

Is Cognitive dissonance a stumbling block in workplace? –An Evaluation of the IT sector

Discipline: Management

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Abstract - This study was conducted to explore the effects of cognitive dissonance among associates in the IT sector, particularly focusing on internal recruitment, as this area significantly influences and shapes the career trajectories of associates while necessitating critical personal decisions. The study examined various factors, including emotional trading (behavior/belief), attitude, satisfaction levels, expectations, stress, and perception, to assess their influence on associates when faced with decisions that involve conflicting interests. Data was gathered from 144 recruiters responsible for hiring associates in the IT industry. The objective of this study is to ascertain the extent to which cognitive dissonance affects workplace behavior, ultimately impacting organizational outcomes over time. The findings indicate that cognitive dissonance consistently poses challenges within organizations, and if not addressed promptly, it can adversely affect employee behavior, which subsequently influences the organization as a whole.

Keywords: Cognitive dissonance, Emotional trading, Recruitment, Perception, Level of satisfaction, decision making, Expectation, Stress, workplace behavior.

1. Introduction

The theory of cognitive dissonance can be understood as a psychological state characterized by stress or a sense of internal unease that arises from the presence of conflicting ideas, values, beliefs, or behaviors; this phenomenon occurs when an individual grapples with two or more contradictory thoughts, leading to a state of psychological discomfort in a particular context. As human beings, we inherently strive to achieve a sense of harmony among our attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and practices, and when confronted with an internal conflict or dissonance, our instinctive response is to seek ways to diminish or eliminate this discomfort in order to restore emotional equilibrium. Consequently, when there is a lack of psychological consistency between one's beliefs and actions, individuals often engage in various strategies to modify these elements until they align harmoniously. To alleviate the emotional strain and its associated consequences, the following three strategies are considered effective according to the theory.

- Changing attitudes, behaviors or beliefs
- Acquiring new information

- Reducing the importance of cognitions

This theory manifests itself within the workplace, particularly as a prevalent and significant source of stress for individuals engaged in organizational support roles, including risk management and human resources; the cognitive dissonance that employees encounter has emerged as a widely recognized phenomenon, evident in the less desirable behaviors exhibited by staff, which in turn leads to negative repercussions for the organization. In the realm of human resource management, this dissonance exerts a considerable influence, particularly in recruitment, where such conflicts can yield both direct and indirect effects. In this context, individuals often find themselves compelled to tolerate, support, and perform tasks that may conflict with their ethical beliefs, training, or personal values. Therefore, it is crucial to acknowledge these underlying beliefs and needs, as they frequently serve as the primary motivators shaping individuals' career paths; it is not uncommon for people to navigate these challenging situations, executing their responsibilities even when the actual outcomes diverge significantly from their expectations.

When cognitive dissonance remains unacknowledged within the professional environment, it engenders a plethora of detrimental consequences, including but not limited to withdrawal and disengagement, heightened absenteeism, inappropriate and negative behaviors, as well as deleterious health ramifications. Should cognitive dissonance not be timely and effectively addressed, it has the potential to alienate individuals from the organization, fostering a belief that the sole recourse available is to pursue a workplace stress claim. The origins of cognitive dissonance are frequently rooted in specific management or leadership styles, instances of bullying, discrimination, among other factors. Consequently, it is imperative to ensure that the management approach aligns harmoniously with the needs of the employees. This investigation seeks to explore the myriad sources of cognitive dissonance and its ramifications on workplace conduct. The anticipated outcomes are expected to furnish organizations with invaluable insights, thereby equipping them to mitigate the adverse effects of cognitive dissonance experienced by their workforce.

The inquiry into the impact of cognitive dissonance on workplace behavior is of paramount significance, as organizations serve as environments where individuals are compelled to navigate pivotal decision-making scenarios to fulfill overarching organizational objectives. In the absence of a robust and invigorated organizational climate, the prospect of a prosperous future remains elusive. The manifestation of cognitive dissonance has the potential to undermine the collective motivation of both individuals and the organization as a whole. Prior to addressing the strategies for managing such circumstances within the workplace, it is essential to recognize that escapist

behaviors, including various forms of internal justification, are ultimately counterproductive.

Engaging in such behaviors may allow us to obscure our dissatisfaction to a certain degree; however, the underlying stress will persist, subsequently exacerbating feelings of frustration. Recruitment, inherently intertwined with the management of substantial human resources, inevitably encompasses the complexities of human emotions in daily interactions. Consequently, it becomes imperative to assess the dissonances experienced by individuals and to comprehend their ramifications within the workplace environment. In light of these considerations, this study endeavors to elucidate the various stressors and sources of cognitive dissonance affecting employees within prominent IT corporations, while also proposing strategies aimed at alleviating their dissonance, thereby fostering a more stress-free and productive workforce in the relentless pursuit of establishing a competitive and thriving IT enterprise.

2. Literature Review

The concept of cognitive dissonance, initially explored by Leon Festinger in 1957, emerged from a participant observation study centered on a cult that fervently anticipated an apocalyptic flood; this investigation revealed the psychological turmoil experienced by its adherents, particularly those who had wholly devoted themselves to the cult's cause, when the prophesied deluge failed to materialize. While the less dedicated members began to acknowledge their misguided beliefs and sought to rationalize their experiences as mere lessons learned, the staunch followers exhibited a propensity to reinterpret the unfolding evidence, asserting that their unwavering faith had ultimately spared the world from destruction, thereby reinforcing their conviction in the cult's doctrines.

- Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory posits that individuals possess an intrinsic motivation to maintain congruence between their attitudes and behaviors, thereby striving to avert any form of discord or dissonance. This phenomenon is encapsulated in the principle of cognitive consistency. When a dissonance arises due to a conflict between attitudes or behaviors, it necessitates a modification of some sort to restore equilibrium. Notably, the theory does not assert that the methods employed to mitigate dissonance will invariably prove effective; rather, it suggests that individuals experiencing cognitive dissonance will endeavor to alleviate their discomfort. The exploration of cognitive dissonance has been extensively conducted across various contexts, aiming to elucidate foundational concepts and identify diverse factors that may play a pivotal role in the process of attitude transformation.

What causes cognitive dissonance?

- **Forced Compliance Behavior**
- **Decision-making**
- **Effort**
- **Forced Compliance Behavior:** When an individual is compelled to engage in an action that they are fundamentally opposed to, particularly in a public context, a cognitive dissonance emerges between their internal conviction (I had no desire to undertake this) and their external conduct (I proceeded to do it). This phenomenon of coerced compliance manifests when a person performs an act that starkly contradicts their personal beliefs. Given that the action has already transpired, it becomes impossible to alter the behavior; thus, the individual must seek to mitigate or eradicate the dissonance by reassessing their attitude towards the action they have undertaken.
- **Decision-Making:** The tapestry of life is intricately woven with a multitude of decisions, each of which, as a general principle, tends to amplify cognitive dissonance. The crux of the matter lies in the fact that the act of making a choice irrevocably severs the potential to relish the benefits associated with the alternatives that remain unselected, while simultaneously necessitating the acceptance of the drawbacks inherent in the chosen path. Individuals possess various strategies to mitigate the dissonance that arises from the decision-making process (Festinger, 1964). One potential avenue is the alteration of one's behavior; however, as previously mentioned, this endeavor often proves to be exceedingly challenging, prompting individuals to resort to a range of psychological tactics. A prevalent method for alleviating dissonance involves enhancing the appeal of the selected option while concurrently diminishing the allure of the alternative that has been forsaken, a phenomenon aptly termed "spreading apart the alternatives".
- **Effort:** It appears that we tend to place the highest value on objectives or possessions that necessitate substantial exertion to attain. This inclination primarily stems from the cognitive dissonance that arises when one invests significant effort into a pursuit, only to subsequently appraise it unfavorably. One might dedicate years to the realization of a goal, only to discover that it is ultimately devoid of worth; in such instances, to mitigate the discomfort of this dissonance, individuals may resort to rationalizing their experience by downplaying the duration and intensity of their efforts, or by asserting that the journey itself was rather pleasurable, or that the exertion was not as burdensome as it initially seemed.

- Taking into account the aforementioned elements as a cornerstone for forthcoming inquiries and scholarly investigations, it is evident that a plethora of research has been conducted on cognitive dissonance across various domains; however, there exists a notable paucity of studies specifically addressing its implications within the realms of recruitment and human resource management. The following delineates a selection of studies that have been utilized as foundational references for this particular investigation.
- **Kim and Bay (2017)** formulated contrasting hypotheses grounded in agency theory and cognitive dissonance theory concerning the determination to document an impairment of goodwill. The findings align with the principles of cognitive dissonance, even when accounting for variables deemed significant within the framework of agency theory. The authors ultimately deduced that compelling evidence exists to suggest that agency theory fails to singularly elucidate the outcomes of managerial decisions as reflected in financial reporting data.
- **Andiappan and Dufour (2017)** undertook an investigation into cognitive theory and attribution theory, aiming to construct a process model that elucidates managerial dissonance and the attribution of responsibility following acts of harm. While the prevailing literature posits an inherent managerial endorsement for such decisions, their research posits that there are instances wherein managers perceive certain organizationally mandated acts of harm as superfluous. They meticulously analyzed the myriad challenges encountered by managers throughout each stage of the dissonance resolution process, alongside the potential ramifications stemming from this process. Ultimately, the study culminates in a discussion of the model's implications for moral theorization.
- **Yamaguchi and Abe (2016)** conducted an investigation into the managerial influences that could incite cognitive dissonance, utilizing empirical data derived from e-commerce panels. Their approach involved the meticulous translation of cognitive and emotional precursor factors identified in prior studies into observable metrics via online data, culminating in the development of a hierarchical model designed to account for individual variability and contextual disparities.
- **Sharifiand and Esfidani (2014)** conducted an investigation into the mechanisms by which relationship marketing mitigates cognitive dissonance during the post-purchase phase, ultimately enhancing customer satisfaction and fostering loyalty, with trust and cognitive dissonance serving as mediating variables. The findings revealed that the implementation of relationship marketing strategies led to a notable reduction in cognitive dissonance experienced by consumers after their purchases. Consequently, as the levels of cognitive dissonance diminished,

consumers exhibited heightened satisfaction, which in turn translated into both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty. Furthermore, the research substantiated the mediating influence of trust alongside cognitive dissonance in this dynamic.

- **Yousaf and Gobet (2013)** conducted an investigation into the emotional and attitudinal ramifications stemming from discrepancies between personal attitudes and behaviors, employing a religiously framed iteration of the hypocrisy paradigm. Their research yielded significant evidence supporting the notion that dissonance, engendered by religious hypocrisy, can elicit feelings of guilt and shame, alongside an attitude bolstering effect, in stark contrast to the attitude reconciliation effects observed in prior dissonance studies.
- **Telci, Madenand, and Kantur (2011)** undertook an investigation into the realms of marketing and management perspectives, meticulously analyzing the application of cognitive dissonance theory within the domains of psychology, management, and marketing. The primary objective of this inquiry was to evaluate the extent to which this theoretical framework enhances understanding in these disciplines. While marketers frequently employ this theory to elucidate consumer behavior, its integration into management practices, particularly in addressing human-related challenges, remains significantly underexplored. The researchers ultimately determined that the theory's impact on the corpus of marketing knowledge is indeed considerable.
- **Metin and Camgoz (2011)** conducted an examination of the historical advancements pertaining to the theory of cognitive dissonance. This theoretical framework posits that individual, upon encountering psychological discomfort—often manifesting as elevated stress levels—endeavor to alleviate such dissonance by either modifying their behaviors and cognitive frameworks or by incorporating additional cognitive elements. The essence of cognitive dissonance theory lies in the premise that the coexistence of two psychologically incongruent cognitions engenders a state of dissonance, compelling individuals to seek resolution through behavioral modification, cognitive alteration, or the introduction of new cognitive components. This theory has significantly influenced the trajectory of social psychology, as it effectively contested the reinforcement theory by elucidating the paradox that individuals often develop an affinity for those experiences that induce suffering and discomfort.
- **Kim (2011)** adeptly employed the theory of cognitive dissonance within the realm of the service industry, meticulously examining its impact on critical marketing variables, including perceived value and trust. The results indicated that the applicability of cognitive dissonance theory transcends mere post-decision

scenarios, extending into service contexts to elucidate the mechanisms by which customers interpret information when confronted with word-of-mouth messages that contradict their pre-existing beliefs. Furthermore, the research revealed that cognitive dissonance serves as a significant predictor of re-patronage behavior, even among those customers who express satisfaction with the service received.

- **Lee, Jung, and Nass (2011)** conducted an investigation into the influence of user selection on the social reactions elicited by computer-generated speech. Their findings revealed the presence of social identification and proximate source orientation effects, which persisted even when users exercised their autonomy in selecting a computer voice. However, the anticipated similarity attraction effect was rendered ineffective due to the cognitive dissonance that emerged following user choices. The study further delved into the resilience of social responses, the ramifications for human-computer interaction, and underscored the critical role of user choice in the design of voice interfaces.
- **Cao and Just (2010)** undertook a laboratory investigation aimed at elucidating the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance and its subsequent manifestations in eating behaviors when confronted with food-related risks. The findings revealed that the presence of cognitive dissonance is intricately linked to the degree of familiarity with the food in question. Specifically, when participants were presented with familiar food items, they exhibited a propensity to offer higher bids, articulate lower risk assessments, and eschew risk-related information, thereby indicating the presence of cognitive dissonance coupled with confirmatory bias. Conversely, when faced with less familiar food options, participants displayed a heightened level of caution. Nevertheless, these individuals still demonstrated a tendency to rationalize their eating choices by expressing an increased willingness to pay (WTP). The efficacy of public information initiatives is thus contingent upon individuals' pre-existing knowledge and perceptions.
- **George and Yaoyuneyong (2010)** elucidated the intricate relationship between impulsive purchasing behaviors and the ensuing cognitive dissonance, particularly within the milieu of student shopping during the spring break period. Their empirical investigation revealed that the cognitive dissonance engendered by impulsive acquisitions was markedly more pronounced than that arising from meticulously planned purchases. It was posited that individuals characterized by impulsivity would, in fact, grapple with a heightened sense of cognitive dissonance following unanticipated purchases, in stark contrast to their less impulsive counterparts. Interestingly, the data indicated that impulsive buyers exhibited comparatively diminished levels of cognitive dissonance relative to those who engaged in

premeditated buying. These revelations culminated in the formulation of a novel theoretical perspective, suggesting that the proclivity for impulse buying may serve as a psychological coping mechanism, strategically employed to mitigate the discomfort stemming from the potential disconfirmation of one's expectations.

- **George and Edward (2009)** conducted a thorough investigation into the intricate relationship between the extent of personal engagement in a purchasing decision and the requisite information needed to mitigate the cognitive dissonance that often accompanies such transactions. Their research revealed a compelling insight: the propensity of an individual experiencing dissonance to embrace new cognitive frameworks tends to increase as time progresses following the initial experience of dissonance. In the context of typical purchases, it was observed that individuals with a higher level of involvement encounter a diminished sense of cognitive dissonance compared to their less engaged counterparts. However, despite this lower level of dissonance, the challenge of reconciling it remains significantly more formidable for those who are deeply involved. Furthermore, the study elucidated that purchasing behaviors characterized by meticulous planning, as opposed to impulsive decisions, correlate with an elevated incidence of cognitive dissonance.
- **Koller and Salzberger (2007)** undertook an exploration into the potential applicability of cognitive dissonance within phases of the decision-making continuum that are typically overlooked, specifically the pre-purchase and even the pre-decision stages. Fundamentally, the notion of cognitive dissonance is indeed relevant during the pre-decision phase. From a managerial perspective, it is imperative that marketing strategies aimed at mitigating cognitive dissonance are not confined solely to the post-purchase phase; rather, they should be integrated throughout the entirety of the decision-making and purchasing journey, commencing even before the actual decision is made.
- **Fotuhi *et al.*, (2004)** made a study to determine if individuals who smoke modify their convictions in a manner that aligns with the principles of cognitive dissonance theory. This objective was achieved by scrutinizing the longitudinal trajectory of belief transformation among smokers in conjunction with alterations in their smoking habits. The findings revealed that smokers exhibit a propensity to justify their actions by adopting increasingly favorable perceptions regarding smoking, and these affirmative beliefs undergo systematic alterations in response to fluctuations in their smoking status.
- **Korgaonkar and Moschis (1982)** conducted a comprehensive examination of the interplay between cognitive dissonance, expectations, perception, and product

performance in shaping product evaluations. This investigation adeptly addresses the methodological shortcomings that have plagued previous experimental inquiries. The outcomes derived from a 2x2x2 factorial design indicate that product involvement serves as a moderating variable within the framework of post-decisional product evaluation. Furthermore, both the theoretical insights and empirical evidence gleaned from this study proffer valuable communication strategies for advertisers.

- **Nicholas and Duke (1977)** conducted an investigation into the foundational aspects of social learning theory, particularly focusing on the analysis of the cognitive dissonance phenomenon. They posited that the locus of control would mediate the alteration of attitudes within a framework of enforced compliance. The quintessential cognitive effect manifested when the emphasis was placed on the autonomy of choice; however, this effect dissipated when the locus of control was excluded as a covariate.
- **Hollon and Chesser (1976)** delved into the fundamental nature of cognitive dissonance, positing that the coexistence of two or more conflicting cognitions engenders a state of psychological tension. The primary focus of subsequent research on dissonance theory has been to delineate the specific circumstances under which the predictions of dissonance are applicable. Findings indicate that such predictions are valid when an individual perceives a disparity between their actual influence and the level of influence they aspire to attain within a professional context.
- **Foran and De Coster (1974)** undertook an experimental investigation involving accountants, employing a cognitive dissonance framework to scrutinize the influence of three independent variables—namely, participation, feedback regarding that participation, and the organismic variable of authoritarianism—on the dependent variable, which pertains to the subjects' attitudes concerning the performance standards they had a role in establishing. The findings of this study suggest that accountants ought to perceive the formulation of performance standards as a multifaceted process that encompasses participation, engagement, voluntary choice, and constructive feedback regarding the outcomes of the planning process. It is only through this comprehensive approach that genuine commitment to the established performance standards can be achieved.
- **Hawkins (1972)** discovered that individuals who express a propensity to worry following decision-making processes typically exhibit elevated scores on assessments of chronic or trait anxiety, in contrast to those who indicate a diminished level of concern, thereby implying that cognitive dissonance may

represent a distinct manifestation of anxiety. He posits that the frequency with which individuals encounter dissonance post-decision is subject to considerable variability among different people. Consequently, while certain individuals may be inherently more susceptible to the experience of dissonance, the likelihood of any given person encountering such dissonance in a particular context is contingent upon the intricate interplay between that individual and the specific circumstances at hand.

- **Oshikawa (1972)** conducted an investigation into the intricate relationship between cognitive dissonance and the quality of service, employing a manipulation of the latter variable across multiple experimental cohorts, thereby facilitating an analysis of the variances in their endeavors to mitigate dissonance. Within the confines of this study, it was posited that dissonance was elicited by the exposure to disparate levels of service quality. The author discerned that the responses elicited post-purchase did not exhibit any significant deviation from those recorded pre-purchase, which implies two critical considerations. Firstly, the transient anxiety experienced after the purchase was minimal, suggesting that the responses were indicative of a more chronic state of anxiety. Secondly, the lack of a significant difference between pre- and post-purchase responses raises the possibility that either the act of acquiring an automobile did not constitute a dissonance-inducing event, or that the employed questions failed to serve as valid metrics for assessing dissonance.

Identification of gap in Dissonance literature

Despite the plethora of research aimed at elucidating the myriad sources, ramifications, and remedial strategies associated with cognitive dissonance in the context of workplace behavior, there exists a conspicuous paucity of investigations specifically targeting the recruitment sector within information technology firms. This is particularly striking given the substantial influx of the workforce into the IT industry, spurred by its remarkable expansion. The advent of digitalization has endowed individuals with an unprecedented array of skill sets, thereby rendering the process of selecting an appropriate career path a formidable challenge in its own right. An in-depth examination of the recruitment practices within IT firms is poised to illuminate the ways in which employees navigate these dissonances and the subsequent repercussions on their workplace conduct.

3. Objectives

In order to meticulously examine the myriad factors that influence cognitive dissonance among employees within the organizational framework, it is focused to

articulate and accomplish the subsequent objectives:

- To assess various factors of cognitive dissonance in employees of IT sector during internal recruitment.
- To assess and compare the level of dissonance in the employees and suggest options in which the impact can be reduced.

4. Hypotheses

To the above objectives, the following hypotheses were set for the study:

H1: There is positive relationship between Emotional Trading of the employees and Workplace Behavior

H2: There is positive relationship between Attitude of the employees and Workplace Behaviour.

H3: There is positive relationship between Expectation of the employees and Workplace Behaviour

H4: There is positive relationship between Level of Satisfaction of the employees and Workplace Behaviour

H5: There is positive relationship between Stress level of the employees and Workplace Behaviour

H6: There is positive relationship between Perception of the employees and Workplace Behaviour

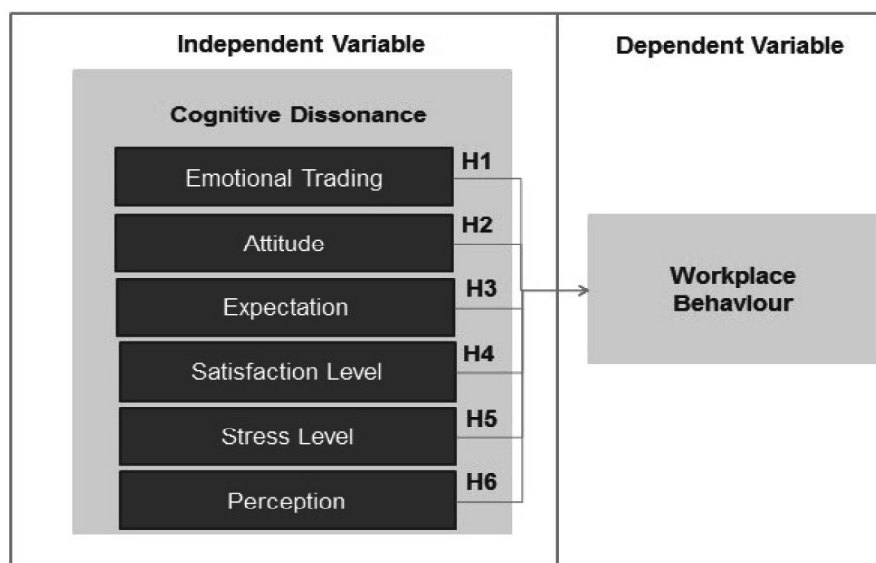
5. Sample and Data Collection

The demographic focus of this investigation predominantly encompasses recruiters tasked with conducting interviews and assigning associates (employees) within their respective organizations, ensuring alignment between job requirements and the qualifications of candidates. The sampling technique employed is non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling, wherein the selection of participants is predicated upon the researcher's discernment to identify a sample that is most pertinent to the study's objectives. This approach was deemed essential due to the necessity of acquiring in-depth insights into a particular phenomenon, as opposed to merely deriving statistical generalizations. The primary emphasis of this research is directed towards the information technology sector, which is regarded as the quintessential modern workplace and plays a pivotal role in shaping the nation's future, characterized by a vast array of employee diversity and skill sets within organizations.

