

Theories of Emotion

Each of the main theories of emotion explains the relationship between physiological response and cognitive label or interpretation.

Three Key Theories of Emotion

James-Lange:

Physiological response → Cognitive label → Awareness of experience = Emotion

Cannon-Bard:

Simultaneous Physiological response (not always necessary) + Cognitive label = Emotion

Two Factor Theory:

Physiological response (Always) + Cognitive label (always) = Emotion

Two More:

Lazarus

Cognitive appraisal – awareness (sometimes) = emotion

Zajonc and LaDoux

Physical response – cognitive appraisal (sometimes) = emotion

Applications!

Explain what happens during the emotional reaction in each scenario using the three primary theories of emotion.

1. You watch the Notebook and you cry during the movie.

James-Lange:

Cannon-Bard:

Two-Factor Theory:

2. Your brother jumps around the corner startling you and you scream.

James-Lange:

Cannon-Bard:

Two-Factor Theory:

3. You see your best friend for the first time in a year and feel overwhelmed with joy.

James-Lange:

Cannon-Bard:

Two-Factor Theory: