



AN EXAMINATION ON THE PLACE OF EMOTION IN MORAL DECISION MAKING

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Abstract

The question of how people make moral decisions has a long history in philosophy. In large part, the debate has centred around two opposing schools of thought - one arguing that people arrive at moral decisions in rational ways and the other arguing that people arrive at moral decisions in emotional ways. While moral decisions are often considered to be rational and logical, emotions play a significant role in shaping our choices. Understanding the interplay between emotion and rationality is crucial for making moral decisions. There is a growing interest in philosophy in relation to the role that emotion plays in moral judgment and decision making. Previous philosophical writings on the subject of moral decision making have exalted the role of rationality with little concern given to the role that emotions play in the process. This seems to undermine and calls to question the power or place of emotion in moral decision-making processes. Thus, this paper aimed and critically evaluated the role that emotions play in moral decision making. The paper employs critical and analytical methods as useful tools of philosophical investigation to carry out its stated objective. The paper concluded that emotions are integral in the moral decision-making processes, and this is what distinguishes human beings from machines.

Key words: Emotion, Decision, Decision-making

Introduction

The question of how people make moral decisions has a long history in philosophy and the social sciences. In large part, the debate has centred around two opposing schools of thought—one arguing that people derive moral decisions in controlled, rational, and reflective ways and the other arguing that people derive moral decisions in more automatic, emotional, and intuitive ways. Each side has adduced persuasive arguments and evidence to support its position (Denton & Krebs, 72). Moral decision-making is an essential asset for humans' integration in social contexts. Emotional processes contribute to moral judgment by assigning affective value to the moral decision-making scenarios, thus guiding the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours (Carmona-Perera *et al*, 1).

Nevertheless, there is a growing interest among scholars both in philosophy and psychology in relation to the role that emotion plays in moral judgment and decision making. Across disciplines ranging from philosophy to neuroscience, a vibrant quest to identify the effects of emotion on judgment and decision making is in progress (Lerner, 5). Interest in emotions and the impact that they have on judgement and



decision making (JDM) has been on the rise. Most researchers in this domain seem to agree that there are several ways in which emotions can enter into decision-making (Efendić, 3). However, the aim of this paper is to deepen discussion on the subject matter by critically evaluating the role that emotions play in decision making.

The Concept of Emotion

The word emotion is said to come from Latin *emovere*, which means to 'stir up', or to 'move'. The origin of the word emotion already emphasizes its actionability and relevance in behavioural drive (Garcia, 4). The term 'emotion' was introduced in research to designate passions, feelings and affections. Emotion is in a permanent interdependence with the mood, temperament, personality, disposition and motivation of the person. Emotions can be defined as a positive or negative experience associated with a particular pattern of physiological activity (Sfetcu, 2). More so, emotion refers to those affective upheavals in experience that are directed at events or objects in the world that often prompt us to act in specific ways vis-à-vis these events or objects. Since antiquity, these episodes have been branded by labels like shame, anger, fear, joy, embarrassment, or disgust, and classed into categories (Scheve & Slaby, 1). Emotion is the momentary (acute) and ongoing (chronic, continuous) disturbance within the mind (soul, spirit) caused by the discrepancy between perceived reality and one's desires (Payne, 2). An emotion is a response to a specific stimulus that can be internal, like a belief or a memory. It is also generally agreed that emotions have intentional content, which is to say that they are about something, often the stimulus itself (Johnson, par. 6).

The notion of emotion had preoccupied the philosophical discussions dating back to antiquity. In the ancient era of philosophy, the discussion on emotion and its subsequent influence on decision making were spearheaded by Plato and Aristotle. For Plato, the role of emotions was in setting the goals and in motivation, whereas in reaching practical decisions, reason and emotion were in opposition (Markič, 55). Plato treats its emotional responses as cognitive. For Plato, emotion as the seat of admiration, honour, and pride can help the rational soul in its striving to reach knowledge and to behave in accordance with the true vision of the nature of human beings and their place in the universe; but in a disordered soul, its passions nourish exaggerated aggression and vainglory (Knuuttila, 8).