The advent of digital transformation has emerged as a significant disruptor, rendering traditional technological advantages ephemeral. Numerous opportunities now exist for individuals to acquire novel and stimulating skills, often accompanied by the prospect of enhanced remuneration. However, the rapid evolution of technology has engendered a rift between IT personnel and management, as both parties grapple with escalating work demands. This predicament resembles a classic chicken-and-egg scenario, wherein decision-makers frequently cite burgeoning workloads as a rationale for withholding training authorization, while staff members find themselves beleaguered by the inability to fulfill assignments due to insufficient skills. Consequently, time that was once allocated for skill enhancement is now diverted to address an ever-growing backlog of tasks. On a global scale, the gap in IT skills has surged by an alarming 155% over the past three years, a reality that can no longer be overlooked, as the absence of requisite skills culminates in heightened employee stress, delays in development and deployment, and inflated operational costs. For the purposes of this study, outreach was conducted with eleven IT companies, resulting in the collection of 144 data sets from recruiters.

6. Research Model

Figure 1: Research Model



The determinants that shape an individual's conduct within the workplace were evaluated through the lens of six distinct independent variables, namely Emotional Trading, Attitude, Expectation, Satisfaction Level, Stress, and Perception, as illustrated in Fig. 1. In the context of this investigation, these six variables were conceptualized as

integral components of cognitive dissonance. Emotional trading pertains to the phenomenon wherein an individual allows personal sentiments and emotions to influence their decision-making processes. While this emotional involvement can occasionally yield beneficial outcomes, it is predominantly regarded as detrimental to sound decision-making, particularly in the realm of Stock Market Trading. In this context, to mitigate the discordance between workplace behavior and personal convictions influenced by emotions, the term Emotional Trading is employed. Attitude encompasses a constellation of emotions, beliefs, and behaviors directed toward a specific object, individual, or event, often shaped by personal experiences or upbringing, thereby exerting a significant influence on behavior. Although attitudes tend to be relatively stable, they are not impervious to change. Expectations arise from both organizational frameworks and individual associates, with this study focusing specifically on the anticipations held by associates in new job roles, which encompass both tangible and intangible demands.

The level of satisfaction experienced by an individual can be linked to both emotional and material benefits, ultimately resulting in either favorable or unfavorable workplace outcomes. Stress, a multifaceted factor, can stem from a variety of underlying issues related to both professional and personal obligations; however, this study exclusively examines the stressors that associates encounter in their professional environments and the consequent effects on workplace dynamics. While behavior, attitude, and beliefs are pivotal in contributing to an individual's cognitive dissonance, the transformative nature of the environment and the novel dimensions perceived by the individual may also significantly influence critical decision-making processes, thereby affecting workplace behavior.

The sampling process involved engaging with a diverse array of recruitment teams from numerous IT companies, wherein questionnaires were disseminated within their respective departments, supplemented by the utilization of online survey platforms for broader reach. Each questionnaire comprised a total of 26 inquiries, not including demographic information, meticulously categorized according to the independent variables as illustrated in the research model (Fig.1).

Table 1: Cognitive Dissonance Variables used in the survey

| Factor | Questions |
|-----------------------|--|
| Behavior | Associates are mostly responsive and provide immediate decision when offered role that does not exactly match their expectations. |
| Behaviour | Associates mostly agree to the next immediate role/profile offering and do not sit in bench until they get the exact matching profile. |
| Behaviour | When the pros of the new profile are being conveyed, the associates mostly get convinced and accept the new offer. |
| Behaviour | Associates rely more on internal job offering than external jobs while in bench. |
| Behaviour | After accepting to switch to a new role, associates mostly stick to their decisions. |
| Attitude | Associates mostly show interest in moving to a new role even if it does not relate to the previous role. |
| Attitude | When offered a challenging role (Example: night shift, additional responsibilities or work timing), associates mostly agree to the offer |
| Attitude | Associates are mostly willing to take up new skills to meet new profile offerings when requested to do so. |
| Expectation | Associates mostly express their expectations in a job when contacted for new roles. |
| Expectation | Associates mostly demand for an onsite/specific job location or any such perks to satisfy their personal needs. |
| Expectation | Associates only accept the role profiles if it exactly matches their expectations |
| Level of Satisfaction | