situations make them weep. Ten options were provided for each type of crying. For instance, crying when being criticized is evaluated as an indicator of mental weakness, crying when grief is evaluated as an indicator of natural emotions, and it is evaluated as an indicator of mental strength when praying God. Content validity of the scale was studied and confirmed using the experts' opinions. Criterion-related validity of the scale was studied and evaluated using similar external scale. Reliability of the scale was obtained using test-retest correlation coefficient and Cronbach's alpha as 0.76 and 0.87, respectively.

Pakizeh Scale of Reaction to Adults Crying (unpublished): This scale includes 6 scenarios. Each scenario describes a situation in which an individual is faced with some problems and begins to cry. Crying in each scenario considers as the indicator of mental strength, natural emotions, or of mental weakness (two scenarios for each). Participants were asked to read the scenarios and show their reaction to the crying person in each scenario by completing a 12 item questionnaire for each scenario.

RESULTS

Pearson correlation was conducted to examine the relations between individuals kind of crying (the reason behind their crying) with their attitudinal, affective, and behavioral reactions to others' crying. Table 1 shows the results.

Table1. the correlations between individuals kind of crying with their reactions to others crying

Individuals reaction to adults crying Individuals kind of crying	Attitudinal reaction to crying as an indicator of mental strength	Attitudinal reaction to crying as an indicator of natural emotions	Attitudinal reaction to crying as an indicator of mental weakness	Affective reaction to crying as an indicator of mental strength	Affective reaction to crying as an indicator of natural emotions	Affective reaction to crying as an indicator of mental weakness	behavioral reaction toward crying as an indicator of mental strength	behavioral reaction toward crying as an indicator of natural emotions	behavioral reaction toward crying as an indicator of mental weakness
crying as an indicator of mental strength	0.28**	0.06	-0.12	0.24**	0.02	0.03	0.22**	-0.02	0.01-
crying as an indicator of natural emotions	0.11	0.28**	0.12	0.07	0.27**	0.09	0.17*	0.18*	0.06
crying as an indicator of mental weakness	-0.03	0.23**	0.27**	-0.11	0.25**	0.18**	-0.05	0.19**	0.20**

p<0.01 *p<0.05 **

As shown in table1, there are positive significant correlations between the individuals' kind of crying as an indicator of mental strength with their attitudinal, affective, and behavior reactions toward others' crying as an

indicator of mental strength. The findings also indicate that there are positive significant correlations between the individuals' kind of crying as an indicator of natural emotions with their attitudinal, affective, and behavior reactions to others' crying as an indicators of natural emotions and also with their behavioral reaction to others' crying as an indicators of mental strength. Finally, as could be seen in table 1, there are positive significant correlations between the individuals' kind of crying as an indicator of mental weakness, with their attitudinal, affective, and behavioral reactions to others' crying as indicators of mental weakness and natural emotions.

Stepwise regression was conducted to examine the predictive power of individuals' kind of crying for their attitudinal, affective, and behavioral reactions to others' crying. Tables 2 to 4 show the results.

Table2. Stepwise regression analysis for the predictive power of individuals kinds of crying for their attitudinal reaction to others' crying

critierion variable	Predictor variables	MR	R ²	F (p)	Regression coefficients
Attitudinal reaction to others' crying as an indicator of mental weakness	Individuals' crying as an indicator of mental weakness	0.28	0.08	17.43 (0.001)	$\beta=0.28$ $t=4.17$ $P<0.001$
Attitudinal reaction to others' crying as an indicator of natural emotions	Individuals' crying as an indicator of mental strength	0.23	0.05	10.96 (0.001)	$\beta=0.23$ $t=3.31$ $P<0.001$
Attitudinal reaction to others' crying as an indicator of mental strength	Individuals' crying as an indicator of mental strength	0.17	0.03	5.71 (0.001)	$\beta=0.17$ $t=2.39$ $P<0.001$

As shown in table 2, among the three kinds of individuals' crying, individuals' crying as an indicator of mental weakness is the best predictor of attitudinal reaction to others' crying as an indicator of mental weakness ($\beta=0.28$, $P<0.001$) and also, individuals' crying as an indicator of mental strength is the best predictor of attitudinal reaction to others' crying as an indicator of natural emotions ($\beta=0.23$, $P<0.001$) and mental strength ($\beta=0.28$, $P<0./001$).

Table3. Stepwise regression analysis for the predictive power of individuals' kinds of crying for their affective reaction to others' crying

critierion variable	Predictor variables	MR	R ²	(fP)	R
affective reaction to others' crying as an indicator of mental weakness	Individuals' crying as an indicator of mental weakness	0.24	0.06	12.02 (0.001)	$\beta=0.24$ $t=3.46$ $P<0.001$
affective reaction to others' crying as an indicator of natural emotions	Individuals' crying as an indicator of natural emotions	0.27	0.07	15.58 (0.001)	$\beta=0.27$ $t=3.94$ $P<0.001$
affectiv e reaction to others' crying as an indicator of mental strength	Individ uals' crying as an indicator of mental strength	0.15	0.03	4.39 (0.001)	$\beta=0.15$ $t=2.11$ $P<0.01$

As table 3 shows, among the three kinds of individuals' crying, individuals' crying as an indicator of mental weakness is the best predictor of affective reaction to others' crying as an indicator of mental weakness ($\beta=0.24$, $P<0.001$), individuals' crying as an indicator of natural emotions is the best predictor of attitudinal reaction to others' crying as an indicator of natural emotions ($\beta=0.27$, $P<0.001$), and individuals' crying as an indicator of mental strength is the best predictor of affective reaction to others' crying as an indicator of mental strength ($\beta=0.15$, $P<0.01$).

Could be seen at table 4, among the three kinds of individuals' crying, individuals' crying as an indicator of mental weakness is the best predictor of behavioral reaction to others' crying as an indicator of mental weakness ($\beta=0.23$, $P<0.001$) and also, individuals' crying as an indicator of mental strength is the best predictor of behavioral reaction to others' crying as an indicator of natural emotions ($\beta=0.19$, $P<0.001$) and mental strength ($\beta=0.24$, $P<0.001$).

Table4. Stepwise regression analysis for the predictive power of individuals' kinds of crying for their behavioral reaction to others' crying

critierion variable	Predictor variables	MR	R ²	(f(P	Regression coefficients
behavioral reaction to others' crying as an indicator of mental weakness	Individuals' crying as an indicator of mental weakness	0.23	0.05	10.48)0.001($\beta=0.23$ $t=3.24$ $P<0.001$
behavioral reaction to others' crying as an indicator of natural emotions	Individuals' crying as an indicator of mental strength	0.19	0.04	7.44)0.01($\beta=0.19$ $t=2.72$ $P<0.01$
behavioral reaction to others' crying as an indicator of mental strength	Individuals' crying as an indicator of mental strength	0.24	0.06	2.01)0.001($\beta=0.24$ $t=3.46$ $P<0.001$

DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the relationships between individuals' kind of crying with their reactions to others' crying. The results revealed strong support for our hypothesis suggesting predictive power of individuals' kind of crying for their attitudinal, affective, and behavioral reactions to others' crying. The findings are consistent with the findings of previous studies suggesting; perceived similarity in attitudes predicts higher attraction, communication, and friendship intensity [22], people treat more favorably individuals who they consider self than individuals whom they regard others [23], attribute more positive views to in-group members than to out-group members [24], and engage in more favorable behaviors towards people who share with them some attitudes and behaviors [25]. The findings could also, explain why perceived similarity in personality could enhance conflict resolution [26], create a feeling of recognition, self-confirmation, and self-reassurance, which could then lead to more enjoyable interactions [27, 28], and relationship satisfaction [29].

REFERENCES

- Vingerhoets, A. et al. 2000. Adult crying: A model and review of the literature. *Review of General Psychology*, 4 (4), 354-377 .
- Hendriks, M.C.P. et al. 2008. Why crying improves our well-being: An attachment-theory perspective on the functions of adult crying, in: A. J. J. M. Vingerhoets, I. Nyklicek, & J. Denollet (Editors), *Emotion regulation: Conceptual and clinical issues*. (pp, 87-96). New York: Springer .
- Vingerhoets, A. et al. 2001. The situational and emotional context of adult crying. In: AJJM. Vingerhoets, & RR. Cornelius (Eds), *Adult crying. A biopsychosocial approach*. (pp, 71-90). Hove (UK): Brunner-Routledge .
- Miceli, M. & Castelfranchi, C. 2003. Crying: Discussing its basic reasons and uses. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 21: 247-273
- Cornelius, R.R. & Labott, S.M. 2001. The social psychological aspects of crying. In: AJJM. Vingerhoets & RR. Cornelius (eds.), *Adult crying: a biopsychosocial approach*. (pp, 159-176). Hove (UK): Brunner-Routledge .
- Kottler, J.A. 1996. *The language of tears*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass .
- Hendriks, M.C.P. et al. 2008. Social reaction to adult crying: The help-soliciting function of tears. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 148 (1): 22-41 .
- Bowlby, J. 1969. *Attachment*. New York: Basic Books .
- Nelson, J.K. 2005. *Seeing through tears: Crying and attachment*. New York: Brunner-Rout ledge .
- Vingerhoets, A.J.J.M. et al. 1997. The psychological context of crying episodes: Towards a model of adult crying. In: AJJM. Vingerhoets, F. van Bussel, & A. Boelhouwer (Eds.), *the (none) expression of emotions in health and disease*, (pp. 323-336). Tilburg: Tilburg University Press .
- Bindra, D. 1972. Weeping, a problem of many facets. *Bulletin of the British Psychological Society*, 25, 281-264 .
- Kottler, JA, & Montgomery, MJ, 2001. Theories of crying. In: A JJM. Vingerhoets & RR. Cornelius (Eds.), *Adult crying: A bio psychosocial approach* (pp. 1-17). Hove, England: Brunner-Rout ledge .
- Hill, P. & Martin, R.B. 1997. Empathic weeping, social communication, and cognitive dissonance. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 16: 299-232 .
- Cornelius, R.R. 1997. Toward a new understanding of weeping and catharsis? In: AJJM. Vingerhoets, F. van Bussel, & A. Boelhouwer (Eds.), *the (none) expression of emotions in health and disease,* pp. 30-32). Tilburg, the Netherland: Tilburg University Press
- Frey, W.H. 1985. *Crying, the mystery of tears*, Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press .
- Cornelius, R.R. & Lubliner, E. 2003. The and why of others' responses to our tears: Adult crying as an attachment behavior. In: AJJM. Vingerhoets, F. van Bussel, & A. Boelhouwer (Eds.), *the (none) expression of emotions in health and disease*, (pp. 327-340). Tilburg: Tilburg University Press
- Hendriks, C.P. & Vingerhoets, J.J.M. 2006. Social messages of Crying Faces: Their influence on anticipated person Perception, emotions and behavioral responses. *Journal of Cognitive and Emotion*, 6: 878-886 .

18. Aaker, J. et al. 2008. Recalling mixed emotions. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 65: 268-287 .
19. Hess, U. et al. 2000. The influence of facial emotion displays, gender, and ethnicity on judgments of dominance and affiliation. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 24: 265-283 .
20. Labott, S.M. et al. 1991. Social reactions to the expression of emotion. *Cognition and Emotion*, 5: 397– 417 .
21. Cornelius, R.R. et al. 2000. An action full of meaning and of real service: The social and emotional messages of crying. Paper presented at the 11th conference of the International Society for Research on Emotions, Quebec City, Canada.
22. Sunnafrank, M. & Ramirez, J.A. 2004. At first sight: Persistent relational effects of get-acquainted conversations. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 21: 361-379
23. Brewer, M.B. & Brown, R.J. 1998. Intergroup relations. In: D. T. Gilbert & S. T. Fiske (Eds.), *handbook of social psychology*, 2(4):554-594. Boston, MA: McGraw Hill .
24. Rustemli, A., Mertan, B. & Ciftci, O. 2000. In-group favoritism among native and immigrant Turkish Cypriots: Trait evaluations of in-group and out-group targets. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 140: 26–32 .
25. Murray, S...L, Holmes, J.G. & Griffin, D.W. 2003. Reflections on the self-fulfilling effects of positive illusions. *Psychological Inquiry*, 14: 289-295 .
26. Murray, S.L., Holmes, J.G., Bellavia, G., Griffin, D.W. & Dolderman, D. 2002. The benefits of egocentrism in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82: 563-581 .
27. Berg, J.H. & Clark, M.S. 1986. Differences in social exchange between intimate and other relationships: In V. J. Derlega & B. A. Winstead (Eds.): *Freiendship and Social Interactions*, pp. 101-128. New York: Springer-Verlag .
28. Lutz-Zois, C.J., Bradley, A.C., Mihalik, J.L. & Moorman-Eavers, E.R. 2006. Perceived similarity and relationship success among dating couples: An idiographic approach. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 23, 865-880 .
29. Luo, S, Chen, H, Yue, G, Zhang, G, Zhaoyang, R, & Xu, D, 2008. Predicting marital satisfaction from self, partner, and couple characteristics: is it me, you, or us? *Journal of Personality*, 76:1231-1266.