
THE ORGANIZATION AND THE NATURE OF IRRATIONAL BELIEFS: SCHEMAS OR APPRAISAL ?

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Abstract

A major problem that needs to be addressed both in rational emotive and cognitive behavioral therapies is the one regarding the organization and nature of cognitions labeled irrational beliefs. Some authors consider irrational beliefs to be evaluative cognitions (hot cognitions) and thus it is important to relate them to appraisal theory while others sustain that these beliefs are organized as schemas (cold cognitions) and thus they need to be related to schema theory. The three studies presented in this article address the matter of the nature of irrational beliefs from a schema theory point of view. The obtained results indicate that the irrational belief categories of “must” and “global self evaluation” are organized as schemas (study 2) while the categories of “catastrofizing” and “low frustration tolerance” (study 3) are better conceptualized as appraisals. Furthermore the utilization of the imperative “must” seems to have a powerful relationship with all other three belief categories; this result sustains the presumption of CBT/REBT that the usage of the imperative “must” is the basis of irrational beliefs.

Keywords: *irrational beliefs, schemas, appraisal*

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