

Affective System

*All happy families look similar to each other, every unhappy family is
unhappy in its own way*

Leo Tolstoy “Anna Karenina”

I. PSYCHOLOGY

A. Emotions Versus Reasoning

Emotions provide a dimension different from reasoning. Emotions play an important role in our life. The affective system of the brain is designed by nature for surviving the organism in the world by using a dimension different from reasoning. When reasoning is not enough for making decision, the brain relies on the affective system. Just a simple example, we seldom rely on our reasoning when we choose a wife or a husband, when we watch a football game played by a favorite team, or when we play with a family dog. Making some important steps in our lives (like marriage, divorce, leaving a job...) we are usually driven by emotions. Another example of the affective system functioning is releasing fundamental actions such as seek for food, water, or a sexual partner.

The affective system produces certain habitual responses, called emotional reactions, to certain events. These responses are produced when the brain detects an emotionally competent stimulus¹. The “habits of mind” – the routines of the

¹This concept was introduced by Antonio Damasio. A popular version of his work is presented in his recent book “The feeling of what happens,” 1999.