

Distinctions between emotion and mood

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Most academics agree that emotions and moods are related but distinct phenomena. The present study assessed emotion-mood distinctions among a non-academic population and compared these views with distinctions proposed in the literature. Content analysis of responses from 106 participants identified 16 themes, with cause (65% of respondents), duration (40%), control (25%), experience (15%), and consequences (14%) the most frequently cited distinctions. Among 65 contributions to the academic literature, eight themes were proposed, with duration (62% of authors), intentionality (41%), cause (31%), consequences (31%), and function (18%) the most frequently cited. When the eight themes cited by both academics and non-academics were rank ordered, approximately 60% overlap in opinion was evident. A data-derived summary of emotion-mood distinctions is provided. These data should prove useful to investigators interested in developing a clearer scientific distinction between emotion and mood than is currently available.

The terms *emotion* and *mood* represent a conundrum for psychologists. Although the words are frequently used interchangeably, most academics agree that the constructs they represent are closely related but distinct phenomena. Distinctions between them are clouded, in part, because an emotion and a mood may feel very much the same from the perspective of an individual experiencing either. Further, as observed by Ekman (1994), language does not always

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represent psychological reality. Because we are able to *say* that emotion and mood are different does not mean that they are, and any difference may be purely semantic. Therefore, emotion and mood may be different words for the same construct or different words for different constructs. Either way, it is incumbent on psychologists to attempt to clarify the exact nature of emotion and mood, their relationship with one another, and their respective relationships with other psychological phenomena.

The rationale for pursuing agreed distinctions between emotion and mood is compelling for at least two reasons. First, conceptual clarity is a bedrock of science and several theorists have noted the existing confusion in terminology (e.g., Alpert & Rosen, 1990; Batson, Shaw, & Oleson, 1992; Bless & Schwarz, 1999; Ekman & Davidson, 1994; Ketai, 1975; Lormand, 1985). Perhaps as a result of this confusion, it is apparent that much of the research in the area of emotion and mood has produced equivocal findings. For example, Parkinson, Totterdell, Briner, and Reynolds (1996), described the research into mood and memory as “vast and inconclusive” (p. 97); a situation perhaps caused by varied conceptualisation and measurement of the mood construct. In other words, some researchers may have been investigating the emotion-memory link and others the mood-memory link, erroneously assuming the two relationships to be the same.

Second, a clear distinction between emotion and mood would also be valuable from a therapeutic perspective. If the emotion of anxiety is in some way distinct from an anxious mood, then the difference may manifest itself as distinct causes or consequences of the two states and therefore may be sensitive to different therapeutic interventions. For example, if, as has been argued, emotion biases behaviour whereas mood biases cognition (Davidson, 1994), emotion-regulation strategies might focus on changing behavioural responses to environmental stressors, such as withdrawing from stressful situations rather than dealing with them, while mood-regulation strategies might focus on cognitive processes, such as encouraging positive rather than negative self-talk. Similarly, if emotions have specific causes but moods do not, as proposed by Ekman (1999), an effective emotion-regulation strategy may be to identify and reappraise the cause; while an effective mood-regulation strategy may be to moderate the resultant feelings by, for example, listening to music or engaging in physical exercise (Thayer, 1996).

It is apparent that the distinguishing characteristics of emotion and mood have already received much attention in the literature. Ekman and Davidson (1994) noted that “most researchers interested in affect insist on distinguishing between them” (p. 94), but emphasised that the criteria used to achieve this distinction vary considerably. A broad range of distinctions is proposed, ranging from physiological and neurological through to behavioural and social criteria. Distinctions are often based on the researcher’s particular area of interest: a psychophysiological, such as Panksepp (1994), may choose to differentiate the

two by comparing the respective neural or somatic correlates of each; whilst a psycholinguist, such as Wierzbicka (1992), may choose to emphasise semantic distinctions in everyday language. Certainly, it seems likely that emotion and mood are distinct along more than one criterion, and it is easy to see how a difference in their respective underlying physiological processes would lead to differences in phenomenal experience, in turn leading to differences in expression, behaviour, and linguistic descriptions of the two states.

A significant feature of emotion-mood distinctions in the literature is that none of them, despite their intuitive appeal and complexity, are supported by published data.¹ Even traditionally data-rich subdisciplines, such as neurology and psychophysiology, appear to make relatively arbitrary distinctions. That is, although objective neurological indices are used to distinguish between two states labelled as emotion and mood, the labels themselves are operational definitions based on the *opinion* of the researchers as to what constitutes an emotion and a mood, as opposed to any “real” occurrence of either emotion and mood per se (see Searle, 1999, for a discussion of the language-reality debate).

One potential yet unexplored avenue of empirical investigation into the emotion-mood distinction is to examine what have been termed *folk psychology* or *common sense* theories; that is, theories based on “the assumptions, hypotheses and beliefs of ordinary people about behaviour and mental experience” (Colman, 2001, p. 283). Many emotion researchers have emphasised the scientific value of such theories (e.g., Lazarus, 1999; Levenson, 1994). Lazarus, for example, stated that “If we believe that emotions result from the way people construe and evaluate events, the most useful theory [of emotion] will be based on those construals and evaluations . . . if formulated appropriately, folk theory can be evaluated by observation, which is the hallmark of science, just as readily as can any other theory” (p. 61).

We propose that folk psychology theories relating to emotion and mood offer much potential to further the academic study of the two constructs. In fact, in view of the limited progress of traditional empirical approaches, such an approach is not only warranted but may be long overdue. There are at least two further reasons for adopting a folk psychology approach to the present research question. First, all humans not suffering from neurological impairment have access to, and some degree of ability to communicate to others, the subjective experience of emotions and moods. They may experience what they call emotions in some situations, and what they call moods in others, and therefore may be able to describe perceived differences between the two. Thus, when canvassing people for their opinions on emotion and mood, we are not asking for their opinion about an abstract psychological problem, such as the nature of consciousness, we are asking them about a subject of which they may have intimate knowledge.

¹ Schimmack and Siemer (1998) have addressed the question empirically, although this paper is as yet unpublished.

Second, most English-speaking people use the words “emotion” and “mood” in everyday language, where for example the phrases “he’s a very moody person” and “he’s a very emotional person” could have distinct meanings. For example, Damasio (1999) proposed that a moody person is one whose reactions to an event are likely to be more consistent with the (usually negative) nature of his or her mood than with the actual nature of the event. Such a person in a hostile mood, for example, is unlikely to be friendly even in response to a friendly greeting. Further, a moody person is often defined as being “sullen and gloomy” (Sykes, 1982) and is “usually prone to bad temper or depression” (Parkinson et al., 1996, p.3). An emotional person, on the other hand, is one who “often reacts in a manner consistent with the nature of the immediate event or situation, whether positive or negative” (Alston, 1967; Sykes, 1982) but in an intense even extreme way; someone who perhaps cries while watching a sad film, or who is easily and demonstrably angered by minor irritations. Moreover, someone who does not feel “in the mood” is generally disinclined to do something (Lormand, 1985; Ortony et al., 1987), possibly for reasons of which he or she is not fully aware, perhaps relating to general perceptions of available physiological resources, ability, or urgency. In contrast, someone who is “too emotional” to do something, has some more pressing concern, perhaps relating to a significant event or situation in his or her life, such as a family bereavement or illness.

In the present study, we adopted a folk psychology perspective for the purpose of investigating non-academic distinctions between emotion and mood and then compared the emergent distinctions to those previously proposed in the academic literature.

METHOD

Participants

The present study adopted a simple research question: “What is the difference between emotion and mood?”. To answer this question, we sought to recruit participants who could provide data-rich replies in sufficient quantity for reliable evaluation of the consensus among their responses. A sampling method described by Fife-Schaw (2000) as “snowballing” (p. 99) was used. In snowball sampling, a network of participants is self-generating, in that each participant is asked to recommend others who may also be able to provide data-rich responses to the question of interest. This strategy produced a sample of participants who were mostly educated to degree level or above. As there is no reason to suspect that well-educated and less well-educated individuals conceptualise the distinction between emotion and mood differently, this demographic characteristic was considered to be advantageous, given that well-educated participants may be able to express emotion-mood distinctions more eloquently.

Participants were 106 individuals (male = 55, female = 51; $M = 30$ years, $SD = 4.4$ years) from a variety of professions ranging from artists, musicians, and photographers ($n = 8$); athletes, including four Olympic medallists ($n = 13$); business consultants ($n = 9$); company directors ($n = 6$); medical doctors ($n = 4$); engineers ($n = 3$); sports coaches ($n = 13$); lawyers and barristers ($n = 4$); business managers ($n = 29$); military personnel ($n = 4$); secretaries ($n = 7$); students ($n = 4$); and teachers ($n = 2$). All participants lived and worked in the UK. Highest academic achievements of participants ranged from O-level ($n = 5$), A-level ($n = 8$), diploma ($n = 1$), university degree ($n = 75$), Master's degree ($n = 15$), MBA ($n = 1$), PhD ($n = 1$).

Pilot study

It was important to limit any bias inherent in the question without limiting the richness of the responses. For example, the question: "What is the difference between emotion and mood?" clearly infers that there *is* a difference between the two. However, a less leading but closed question, such as: "Is there a difference between emotion and mood?" would likely yield more "Yes" or "No" answers. To assess these effects, a pilot study was carried out with 10 participants, who were asked the following two questions: Question 1 "Is there a difference between emotion and mood?" and Question 2 "What do you believe is the difference between emotion and mood?" Participants were canvassed for their views on the clarity of the instructions and questions. Supporting our original suspicions, participants believed that respondents to Question 1 may be tempted simply to write "No" or "I don't know", whereas respondents to Question 2 were more likely to provide a longer response. Although participants stated that they did not feel that Question 2 was in any way biased, they proposed that some form of qualifying statement in the accompanying instructions would ensure that this was also the case for all future participants (see below).

Measures

Mood-emotion distinctions were assessed by asking participants a single, open-ended question: "*What do you believe is the difference between an emotion and a mood?*" with qualifying instructions being: (a) "There is no right or wrong answer, please simply write down your personal view"; (b) "Please do not ask friends or colleagues for their opinion to assist you in deciding your answer"; (c) "Please do not use any form of reference text to help you answer the question (e.g., dictionaries, textbooks, internet, etc.)"; (d) "Please feel free to use any examples or experiences you may have to illustrate your answer"; (e) "Make your answer as short or as long as you like"; and (f) "The question asks for the difference between two types of human feeling. If you do not think that there is a difference, please simply state that opinion". Demographic informa-

tion relating to occupation, education, and any background or experience in academic, counselling, or clinical psychology, was also requested.

Procedure

The questionnaire, including a request to nominate other participants, was distributed in electronic format to the participants. Originally, the aim was to survey a larger number of respondents. However, an initial analysis of the first 106 participants showed clear signs of *saturation* in the data, whereby increasing numbers of respondents yielded no increase in the number of themes or the richness of their description. Thus, it was decided to limit the number of participants to this initial group. This strategy is supported by Coyle (2000), who proposed that although “it is important to gather sufficient text to discern the variety of discursive forms that are commonly used when speaking or writing about the research topic” there is “no necessity to sample from a large number of people” (p. 256); and by Kvale (1996), who noted that increasing sample sizes in qualitative research may reduce the quality of data and lead to data management problems.

Responses from participants with background experience or education in psychology were removed from the dataset prior to analysis. This was to ensure that in attempting to determine commonalities between academic and non-academic perspectives of the emotion-mood distinction, no participants could fall into both groups.

Data analysis

Four analyses were conducted: (a) content analysis of participants’ responses; (b) content analysis of the academic literature; (c) quantitative comparison of analyses (a) and (b); and (d) qualitative comparison of analyses (a) and (b). Content analysis is a technique for analysing qualitative data, for example by the use of frequency counts of words, statements, or concepts. Jackson (1995, p. 141) described the purpose of content analysis as:

To synthesize specific ideas expressed by individuals into meaningful themes which link similar ideas into a set of integrated concepts. Guiding the process is a search for patterns of similarity across the raw data themes, to group similar ideas together, and to progress from the specific to the more general over two or more stages. The process involves comparing and contrasting each theme at a particular level with all other themes, uniting themes with similar meaning and separating themes with different meanings.

Analyses were carried out in three distinct stages. The first stage was to identify raw data items, such as “Mood is a long-term state of mind/being, emotion is a short-term feeling” and separate these from responses not directly

related to the present research question, such as “Emotions and moods are felt by all humans”. The second stage was to group together raw data items with similar meaning into higher order themes. For example, the items “Mood is a long-term state of mind/being, emotion is a short-term feeling” and “An emotion is experienced for an instant, a mood can last for ages” both relate to a proposed temporal difference between emotion and mood and were grouped under the dimension *duration*. The third stage was to group higher order themes into general dimensions. For example, the themes duration, intensity, stability, timing and clarity were grouped under the dimension *structure*, as they all describe the structure of an emotion or a mood in space and time, analogous perhaps to the way a sound can be described in terms of its duration, volume, pitch, and rhythm.

Our initial plan for the analyses was to analyse and classify non-academic responses with no reference to any a priori assumptions. However, this proved problematic; that is, our knowledge of the mood and emotion literature led us to classify many of the responses in line with the proposals in that literature, of which we were all cognisant.² For example, the statement “my emotions are always much stronger than my moods” indicated to us that the respondent was using the criterion of intensity, a criterion frequently proposed in the literature to distinguish emotion from mood (i.e., the term *stronger* was interpreted as relating to the intensity of feeling). However, it may be argued that an individual not familiar with the literature may have interpreted the word *stronger* in a different manner, for example, indicating that emotions are harder to modify (i.e., an engineer may express or interpret the word *strength* in terms of resilience to imposed stress), or even that emotions endure longer than moods (i.e., an athlete may express or interpret the word *strength* in terms of persistence in the face of adversity). Therefore, many different interpretations of even a simple nine-word statement may be possible. Such issues, to an extent, lie at the heart of psychology; language rarely represents an unambiguous fact, and consequently any claim regarding the validity of the analysis presented below in relation to an alternative analysis may be unjustifiable, an issue addressed further in the section on trustworthiness below.