Emotions were important from the point of view of many philosophical disciplines pursued by Aristotle, especially in ethics, rhetoric and poetics. A basic principle of his ethics was that man sought for the highest purpose (which he saw to be 'happiness')



with his whole soul; and this means that emotions, as a part of it, had to be engaged in that pursuit. Aristotle claimed that emotions have a very important role in various forms of social life, attitude education, political debates, and seeking for happiness. Aristotle noted that emotions were cognitive—they were based on beliefs and assessments (Dąbrowski, 9).

In the modern era, emotions were pondered on mainly in the junction area of epistemology and metaphysics, ethics and axiology. In that manner emotions were considered by Descartes, Pascal, Hobbes, Spinoza, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, Kant, among others. For instance, both Descartes and Spinoza were rationalists but their ontological positions and views about emotions were different. The former maintained that emotions are bodily appearances, though they are closely connected to the soul. The latter held that they are purely cognitive phenomena, i.e. thoughts. Descartes defined emotions-passions ambiguously as perceptions, impressions or affections caused, maintained and amplified by some movement of animal spirits. Spinoza held that our cognitive states and emotions belonged to the same kind of mental states (Dąbrowski, 10,11). For William James (1884), emotions are, first and foremost, a specific class of feelings, to be distinguished from related concepts such as moods, sensations, and sentiments. Emotions according to this view are the subjective feelings associated with bodily changes and expressive behaviours. Hence, as James famously put it, ‘we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble’ – and not vice versa (Scheve & Slaby, 1).

However, the revival of philosophical interest in emotions from the middle of the twentieth century can be traced to “*Emotion*”, an article by Erroll Bedford (1957), and *Action, Emotion and Will*, a book by Anthony Kenny (1963), which argued against the assumption that emotions are feelings, impervious to either will or reason. Bedford stressed both the intentionality and the importance of contextual factors on the nature, arousal and expression of emotions. Kenny, reviving some medieval theories of intentionality, urged that emotions should be viewed as intentional states. He defined a notion of a formal object of an intentional state “as that characteristic that must belong to something if it is to be possible for the state to relate to it” (Scarantino & Sousa, 2). This implies an excessively strong logical link between the state and its object’s actual possession of the characteristic in question. Nevertheless, it points to an important condition on the appropriateness of an emotion to a given object (Scarantino & Sousa, 2).

Emotion and Emotivism

The discussion on emotion has been deeply treated philosophically within the context



of emotivism. Emotivism in basic refers to the idea that all ethics and value judgments ultimately come from our emotions rather than rationality. So as a result, under this theory, morality is an emotional attitude rather than a verified concept (Bolton, par. 3). According to emotivism, as moral judgments are nothing more than 'pure expressions of feeling,' no one has the right to say their morality is true and another's is false. Hence, emotivism is regarded as a non-cognitive theory of ethics, whereas naturalism and non-naturalism asserts the existence of certain moral facts which are either true or false (Ozumba, 163). However, an unappealing feature of ethical emotivism is that it arbitrarily reduces morality to emotions. But morality cannot be reduced to emotions since our emotions and moral judgments may not always be in agreement with each other. It is a common feature of moral debate that we do not evaluate a moral judgment by its emotional force, but by the reasons that can be given in its support (Ekong, 30).

Although Swedish philosopher, Axel Hagerstrom has been credited as the first to formulate the theory of emotivism in 1911 in one of his lectures: 'On the Truth of Moral propositions', it was A. J. Ayer who popularized the term. It was in early 20th century that A.J. Ayer proposed his own theory of emotivism. In chapter 6 of his *Language, Truth and Logic*, one finds Ayer's earliest attempts to develop, in some detail, what came to be known as the emotive theory of ethics. In chapter 6 of *Language, Truth and Logic*, entitled: 'Critique of Ethics and Theology' Ayer began by saying that judgments of value were 'expressions of emotion,' when he discussed ethics in particular (as opposed to aesthetics), he abandoned the term 'emotion' and instead used the terms 'sentiment', 'feeling' or 'attitude'. He argued that ethical judgments express and evoke ethical emotions that are different in kind from non-ethical emotions (Ekong, 22). In other words, Ayer argued that ethical judgments were expressive and evocative of ethical or moral emotions. Ethical emotions were *sui generis* emotions, entirely distinct from other kinds of emotions. The reason is that only terms such as 'sentiment', 'feeling', and 'attitude' are qualified by 'moral' or 'ethical' in plain English. Ayer was arguing that ethical judgments express and evoke ethical emotions that are different in kind from non-ethical emotions; hence his use of the expressions 'moral sentiment', 'moral feeling' and 'moral attitude' (Mahon, 19).

Stevenson was a staunch exponent of the theory of emotivism. He enunciated three features of moral discourse. He held that genuine agreements and disagreements occur within moral discourse; that, moral terms have what he called 'magnetism' which he uses to show that if a person expresses a particular attitude *ipso facto*, the person is supposed to acquire a stronger tendency towards that attitude; and that the



scientific or empirical method of verification is not sufficient for ethics (Ozumba, 164).

Stevenson gave an account of moral disagreement that is compatible with emotivism, and he claimed he is offering something that was lacking in the work of previous emotivists such as Ayer's 'Critique of Ethics and Theology' (1936). He argues that ethical agreement and disagreements are common because value, the subject matter of ethics, is the kind of thing that is disputatious. To have a good knowledge of ethics, Stevenson argues that there is need to draw a distinction between belief and attitude. For him, beliefs inform attitudes. Therefore, he sees moral judgements as expressing and not reporting attitudes (Ozumba, 165). Stevenson's main claim is his distinction between emotive meaning and descriptive meaning, which was first stated in his 'Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms' (1937). His distinction allows him to distinguish between disagreement in attitude and disagreement in belief, which in turn allows him to give an account of moral disagreement that is compatible with the basic claims of emotivism. According to Stevenson, Moral statements evoke certain attitudes and persuade the hearer to adopt similar attitudes, this is why moral disagreement is therefore a genuine attribute of ethics because men have different beliefs. And beliefs are the ingredients that inform attitudes. So when one person says that an act is good and another says that the same act is bad, it simply means that the two have different beliefs. Nobody has contradicted the other since one is simultaneously asserting positions at the same time (Ozumba, 165).

Descriptive meaning is the sign's disposition to cause some 'cognitive mental processes', such as believing or thinking; while, on the other hand, emotive meaning is a meaning in which the response (from the hearer's point of view) or the stimulus (from the speaker's point of view) is a range of emotions. According to Stevenson, the distinction between these two kinds of meaning allows us to explain why claims such as 'Stealing books from libraries is (morally) wrong, but I do approve of it' are somehow paradoxical (Oya, 314). The most evident feature of Stevenson's emotivism is the strict relationship between ethics, or rather value judgments, and emotions. On this view, ethical words affect attitudes because they are value judgments. The force of value judgments does not simply consist in arousing an emotion, but affecting the other's system of choices, the reasons underlying his or her decisions. For Stevenson, ethical terms have the tendency to influence a person's decision (Macagno, 31-32).

However, following Stevenson's argument that ethical statements are merely talks evocations of attitudes, for instance, when one says that X is good, that for Stevenson means that he is merely expressing the view that X is good. The questions arise thus:



is it because of the likeness of X by the agent? Or is it because X possesses the quality of good? In what sense are we using good here? Should the meaning of 'good' be found in interest and desirability and not in rightness and objectivity?

The emotivism of Stevenson has been criticized on the basis that he did not properly articulate on how the agent should behave towards X in order to enable others know that X is good. Also, the notion of good should not be based on individual interest or desirability but on objectivity and universalizability, else, it will lead to conflict of interest between individuals as one's interest has the tendency of antagonizing another's interest. Emotivism is therefore seen to be destructive of morality since it does not provide for the universal objective moral standard.

Aside from Ayer and Stevenson, Hume is said to have discussed extensively on emotivism. Hume is believed by many to hold an emotivist thesis, according to which all expressions of moral judgements are expressions of moral sentiments. Hume's arguments for emotivism focus more on the causes of moral sentiments than on their relation to reason or belief, and he argues that moral sentiments are such as to arise whenever we contemplate morally relevant objects. He also holds that the presence of moral sentiments precludes any possibility of moral belief. Hume concludes that all moral judgements must be expressions of sentiments or emotions (Chamberlain, 1058). David Hume is famous for postulating, among other things, that moral judgements are made with reference to people's emotions, rather than to their deductive reasoning. Thus, moral judgements are in Hume's view conditioned on the judging subject having the capacity to feel emotion or sympathy for others. In Hume's view, it is through emotion alone that moral judgements become possible (Öhnström, 2-4).

According to Hume, when people desire something or hold an emotional response towards it, the desire or emotion motivates them to take action. In other words, for Hume, an action's motivation is intertwined with the desire tied to that action. Within Hume's ethical framework, emotions assume such a crucial role and significance. For Hume, the roots of our moral values and judgments lie within us as individuals who have emotional experiences and feelings. As a result, evaluating our actions cannot be done in a factual manner based on object references or in a logical manner based on ideas or concepts. In other words, moral judgments cannot be considered like factual or logical judgements. Hume argues that while factual or logical propositions are essentially descriptive, moral propositions are normative. According to Hume, our judgment of deliberate murder as morally wrong doesn't come from a logical



deduction through reason, but rather, it's related to our inner emotional reactions. In the ethical judgments, what we encounter are the specific emotions, desires, intentions, and thoughts. What we state as unethical is a judgment that we can get by focusing on an event or phenomenon itself (Çelik, 9).

Although Hare's universal prescriptivism displaced emotivism, which had the virtue of rejecting descriptivism but failed to do justice to the possibility of rational argument in ethics, Hare acknowledged that it was A. J. Ayer's account of emotivism which put him on the right track in ethics towards the development of a viable form of non-descriptivism. His emphasis on universalizability principle (as found in Kant's categorical imperatives), leads Hare to adopt a form of utilitarianism where other people are treated on equal terms with ourselves. In this way, Kantian and utilitarian approaches come together in his theory. Richard Hare put forward a theory of ethics in his first book, *The Language of Morals* (1952) that immediately attracted enormous interest in philosophical circles, establishing at once his reputation as a moral philosopher of the first rank. His prescriptivist account of ethics rejects naturalism and intuitionism (Hare, 72).

Finally, G. E. Moore's attempt to defend an objectivist ethics backfire and leads to emotivism (Stratton-Lake, par. 2). Moore notes that ethics was commonly defined as the science of conduct. Moore considered an altogether different sort of inquiry in his two unpublished Dissertations written in 1897 and 1898 entitled 'the Metaphysical basis of Ethics' or 'Metaphysics of Ethics' respectively. In dissertations, Moore rejects the suggestion that ethics should be defined as either the 'art' or the 'science' 'of conduct,' because this would limit ethics to

the actual pursuit of some end, or ends, in so far as such pursuit involves a systematic use of certain definite means and not to include any statement or, or enquiry into, the rules by which such end or ends may be attained' in which case ethics is simply the attempt to do what's right without worrying about why it's right. Moore baldly asserts that ethics has nothing in particular to do with human conduct, being instead simply 'the general enquiry into what is good' (Welchman, 397).

The position of Moore begs the question on the subject matter of ethics. It is common place (or common sense, borrowing from Moore himself and using differently), that ethics is concerned with the rightness or wrongness of human action. Its subject



matter is morality; and morality has to do with human conduct. Does this not mean that Moore is thinking in error when he says that the subject matter of ethics should not be about human conduct?

Notion of Moral Decision-making

To be able to conceptualize the notion of moral decision-making, it is pertinent to first of all demystify the sub-concepts: morality and decision-making. The term Morality is derived from the Latin word 'moralitas' which means 'manner', 'character', and 'proper behaviour'; it denotes the differentiation of intentions, decisions, and actions between those that are distinguished as proper and those that are improper. Morality is the moral beliefs, views, and attitudes of given individuals, societies, and groups. Morality can be a body of standards or principles derived from a code of conduct from a particular philosophy, religion, or culture, or it can derive from a standard that a person believes should be universal (Khatibi & Khormaei, 66-67). For Özlem (7), morality is defined as 'the group or network of beliefs, values, norms, orders, prohibitions, and designs which are involved in the life of a person, group, people, social class, nation, or cultural environment in a certain historical period and which guide their actions'.

On the other hand, the word decision is etymologically derived from the Latin verb *decidere* which means to separate, cut, followed by a relationship between reason and action". Decision involves concerns over the fundamental aspects of human action, as it has a connotation with reason and action (Franco & Sanches, 43). A decision is the rational process of choosing between possible actions in a situation of uncertainty (Serrat, 1). However, decision making is traditionally viewed as a rational process where reason calculates the best way to achieve the goal (Markič, 54). Decision making is where thinking and doing overlap. For that to happen profitably, a decision must be logically consistent with what the parties to it know, want, and agree they can do. Nothing, then, could do decision making a greater disservice than to treat it as a single, isolated event, not the clearly defined process it inherently is or rather should be (Serrat, 4). More explicitly, decision making can be conceptualized as follows:

Decision making is a process in determining the nature of the problem or opportunity that exists and choosing among the best alternatives available to solve problems or take advantage of opportunities. Decision making is a process of identifying and choosing between several alternative actions by agreeing - according to the demands of the situation. Decision making is the process



of choosing a solution from the best available alternative by making a decision. Decision making is a process of identifying existing problems and opportunities and solving them or taking advantage of them. Decision making is an intellectual process to choose the optimal and best option among the many alternative options available. (Mulyono et al, 227).

From the definitions of morality and decision making, the compound notion 'moral decision-making' can be conceptualized as the process by which people consider different ethical rules, principles, and guidelines in their decision-making process. During moral decision-making, people evaluate and select among the alternatives in a manner that is in line with their moral principles (Leung & Grimsley, par. 4). Moral decision-making represents a complex process that requires individuals to make consistent decisions in actions that can harm or help others, demanding a balanced achievement between personal and other interests, immediate or deferred rewards, and emotional and rational processes (Balconi & Fronda, 229). Moral decision-making is a procedure in which we evaluate our own or other peoples' actions based on norms and values. Moral decisions are challenging and conflicting because they contain choosing between two undesirable alternatives with aversive outcomes. Most times, moral decision making is understood in the context of moral dilemma. Moral dilemma is a situation in which one must choose between two values or principles that conflict. For instance, in response to a moral dilemma scenario, one could sacrifice the life of a human to save the lives of four or five other people (utilitarian response) or not taking any action, resulting in the death of all (deontological response). According to the deontology principle, a harmful action is forbidden and immoral regardless of its result, while on the other hand, the utilitarian principle determines the morality of action regarding its result (Borhany *et al*, 211).

A moral decision is a choice made based on a person's ethics, manners, character and what they believe is proper behaviour. These decisions tend to not only affect one's well-being, but also the well-being of others (Teasley, par. 1). Moral decisions can also be understood as moral judgements. Moral judgements can be understood as either judgements of obligation or judgements of value. Judgements of obligation are concerned with what we do in any given circumstance. Sentences that speak to judgements of obligation include words such as 'duty', 'ought', or 'right'. Judgements of value, on the other hand, do not concern themselves with what is the correct thing to do. Instead, judgements of value speak to what is good or what has value. 'Freedom is good' (Thomson *et al*, 19).



More so, simply understanding the rational and analytic approaches to decision making may provide an adequate basis for understanding moral decision making. Certainly, there are some ways in which moral decision making can be similar to generic rationalistic decision making. When making a moral decision, one might sometimes be able to look at the different alternatives available, to weight these alternatives, and to come up with a moral decision. In some cases, a person making a moral decision can identify a particular moral issue or problem, judge what the right action is by applying principles, values or rules in order to make a decision on the action, and act. Moreover, both conventional decision making and moral decision making specifically can also have an intuitive component. Despite these similarities, however, moral decision making also diverges from conventional decision making in several ways. Moral decisions have distinct content, because they have human elements at their core, such as the welfare or treatment of others. Nonetheless, the human aspect underlying a decision can turn it from a conventional decision to a moral one (Thomson *et al*, 48).

The terms 'moral judgement', 'moral reasoning', and 'moral cognition' are often used interchangeably although with differing definitions. The broader term 'moral decision-making' refers to any decision, including judgements, evaluations, and response choices, made within the 'moral domain', i.e. decisions regarding moral issues or principles such as justice, harm, fairness and care. A moral decision can be a response decision about how to behave in a real or hypothetical moral dilemma or it can be a judgement or evaluation about the moral acceptability of the actions, or moral character of others, including judgements of individuals, groups or institutions (Garrigana *et al*, 80).

The Role Emotions in Moral Decision Making

Exploring the role of emotion in decision making is a crucial and complex task that involves several elements (Garcia, 4). Over the years, the role of emotions in morality has been the source of serious controversies in moral philosophy. Philosophers have debated whether we should consider our emotional reactions when defining a certain action as morally permissible or not (Ugazio *et al*, 4). The role of emotion in moral decision-making is deeply debated and contested in Western philosophy. Much of the canonical scholarship in moral philosophy, for instance, describes ethical judgment and decision making as abstracted and impartial deliberative processes undertaken to temper the instincts of fundamentally autonomous and otherwise self-interested moral agents. Within this tradition, reason is the measure of moral conduct, the source of moral knowledge, and the standard by which ethical theories are judged



and justified. Emotion, by comparison, has been relatively neglected among many moral philosophers as a source of moral understanding, or even a significant component of moral experience. It was not until the mid-20th century that a substantial body of critical scholarship drew attention to this notable exclusion (Batavia *et al*, 1382).

Most philosophers who have considered the nature of moral decision-making have concluded that people deduce moral decisions in rational ways. For instance, Plato regarded reason as divine and emotion as animalistic, claiming that we invoke reason to channel our emotions in moral directions. Also, Kant asserted that decisions qualify as moral only if they are based on moral rules derived from reason, arguing for example that if an act is performed merely out of sympathy, it does not qualify as moral (Denton & Krebs, 73). Hume, in examining the source of human actions, was of the opinion that reason or rationality alone can't provide the answer, as reason is concerned with matters of fact and relations of ideas. Thus, determining what's logically or empirically accurate cannot be a motivational force for an individual's choices (Çelik, 8)

More so, the argument that people make moral decisions in rational ways resonates with common experiences in everyday life. People often appeal to reason to decide what is fair, such as, for example, when they make decisions about exchanging goods and services. People also often appeal to reason when deciding whether it is right to violate one moral rule, such as keeping a promise, to uphold another, such as preserving a life. In addition, people may deduce decisions about how they should treat others from general principles such as the Golden Rule. When people engage in moral debates about such topics as genetic enhancement, affirmative action, and minimum wage, they often adduce rational arguments to support their positions (Denton & Krebs, 73).

In spite of the argument for rationality as the source of moral decision making, however, many scholars have questioned rational models of moral decision-making and have advanced more emotional and intuitive models in their stead (Denton & Krebs, 73). Although moral reasoning has been viewed as a purely rational process in the past, recent research suggests that emotion plays an important role in making moral decisions (Kelly & Win, 1). People make moral decisions based either on negative emotional responses elicited by a dilemma, or by engaging in utilitarian moral reasoning. Initial emotional responses can be overridden by moral reasoning but this requires increased cognitive control (Garrigana, 64). Emotions influence



people's reasoning processes, and therefore their logical rationality. The desirability of these influences seems to be a function of the intensity of the states, their valence, and their appraisal content. Most intense emotional states, except sadness, are accompanied by high levels of autonomic arousal, which is known to impair working memory capacity. This decrement in processing capacity has a variety of consequences that seem detrimental to sound reasoning. Intense emotional states, such as anxiety, therefore appear to produce deficits in people's reasoning abilities. However, the effects of intense arousal on cognitive performance are not always negative. Also, states of intense emotional arousal appear to benefit reasoning in at least one respect. In task settings where multiple cues are available, emotionally aroused individuals seem to adjust to their reduced processing capacity by narrowing down their cue-utilization to the more diagnostic cues at the expense of the less diagnostic cues (Pham, 157).

Emotions can also influence the content of thought and subsequent judgments and decisions in a wide variety of settings. Experienced emotions influence judgment and choice not only via the content of thought, but also via the depth of thought. Historically, emotions were thought to hinder deep, thoughtful processing. In line with this historical belief, emotions that are associated with a high sense of certainty, such as happiness, anger, and pride, do in fact cause people to think less deeply. The sense of certainty associated with these emotions conveys a meta-level sense that one does not need to engage in deep analysis. On the other hand, emotions that is low on a sense of certainty, such as fear or sadness, cause people to think more carefully. The sense of uncertainty associated with these emotions conveys a meta-level sense that more thought is needed (Dorison *et al*, 5).

Furthermore, the influence of emotions explains why, in philosophy, emotions are traditionally set in direct opposition to reason. Such opposition has been questioned because, under certain circumstances, emotion-related processes can advantageously bias judgment and reason. An emotional contribution to high-level decision making is evident after prefrontal cortex damage, even if it may have no consequence on intellectual function. It results in patients making personally disadvantageous decisions (Coz & Tassy, 471). Thus, the separation of emotional and rational-decision-making is fallacious for two reasons. First, rationality without emotions is irrelevant, especially in the conduct of strategy. Rationality is only relevant when it manifests itself in decisions or actions; otherwise, it is a mere exercise in abstract theorising with no utility to the real world. Emotions enable rationality to be strategically relevant because they help us make choices. Simply put,



emotions make us care. Without emotions, people are unable to make even the simplest decisions. Although, not all emotional choices are inherently rational. Emotions emerge based on our appraisal of situations rather than because of the situations themselves. Hence, if people interpret the situation at hand in a wrong way, they may experience emotions that lead to irrational decisions (Zilincik, 6-7).

Conclusion

As elucidated above, the role that emotion plays in decision making can never be underestimated or overemphasized. Emotions precede and are integral in the decision-making process. The role that emotions play in decision making is what distinguishes human beings from machines. However, research according to Dorison *et al* (5) shows that emotions can influence such decisions in non- intuitive ways, without decision makers' awareness. Emotions are not obstacles to rational decision making but rather integral components of the process. By acknowledging and understanding the influence of emotions, individuals can make more informed and adaptive decisions. Balancing emotional intuition with rational analysis empowers individuals to navigate complex decision-making scenarios with greater clarity and effectiveness.

However, the role of emotions in decision making can be said to be positive and as well negative. Positively, emotions can provide valuable insights, helping us make choices aligned with our values and desires. They add depth to our experiences, enriching decision outcomes with feelings of satisfaction and fulfilment. Emotions can also motivate action, driving us to pursue goals with passion and determination. On the negative side, emotions can sometimes cloud judgment, leading to impulsive or irrational decisions. Strong emotions like fear or anger can distort perceptions and impair our ability to weigh options objectively. Additionally, overly emotional decisions may neglect important facts or long-term consequences, leading to regret or dissatisfaction.



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