Although a significant number of respondents’ views concurred with those evident in the academic literature, a significant number did not. Consequently, two analysis strategies, one deductive and one inductive, were used; data items were either classified into predetermined higher order themes derived from the literature, such as duration, intensity and stability (i.e., structural analysis, Tesch, 1990), or data were classified into themes not evident in the literature which were allowed to emerge (i.e., interpretational analysis, Tesch, 1990).

² It should be noted that the presentation of the non-academic results before the academic results merely reflects the order in which the actual analyses themselves were carried out, and should not be seen to imply that the initial analysis was carried out with no knowledge of the academic literature.

Trustworthiness of the analysis of non-academic responses

The reliability of any interpretational analyses is a thorny issue. Smith (1995) warned of the potential pitfalls of trying to evaluate qualitative research “in terms of the canons of validity that have evolved for the assessment of quantitative research, since these have different epistemological priorities and commitments” (p. 192). Smith argued that qualitative methods will be found wanting if judged by such criteria (e.g., a numerical indication of interrater reliability), an argument supported by Denzin and Lincoln (1994), who stated that “no [quantitative] trustworthiness quotient can be developed” (p. 151). Smith suggested several methods by which the trustworthiness of qualitative research may be assessed, for example independent audit (i.e., the data are presented to one or more experts whose role is to check that the final analysis is credible); member validation (i.e., allowing one or more of the respondents in the study to review, and comment upon, the analysis); and presentation of evidence (i.e., enough of the raw data is presented to allow the reader to investigate the interpretations being made).

Independent audit of non-academic responses. Two authorities on the psychology of emotion and mood audited our initial analysis (i.e., the classification of raw data themes into higher order themes and these into dimensions). A consensus analysis of the opinions of the two independent auditors and the initial analysis was then conducted. This process initially yielded multiple differences in opinion, which although suggesting that analyses were free from excessive theoretical alignment, arguably indicated that our initial analysis might have been problematic.

Several approaches could have been used to align the three views. For example, a simple interrater reliability statistic could have been calculated, and only those parts of the analysis where 80% or above agreement was evident retained. However, Smith (1995) warned that the role of the independent auditors is not to ensure that the original analysis is the *only* definitive account of the data, but that the analysis is credible and warranted based on the data collected and conclusions drawn. It was evident that many of the discrepancies between the three views related to the criteria of *cause* and *awareness of cause*, specifically, that both external auditors tended to group responses relating to the two criteria together, whereas the authors explicitly distinguished between them. We discussed these discrepancies with the auditors, and it was agreed that, given the objective of our research, and our argument that, like emotion, mood has a cause, but one that may be obscure to the person experiencing it (see below), our perspective was perhaps most appropriate to the analysis in question.

Several other areas of disagreement were evident relating to structural criteria, especially those of “duration”, “timing”, and “stability”. For example,

the statement “An emotion can be more reactive and spontaneous”, was classified differently by the auditors and the authors (as relating to the themes of stability and timing, respectively). In such cases, where classifying distinctions often seemed more a semantic than conceptual problem, the authors accepted an interrater reliability of above 66% (i.e., agreement between two of three of the views). A similar process was adopted with several other differences of opinion between author and auditors.

Member validation. The second step in demonstrating the trustworthiness of the analysis above was via member validation. Two of the initial respondents were asked to assess the accuracy of the consensual analysis derived through the independent audit above. The two respondents were selected on the basis that they had both submitted detailed and comprehensive responses to the research question. It was thus hypothesised that their evaluation of our analysis of their own responses may not only shed light on the accuracy of these analyses, but that subsequent discussion would facilitate their understanding of the analysis process, enabling a reliable evaluation of the narratives of other respondents. Having checked our analysis of their own responses, the two respondents were asked to check one in five of the remaining responses (this policy was implemented in order to assess any general trends in agreement or disagreement with our analysis before asking the two respondents to complete the lengthy process for all responses). Neither respondent disagreed with any aspect of our initial analysis. Although Smith (1996) argued that such high levels of agreement are not unusual in member validation, proposing that factors, such as the power relations between researcher and participant, may play a major part, we were thus presented with a problem, whether to press the respondents for a re-analysis of their original overview, or whether to accept it at face value. A decision to leave the analysis as it stood was taken on the basis that pressing the two individuals further may: (a) place them under pressure to find differences that perhaps they believed did not really exist; and (b) may have been seen to imply an expert/novice distinction between researcher and respondent, that is, the researchers would have in effect been telling the respondent that their initial analysis was incorrect.

Presentation of evidence. To further demonstrate the trustworthiness of our analysis, raw data and subsequent analyses are presented in Table 1. (The authors will be pleased to submit *all* raw data collected and the resultant classification of these data into higher order themes to any interested reader.)

Content analysis of the academic literature

The content analysis of the academic literature was conducted on 65 published works from the psychology, psychiatry, and philosophy literature. Sources for this literature were: (a) searches of the electronic databases PsychINFO and

TABLE 1
 Selected raw data, higher order themes, and general dimensions of
 participants' responses

<i>Raw data</i>	<i>Higher order theme</i>	<i>General dimension</i>
"Mood is a little longer, and a little less defined, I could never describe a mood as precisely as I could an emotion" "A mood is something that is more underlying—perhaps more intangible and less easy to explain" "Emotions are also more identifiable and pigeonholeable whereas moods tend to be more nebulous and abstracted"	Clarity	Structure
"Mood is a long-term state of mind/being . . . [emotion] is a short-term feeling" "Moods are generally less intense than emotions and last longer" "An emotion is experienced for an instant, a mood can last for ages"	Duration	
"Moods are generally less intense than emotions" "My emotions are always much stronger than my moods"	Intensity	
"An emotion may be experienced over a shorter time-frame than a mood, in that it may be fleeting, sudden, or easily induced/altered/influenced" "One minute I can be in a great mood and then the smallest thing can change my mood . . . My emotions tend to be more powerful, but more constant!!"	Timing	
"An emotion can be more reactive and spontaneous" "A mood, I believe is not instantaneous as an emotion" "I think an emotion is an instinctive feeling that is felt fairly immediately in response to a stimulus, . . . A mood, in contrast, would last longer, and would not generally be an immediate response to something"	Stability	

(Continued)

TABLE 1
(Continued)

<i>Raw data</i>	<i>Higher order theme</i>	<i>General dimension</i>	
<p>“Sometimes one might be in a ‘bad’ mood or a ‘good’ mood but not always be able to explain why. Normally, an emotion can be linked to a specific thing”</p> <p>“An emotion is usually driven by an identifiable source, where a mood is seemingly unrelated to circumstance”</p> <p>“...sometimes moods do seem to come on their own without any visible cause”</p>	Awareness of cause	Subjective context	
<p>“Emotion is usually aimed at something (i.e., love/hate is for a particular person), whereas mood is simply a general background state of mind”</p> <p>“An emotion can be a fleeting or brief feeling about a single event or about someone or something. A mood is a state of being and effects the way someone reacts, performs or exists whilst experiencing the mood, be it good or bad”</p> <p>“Moods are general, background feeling states, with no specific ... direction. Emotions ... are directed at a specific object”</p>	Intentionality		
<p>“In short, think a mood, feel an emotion”</p> <p>“An emotion is a feeling. A mood is a state of mind”</p> <p>“When I am in a certain mood it has more to do with the way I am thinking. When I experience a certain emotion it has more to do with the way I am feeling”</p>	Experience		
<p>“Emotions are in the heart and mood is in the head”</p> <p>“Emotions are ... predetermined by the heart, whilst a mood is more governed by the brain”</p> <p>“An emotion comes from the heart, psyche, or soul ... one could argue that mood comes from the mind”</p>	Anatomy		Somatic processes
<p>“Moods are very much determined by psychological and hormonal influences”</p> <p>“A particular emotion occurs through a physical chemical response”</p>	Physiology		

(Continued)

TABLE 1
(Continued)

<i>Raw data</i>	<i>Higher order theme</i>	<i>General dimension</i>
<p>“Mood is a long-term state of mind/being [which] can be altered by an emotion. Emotion is a reaction to some trigger”</p> <p>“Emotions are more spontaneous reactions/feelings . . . [a mood] is normally a reaction to a cumulative sequence of events”</p> <p>“Moods are general, background feeling states, with no specific cause or direction. Emotions have a specific cause”</p>	Cause	Objective context
<p>“One can experience many different emotions about different things at once but these do not cloud judgement in the same way a mood can”</p> <p>“Emotion a cause. Mood an effect”</p> <p>“A mood is the result of an emotion”</p>	Consequences	
<p>“Moods are easier to control . . . emotion is more instinctive and less controlled by reason”</p> <p>“Emotions are far harder to control, since they are a reaction to an event”</p> <p>“An emotion is something you cannot control, you just feel it: sorrow, joy, etc. A mood is something you can modify if you want to do so, you can decide to be in a bad mood or you can decide that what happened does not matter and stay in a good mood”</p>	Control	Management
<p>“Emotions are public and moods are personal”</p> <p>“[Emotions] are more visible to others . . . [Mood] can be hidden from other people”</p> <p>“A mood is something you suffer and an emotion is something you display”</p>	Display	
<p>“Emotions have purpose—if we feel an emotion as a result of certain factors in our environment, the emotion is intended to tell us something”</p> <p>“A mood may be described as a pervading backdrop or undercurrent to a person’s perspective/behaviour/outlook, etc. An emotion may be more evident, and at the forefront of their perspective/behaviour/outlook”</p>		Function

(Continued)

TABLE 1
(Continued)

<i>Raw data</i>	<i>Higher order theme</i>	<i>General dimension</i>
“I associate the word mood with (bad) mood more often than (good) mood” “I generally see an emotion as being positive—a mood has more negative connotations” “Emotions can be both negative and positive and a mood is usually negative”		Valence

Medline using the keywords *emotion*, *mood*, *affect*, and *feeling*; (b) manual searches of the reference lists of all works found through process (a); and (c) an extensive manual search of psychology and philosophy texts in the libraries of several London universities.

Although the literature search was extensive and thorough, it is unlikely that the literature analysed in the present paper represents the entire body of published work relating to the subject. For example, several citations were found by chance; that is, they were either not referenced in the sources listed above or were in papers relating to other disciplines (e.g., Elster, 1996). The fact that these papers were not referenced in relation to emotion and mood in any of the above databases or sources hints at the possibility that other relevant information may have been published but not found in our search. Although the academic literature analysed in the present study may not be complete, a similar level of saturation was evident in the 65 academic citations as was evident in the non-academic responses. That is, despite increasing numbers of citations, the same themes tended to be used by authors to distinguish emotion from mood. It was judged unlikely that increasing the quantity of the citations would have increased the quality of the data.

Trustworthiness of analysis of academic literature

Initially, it was considered that as all the papers included in the present analysis were peer reviewed, published, and apparently unambiguous in their conclusions about emotion-mood distinctions, it was unnecessary to address the trustworthiness of this particular content analysis. However, a reviewer of an earlier draft of the present paper indicated that he/she did not agree with our classification of a specific citation.³ This indicated to us that perhaps the literature is

³ The authors would like to express their gratitude to the reviewer in question for the helpful and detailed review.

not as unambiguous as we supposed, and that some evidence of trustworthiness was required. In this case, using all three of Smith's (1995) criteria to demonstrate trustworthiness was problematic. Although we used two independent psychologists to audit our analysis, the second process, member checking, was deemed to be inappropriate. First, such a process would have involved contacting each of the 65 authors cited in order to ascertain whether, in their opinion, we had correctly interpreted their work. Second, we judged this process unnecessary given that Smith's third criterion, presentation of evidence, is satisfied; that is, all citations in the analysis have been published and our analyses are reported below.

Smith (1995) proposed that no analysis can be deemed the *only* definitive account of the data, and that the role of auditors is to ensure that the analysis is credible and warranted based on the data collected and conclusions drawn. In other words, it may be unavoidable that at times our interpretation of the criteria proposed by a specific author to distinguish between emotion and mood in the literature may differ slightly from that author's own interpretation. We argue instead that the interested reader is able to verify the inferences and conclusions we drew by referring to the literature, and that satisfactory trustworthiness is demonstrated.

RESULTS

Non-academic distinctions between emotion and mood

Given the open-ended nature of the question posed to respondents, predictably there was a wide range in both length of response (from 7 words to 827 words) and the level of detail provided. As stated above, in the first stage of analysis, statements relating directly to the research question were identified and separated from more general statements. In the second stage of analysis, raw data items were grouped into higher order themes. Many of the distinctions mentioned by respondents did not fall readily into any of these predetermined categories, and consequently an inductive process was used to classify these responses into a further eight higher order themes, which were labelled as anatomy, clarity, controllability, display, experience, stability, timing, and valence.⁴ It is evident that several of the higher order themes are related to each other conceptually, thus the third stage of the analysis was to group higher order themes with similar characteristics into general dimensions. Fourteen of the 16

⁴ It is acknowledged that some of these additional themes have been addressed in the literature but not cited specifically as criteria by which to distinguish emotion from mood. For example, valence (i.e., whether feelings are positive or negative) forms one dimension of several biopsychological models of mood (e.g., Russell, 1980; Larsen & Diener, 1992) but is not proposed to make mood distinctive from emotion.

higher order themes were grouped into five general dimensions. Selected raw data items, higher order themes, and general dimensions derived from the analysis are shown in Table 1.

Academic distinctions between emotion and mood

Eight higher order themes were identified from a content analysis of 65 published articles that included criteria to distinguish emotion from mood. The eight themes were intensity, duration, physiology, cause, awareness of cause, consequences, function, and intentionality. Table 2 shows the themes cited in each article. The number of distinguishing characteristics cited ranged from 1 to 5, with a mean of 2.3. The majority of articles (59%) cited two or three distinctions between emotion and mood but precise distinctions varied widely across papers. It is apparent, with different authors citing usually two or three of eight criteria that, to date, there has been limited consensus in the literature as to which specific criteria distinguish emotion from mood. However, there is a degree of consensus about the nature of each individual criterion (e.g., most theorists who cite duration as a criterion agree that moods endure longer than emotions, a notable exception being Lazarus, 1994).

Quantitative comparison of academic and non-academic perspectives

A percentage-wise comparison of academic and non-academic perspectives on emotion-mood distinctions is presented in Table 3. This indicates a fair degree of correspondence between academic and non-academic perspectives on emotion-mood distinctions. It can be seen that among non-academics, cause (65% of respondents), duration (40%), control (25%), experience (15%), and consequences (14%) were the most frequently cited criteria, whereas among academics, duration (62% of authors), intentionality (41%), cause (31%), consequences (31%), and function (18%) were the most frequently proposed criteria. When the eight themes cited by both academics and non-academics were ranked according to frequency of citation, more than 60% overlap in opinion about emotion-mood distinctions was evident ($\rho = .78$; $p < .05$).

It was equally apparent, however, that non-academics proposed several distinctions not generally found in the literature. For example, several participants in the present study proposed that emotions are usually displayed or expressed behaviourally whereas moods are not. Although behavioural displays are frequently discussed in the literature as a feature of emotion (e.g., Ekman, 1994) and lack of display has been discussed in relation to mood (e.g., Davidson, 1994), no author has proposed explicitly that degree of display distinguishes emotion from mood.

TABLE 2
Distinctions between emotion and mood from the literature

<i>Author/Year</i>	<i>Int</i>	<i>Dur</i>	<i>Phy</i>	<i>Cau</i>	<i>Awa</i>	<i>Con</i>	<i>Funct</i>	<i>In</i>
Alder (1999)		*		*				
Alpert & Rosen (1990)		*			*			
Averill & Nunley (1992)						*		*
Batson et al. (1992)							*	
Berkowitz (2000)	*	*						*
Biddle (2000)				*				*
Bless & Schwarz (1999)	*			*				*
Brehm (1999)		*		*	*			*
Clore (1994)		*		*			*	*
Colman (2001) ^a		*						*
Crawford et al. (1992)				*				
Damasio (1999)		*		*				*
Davidson (1994)							*	
Ekman (1994)		*			*			
Ekman (1999)		*		*				
Ellis & Moore (1999)	*	*		*				*
Elster (1996)						*		
Elster (2000)								*
Evans (2001)		*						
Ewalt et al. (1957)		*			*			
Ewert (1970)				*				*
Fish (1967)		*						
Frijda (1994)							*	*
Goldsmith (1994)								*
Isen (1984)								*
Kagan (1994a)		*		*		*		
Kagan (1994b)		*		*		*		
Kaplan & Sadock (1986)		*						
Ketai (1975)		*	*					
Kolb & Brodie (1982)		*						
Lane & Terry (2000)	*	*						
Lang (1988)	*	*				*		*
Lazarus (1984)		*						*
Lazarus (1994)				*			*	*
Leshner (1977)		*		*		*		*
Levenson (1994)		*	*	*				*
Lormand (1985)		*		*				*
Lormand (1996)						*		
Mandler (1983)	*	*				*		
Mandler (1984)		*				*	*	
Manstead et al. (1999) ^a	*			*		*		*
Morris (1992)				*			*	
Nowlis & Nowlis (1956)				*				*
Oatley & Jenkins (1992)		*		*				*

(Continued)

TABLE 2
(Continued)

<i>Author/Year</i>	<i>Int</i>	<i>Dur</i>	<i>Phy</i>	<i>Cau</i>	<i>Awa</i>	<i>Con</i>	<i>Funct</i>	<i>In</i>
Oatley & Johnson-Laird (1987)		*					*	
Ortony (1988)				*				
Ortony et al. (1987)							*	
Panksepp (1994)	*	*	*					
Parkinson (1994)		*		*	*			
Parkinson et al. (1996)	*	*					*	*
Power & Dalgleish (1997)						*		
Ruckmick (1936)		*			*	*		
Russell & Feldman-Barrett (1999)					*	*		*
Ryle (1949)						*		
Schimmack & Siemer (1998) ^b								*
Schwarz & Clore (1988)		*		*				*
Simon (1982)		*				*		
Solomon (1976)								*
Thayer (1996)						*		*
Vallerand & Blanchard (2000)	*	*	*			*		*
Watson & Clark (1994)		*	*	*				
Watson & Clark (1997)	*	*						
Wessman (1979)	*	*			*	*		*
Wessman & Ricks (1966)				*				*
Whybrow (1997)		*				*		

Int, Intensity; *Dur*, Duration; *Phy*, Physiology; *Cau*, Cause; *Awa*, Awareness of cause; *Con*, Consequences; *Funct*, Function; *In*, Intentionality.

Where an author's name appears more than once in the table, the emotion-mood distinctions expressed are different in each citation listed.

^a Dictionary entry. ^b Distinctions based on empirical research.

Qualitative comparison of academic and non-academic perspectives

The qualitative comparison focused on identifying contextual differences between emotion and mood by analysing respondents' comments in more detail. The results of this comparison are presented for each higher order theme.

Cause. Cause was the distinguishing feature most frequently cited by non-academics and the second most frequently cited in the psychology literature. Perhaps the most representative non-academic response was "Moods are general, background feeling states, with no specific cause or direction. Emotions have a specific cause and are directed at a specific object. For example, you might experience an emotion because of someone. When you are not with them or thinking about them the emotion goes, but might return when you see them/think about them again". Other responses included "Mood is a long-term state

TABLE 3
Percentage-wise comparison of non-academic and
academic distinctions between emotion and mood

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Non-academic (%)</i>	<i>Academic (%)</i>
Cause	65	31
Duration	40	62
Control	25	–
Experience	15	–
Consequences	14	31
Display	14	–
Intentionality	12	41
Anatomy	11	–
Intensity	11	17
Timing	8	–
Function	7	18
Physiology	7	8
Stability	7	–
Awareness of cause	4	13
Clarity	3	–
Valence	3	–

of mind/being [that] can be altered by an emotion. Emotion is a reaction to some trigger” and “Emotions are more spontaneous reactions/feelings . . . , whilst a mood is more governed by the brain and is normally a reaction to a cumulative sequence of events”. Responses were generally consistent with opinions expressed in the literature, such as the definition provided by Parkinson et al. (1996) that “Emotions are caused by specific events localized in time, whereas moods build up as a consequence of either a concatenation of minor incidents, persistent conditions in the environment, and/or internal metabolic or cognitive processes” (p. 6).

Duration. Duration was cited as distinguishing emotion from mood by 40% of respondents and 62% of authors in the psychology literature. The most representative non-academic response was probably that “An emotion is experienced for an instant, a mood can last for ages” or that “Emotions can come and go far quicker than moods, my emotions are quick flashes of light, they are feeling generated from experiences and events. Moods however are far more prolonged, and depending on an individual’s strength of character a mood could last all day or longer”. These views are consistent with opinion in the literature where most authorities agree that moods endure longer than emotions.

However, a small percentage of respondents proposed that emotions endure longer than moods. One respondent stated “A mood is transient where an emotion is more long lasting. For example, you may be in a bad mood for a few

hours but the mood will pass, if you have the emotion of anger about something you are likely to remain angry for a considerable period of time". Although this statement may be interpreted as a reference to repeated occurrences of the emotion of anger rather than one enduring emotion episode, it is lent some credibility by Lazarus (1994), who noted that the respective duration of emotion and mood is not a reliable criterion by which to distinguish the two constructs.

Control. More than a quarter of respondents cited control as distinguishing between emotion and mood. Indeed, several respondents saw control as a central distinction (e.g., "I would define emotion as a temporary lack of control"). Possibly the most representative response was "An emotion is something you cannot control, you just feel it: sorrow, joy, etc. A mood is something you can modify if you want to do so, you can decide to be in a bad mood or you can decide that what happened does not matter and stay in a good mood". Further responses included "Moods are easier to control whereas emotion is more instinctive and less controlled by reason" and "Emotions are far harder to control, since they are a reaction to an event".

This criterion has not been explicitly proposed in the psychology literature, although control has been extensively examined in relation to emotion (see, e.g., Ekman & Davidson, 1994, pp. 65–281), and in relation to mood management (Mayer & Gaschke, 1988; Mayer, Mamborg, & Volanth, 1988; Mayer, Salovey, Gomberg-Kaufmann, & Blainey, 1991; see Parkinson et al., 1996, for a review). Although the question of whether emotions are controllable is still being addressed (see Ekman & Davidson, 1994), the controllability of everyday, nonpathological moods is generally accepted; indeed the literature on the efficacy of mood regulation is extensive (see, e.g., Morris, 1989; Parkinson et al., 1996; Thayer, 1996).

Experience. About 16% of respondents equated emotions with feelings and mood with thoughts. Their responses included "In short, think a mood, feel an emotion" and "When I am in a certain mood it has more to do with the way I am thinking. When I experience a certain emotion it has more to do with the way I am feeling". This criterion is not explicitly cited as a distinction in the psychology literature although many authors have made links between the mind and mood, and between the body, or at least somatic processes, and emotion; links which could be said to imply mood-thought and emotion-feeling relationships. However, several authors have argued that all emotional responses are preceded by cognitive processes (e.g., Lazarus, 1999). Further, holistic approaches to human functioning downplay such dualistic mind-body distinctions that have troubled philosophers and psychologists for centuries. Nevertheless, the experience of feeling vs. thinking *is* a criterion used by people to distinguish their emotions from their moods, and thus should be of interest to those seeking to understand these constructs.

Consequences. Of respondents, 15% proposed that emotion and mood have different consequences, as did 31% of authors in the psychology literature. Typical responses included “One can experience many different emotions about different things at once but these do not cloud judgment in the same way a mood can”. Other comments, such as “Emotion a cause, mood an effect” and “A mood is the *result* of an emotion”, in which moods are seen to be the consequence of emotions, clearly hint at a transactional relationship between emotion and mood. These responses are consistent with the literature, where different consequences for emotions and moods have been proposed. For example, Davidson (1994) argued that mood biases cognition whereas emotion biases behaviour; Frijda (1994) argued that emotions alter action readiness whereas moods produce generalised cognitive consequences; and Oatley and Jenkins (1992) argued that emotions serve to rearrange the priorities of goals and change the flow of action, whereas moods maintain a distinctive readiness that continues despite events that might disturb it. The notion that the autonomic activity associated with emotion prepares the organism for activity (e.g., the fight or flight response) whereas moods influence cognitive processes, such as information processing and memory, is widely espoused. Respondents and psychologists alike frequently mentioned the concept of mood *colouring* our cognitive and perceptual processes (e.g., Clore, 1994; Ruckmick, 1936; Whybrow, 1997).

Display. Of respondents, 15% cited differences in the way the emotion and mood are displayed as a distinguishing feature of the two states. This criterion has not received significant attention in the psychology literature, although, as stated above, there is a body of research on the expression of emotion. The most representative non-academic response was “Emotions are public and moods are personal”. Further responses included “[Emotions] are more visible to others, with emotions clearly being seen through the eyes. They are very hard to hide . . . [mood] can be hidden from other people”, a response which also hints at the relative uncontrollability of emotion, and “A mood is something you suffer and an emotion is something you display”. There is clearly some crossover between the criteria of display and control; the implication being that mood, which can be more readily controlled than emotion, can therefore be more easily hidden.

Respondents’ views on the relative visibility of emotions and moods were largely in accord with the literature. Research into the expression of emotion goes back at least to Darwin’s (1872) *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, although there has been comparatively little work on the expression of mood per se. There is general consensus in the literature that specific emotions have corresponding facial expressions whereas specific moods do not (see Ekman, 1994) although some researchers have proposed that moods are instead expressed via bodily posture (e.g., Parkinson et al., 1996). It has also been acknowledged that mood changes may be signalled by nonvisible, yet measurable, changes in facial muscle tone.

Intentionality. Although none used the term “intentionality”, 13% of respondents cited the object-relatedness of emotion compared to the lack of relatedness of mood. This compares with 41% of contributors to the psychology literature. Non-academic responses included “Emotion is usually aimed at something such as love/hate for a particular person, whereas mood is simply a general background state of mind, which is not wholly rationally explained and it is not aimed at anything in particular” and “Moods are general, background feeling states, with no specific cause or direction. Emotions have a specific cause and are directed at a specific object”. These responses are consistent with the literature, where it has been proposed that emotions are *always* about, or directed at, something (i.e., they are intentional) whilst moods may not be. Frijda (1994) argued that whereas one is angry (an emotion) about or at something, we tend to be irritable (a mood) nonspecifically. Parkinson et al. (1996) also suggested that whilst moods are unfocused, emotions are directed at specific objects. In relation to the cause criterion discussed earlier, Parkinson et al. added that emotions are *directed* at specific objects rather than necessarily *caused* by specific objects, and that the cause and the object may not necessarily be the same.

Anatomy. Of respondents, 12% cited differences in the anatomical location of emotion and mood. This distinction has not been cited explicitly in the literature, although the link noted previously between moods and thoughts (implicitly located in the brain), and emotions and feelings (arguably located elsewhere) resonates the same message. Non-academic responses included “Emotions are in the heart and mood is in the head,” “Emotions ... are predetermined by the heart, whilst a mood is more governed by the brain”, and “An emotion comes from the heart, psyche, or soul ... one could argue that mood comes from the mind”. Parenthetically, 28% of respondents also described mood as either a “state of mind” or a “frame of mind”.

There is certainly a wealth of literature describing the somatic correlates of emotion. In fact, it was proposed as far back as James (1898) that physiological processes might be *the* defining part of the emotion process. Similarly, the close relationship between mood and cognition has been well researched and documented. However, despite the mind-mood and body-emotion associations in the literature, it appears that respondents in the present study were identifying a genuine anatomical distinction between emotion and mood rather than simply emphasising different aspects of human functioning.

Intensity. Of respondents, 12% proposed that emotions are more intense than moods, compared to 17% of authors in the literature. Typical responses included “Moods are generally less intense than emotions” and “My emotions are always much stronger than my moods”. Exactly the same sentiments have been expressed in the literature. Mandler (1983), for example, described mood

as “a persisting state of low level emotion” (p. 145); Lang (1988) described moods, in relation to emotions, as “less intense but more persistent states of feeling” (p. 178); and Panksepp (1994) referred to the arousal associated with mood as “milder and more sustained” (p. 86) than that associated with emotion.

Timing. Of non-academic respondents, 9% cited temporal differences between emotion and mood. Responses included “A mood, I believe, is not as instantaneous as an emotion” and “I think an emotion is an instinctive feeling that is felt fairly immediately in response to a stimulus... It generally won’t last long, for example, a ‘pang of jealousy’ would be an emotion. A mood, in contrast, would last longer, and would not generally be an immediate response to something”.

Timing has also been cited in the literature as a distinguishing feature between emotion and mood. For example, Parkinson et al. (1996) proposed that “Emotions usually seem to have a clear moment of onset then dissipate fairly rapidly, whereas moods often change more slowly and continue to linger somewhere in the background of consciousness (p. 5). However, as a criterion in the literature, *timing* is often subsumed under the *duration* or *intensity* criteria. Although it is proposed that the onset and decay of moods may be gradual whilst those of an emotion are instantaneous, it is possible that the onset of mood is also instantaneous but its initial and final intensities are below the threshold of conscious awareness of the individual.

Physiology. Of respondents, 7% alluded to differences in the physiology of the two states. Respondents generally proposed that emotion is more closely associated with physiological processes than mood, rather than proposing that each is associated with different physiological responses. Typical responses included “A particular emotion occurs through a physical chemical response/reaction e.g., adrenaline/fear” and “Moods are very much determined by psychological and hormonal influences”. In the literature, 8% of authors made a similar point. Interestingly, mirroring the views of respondents to the present study, the literature has also tended to focus on the physiology of emotion *or* mood as opposed to proposing distinct physiological responses for each. Ketai (1975), Vallerand and Blanchard (2000), and Watson and Clark (1994) all addressed emotion-mood distinctions but only mentioned physiology in relation to emotion, whilst Ekman (1994) mentioned only the physiology of mood. Panksepp (1994) did address both constructs but referred to the physiology of mood simply as low levels of arousal in “emotional and affective systems”.

Stability. Of respondents, 7% suggested that the respective stability of instances of emotion and mood distinguished between the two. Responses included “An emotion may be experienced over a shorter time frame than a

mood, in that it may be fleeting, sudden, or easily induced/altered/influenced” and “One minute I can be in a great mood and then the smallest thing can change my mood, other people, unless they know me very well wouldn’t notice my mood changes, but I can’t hide my emotions. My emotions tend to be more powerful, but more constant”. It is evident from these responses that, whereas some respondents believed that emotion was more stable than mood, others believed the opposite was true. A stability criterion is not cited explicitly in the literature although, as with the criterion of *timing*, there are strong links with the more frequently addressed criteria of *duration* and *intensity*. In the literature, it is frequently argued that, whereas emotions are acute and phasic episodes, moods, which are sustained and enduring, are ever present and we are constantly in a mood of one sort or other (Mandler, 1983; Parkinson et al., 1996; Watson & Clark, 1994).

Awareness of cause. Of respondents, 4% cited awareness of cause as a distinguishing feature compared to 13% of authors in the literature. Probably the most representative non-academic responses were “Sometimes one might be in a ‘bad’ mood or a ‘good’ mood but not always be able to explain why. Normally, an emotion can be linked to a specific thing” and “An emotion is usually driven by an identifiable source, where a mood is seemingly unrelated to circumstance”. These proposals can be seen to represent a very similar perspective to those in the literature. For example, Ekman (1994) argued “People can usually specify the event that called forth an emotion, and often cannot do so for a mood” (p. 57). Similarly, Brehm (1999) suggested that while emotions result from specific instigators moods can occur without apparent cause; and Russell and Feldman-Barrett (1999) proposed that, compared to emotion which is highly object-focused, mood represents “free-floating affect . . . subject to many causes from specific events, such as the weather to diurnal cycles, some of which are beyond the human capacity to detect” (p. 806). In addition, Ekman and Davidson (1994) stated that “Growing evidence does suggest that when an emotion is elicited outside conscious awareness, the emotion that is generated has different consequences compared with contexts in which the eliciting stimuli are conscious” (p. 299), implying that whether a feeling is experienced as either an emotion or a mood is dependent on the context in which this feelings is experienced.

It is important to note the distinction between the *cause* and *awareness of cause* criteria. The cause distinction implies that the emotions and moods have different causes; for example, a perceived obstacle to achieving a goal in the case of the emotion of anger, and the combined effects of factors, such as tiredness, hunger, and repeated minor irritations in the case of the related mood of irritability. To distinguish emotion from mood via awareness of cause (continuing the above example), the individual would be aware of what is preventing goal attainment, whereas the individual would not necessarily be

aware that tiredness, hunger, and minor irritations are combining to influence mood. In summary, there is a degree of consensus between respondents and academics that emotions result from causes the individual is aware of whilst moods may occur without *apparent* cause.

Clarity. Of respondents, 3% cited clarity as a distinction between emotion and mood. Typical responses included “Mood is . . . a little less defined, I could never describe a mood as precisely as I could an emotion”, “A mood is something that is more underlying—perhaps more intangible and less easy to explain”, and “Emotions are also more identifiable and pigeonholeable [*sic*] whereas moods tend to be more nebulous and abstracted”. Although clarity is not a criterion used explicitly in the literature, arguably it is implied by the terms used to describe emotion and mood. For example, words like “diffuse” (Averill & Nunley, 1992; Ewert, 1970; Frijda, 1994; Parkinson et al., 1996; Schwarz & Clore, 1988; Vallerand & Blanchard, 2000), “vague” (Averill & Nunley, 1992), and “unfocused” (Parkinson et al., 1996) have been used to describe mood, whereas emotions have been described as, for example, “distinct” (Watson & Clark, 1994), “focused” (Frijda, 1994; Parkinson et al., 1996; Solomon, 1976), and “organised” (Averill & Nunley, 1992; Watson & Clark, 1994). As part of the structural dimension (which also includes duration, intensity, timing, and stability) it is possible that mood’s lack of clarity may be a function of its low intensity or gradual onset.

Function. Although several respondents cited the respective functions of emotion and mood as a distinguishing characteristic, none described what the distinct functions of emotion and mood might be (one respondent in fact proposed that mood has no function). This is at odds with the literature, where authors have proposed that emotions bias action and moods bias cognition (Davidson, 1994) or that mood signals the state of the self whereas emotion signals the state of the world (Frijda, 1994; Mandler, 1984; Morris, 1992, see also Clore, 1994; Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 1987; Schwarz & Clore, 1983; Watson & Clark, 1994). Lazarus (1994) similarly argued that emotions refer to “the immediate adaptational business in an encounter with the environment, the fate of a specific and narrow goal that confronts a beneficial or harmful (or threatening) environmental condition” whilst moods are “products of appraisals of the existential background of our lives” (p. 84). It may in fact be argued that emotion and mood, like all psychological processes, share the same ultimate function, that is, to help the organism adapt and survive in an ever-changing environment. Given that we cannot observe, measure, or evaluate function but can only speculate as to what it may be, and because function is unlikely to form the basis of a useable criterion by which to distinguish emotion from mood, its utility as a criterion by which to distinguish emotion from mood is questionable.

TABLE 4
Summary of distinctions between emotion and mood

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Emotion</i>	<i>Mood</i>
Anatomy	Related to the heart	Related to the mind
Awareness of cause	Individual is aware of cause	Individual may be unaware of cause
Cause	Caused by a specific event or object	Cause is less well defined
Clarity	Clearly defined	Nebulous
Consequences	Largely behavioural and expressive	Largely cognitive
Control	Not controllable	Controllable
Display	Displayed	Not displayed
Duration	Brief	Enduring
Experience	Felt	Thought
Intensity	Intense	Mild
Intentionality	About something	Not about anything in particular
Physiology	Distinct physiological patterning	No distinct physiological patterning
Stability	Fleeting and volatile	Stable
Timing	Rises and dissipates quickly	Rises and dissipates slowly

Valence. The valence theme also presented a problem conceptually. A small number of respondents opined that emotion is always positive and mood is always negative. This ran counter to the majority view expressed in the present study—many respondents referred to “being in a good mood”—and to the widely accepted views in the literature that fear, a negative feeling, represents a prototypical emotion. This example highlights the caution required when investigating common sense theories, and the need to speculate about potential reasons for such beliefs. In this case for example, if a child were brought up with an irritable, bad tempered brother, and an easily overjoyed and excitable sister, and these two siblings were described respectively as moody and emotional by their parents, the individual in question may conceptualise mood as negative and emotion as positive; an idiosyncratic common sense theory that may persist into adulthood.

Table 4 shows a summary of emotion-mood distinctions derived from the responses of participants and the views expressed in the literature. This summary represents the majority views of those who cited specific distinctions between emotion and mood.

DISCUSSION

The present study investigated if and how a non-academic population distinguished between emotion and mood, and then established the extent of correspondence between these non-academic perspectives and academic theories. Results showed that participants described emotion and mood as distinct phenomena in terms of how they were manifested in phenomenal experience,

and how they impacted on behaviour. Although 16 different distinctions were reported, considerable agreement was evident among respondents about the nature of the differences. For example, most participants who cited controllability as a distinction agreed that emotion is less controllable than mood. Similarly, authors in the academic literature, although not agreeing on the specific criteria by which to distinguish emotion from mood, tended to agree on the direction of the various distinctions. Moreover, academic and non-academic views were also generally in accord about the direction of emotion-mood differences, agreeing that emotions are more intense, brief, volatile, etc. than moods (see Table 4).

The data and subsequent analyses reported above are, within reason, relatively simple to interpret. The aim of the present paper was to present data that should prove useful to investigators interested in developing a clearer scientific distinction between emotion and mood than is currently available. As such, we feel that to go beyond the presentation and tentative analyses of these data by, for example, arguing for the adoption of certain criteria, would be conjectural.

There are two potential limitations to findings from the present study. The first is their potentially unscientific foundation and, second, the potential discrepancy between language and reality. In relation to the first perspective, Averill (1996) suggested that scientific theories are often “little more than folk theories, clothed in the scientific jargon of the time” (p. 24). If this proposal is true—and the lack of empirical data relating to emotion and mood distinctions hints that it may be—it is interesting that several of the non-academic distinctions go beyond those described in the scientific literature. If academic theories are indeed founded on folk theories, logically, the fact that psychologists have not explicitly adopted these particular conceptions as potential distinctions between emotion and mood could imply that these are in some way deemed implausible or unscientific. Take for example the criterion *display*, a criterion proposed by several non-academic respondents but not evident in the academic literature. Some participants clearly viewed the tendency for emotions to be displayed and moods not to be displayed as an important distinguishing feature. However, the degree of display may be seen by psychologists as being as much a consequence of factors such as personality, situation, or societal norms, as any intrinsic characteristic of emotion or mood per se.

Several authors have criticised the use of folk theory in developing a scientific account of mental states. For example, Churchland (1981) argued that folk theories of mental states are based on a false premise and should be replaced with theories drawn from human neuroscience. Similarly, Parkinson (1995, p. 347) suggested:

If people represent emotional reality accurately, then it makes sense to make use of their representations when trying to get at the underlying phenomenon, but if their representations are distorted in any way, then psychologists relying on self-reports

are in danger of developing theories based on emotional ideology instead of emotional reality.

It was highlighted when discussing the valence theme that an individual's idiosyncratic beliefs about psychological phenomena could easily be based on erroneous information (e.g., the adjectives *emotional* and *moody* having been used by parents to describe the respective temperaments of their children). Clearly the basis for any folk theory must be critically evaluated before it is incorporated into any scientific theory.

In relation to the second potential limitation—the nature of the relationship between language and reality—folk psychology theories posit that the phenomena they describe exist in a real world, and are independent of the phenomena they describe. This position is well summarised by Frijda, Markam, Sato, and Wiers (1995) who argued that “there are phenomena for which the word ‘emotion’ has been invented, and which phenomena existed prior to the word having been invented” (p. 121). If we adopt such a realist philosophical stance, we can assume that folk theories are based on peoples’ descriptions of pre-existing, biological, phenomena. A logical deduction from this argument would be that the data above could contribute to a scientific taxonomy of emotion and mood.

However, several authors have questioned this account. For example, Parkinson (1998) suggested “the culturally-provided representational template that is imposed on psychological reality determines the conceptual entities that are discerned there . . . So nature is carved not at its joints but in whatever places societies or institutions are inclined to draw their dividing lines” (p. 620). Parkinson, while acknowledging biological factors in emotion, hints at strong social factors influencing the way we represent emotion, and in doing so, calls into question the realist stance described above.

Debates relating to the respective complexities and merits of these contrasting positions that have occupied psychologists and philosophers for many years, are beyond the scope of the present paper. The present paper sought to present and offer a tentative analysis of folk psychological distinctions between emotion and mood. These debates are briefly alluded to remind the reader that to accept the data above as evidence of valid distinctions between emotion and mood requires the acceptance of a certain philosophical stance, and that the validity of that stance is far from universally accepted.

CONCLUSION

It is anticipated that the data above, representing as they do an integration of academic and lay perspectives, will encourage those working in the area to consider the respective natures of the constructs of emotion and mood. It is also hoped that the present findings will stimulate further empirical research into

emotion-mood distinctions. Several philosophical, conceptual and practical questions remain to be answered. First, from a philosophical perspective, what is the relationship between the common sense theories expounded above and the psychological or biological reality of emotion and mood? That is, just because people say that emotion and mood exist as distinct entities does this mean that they do, or are they simply socially constructed phenomena.

Second, from a conceptual perspective, are emotions and moods, although distinct in manifestation (duration, cause, intensity, etc.), actually the same construct in different guises. Do they exist at opposite ends of a single continuum or as two distinct phenomena? Is a mood simply a low intensity and enduring emotion? In the words of one respondent "I guess the difference for me is the degree to which the original feeling is felt and expressed that makes it either an emotion or a mood, but I get the sense that in their original form they may be the same thing."

Third, from a practical perspective, which of the 16 criteria should become objects of explicit measurement and study in future research? The present results suggest that the duration, cause, and intentionality criteria might represent the most fruitful avenues for future research but whether criterion values can be established where, for example, a particular response duration distinguishes a mood from an emotion appears doubtful.

Although the data presented do not constitute evidence for a distinction between emotion and mood based on any specific criterion, they lay an empirical foundation for future research and should prove useful to investigators interested in developing a clearer scientific distinction between emotion and mood than is currently available. Future research should aim to identify the congruence between such folk psychology theories and biological/neurological indices to further our knowledge of the true nature(s) of emotion and mood.

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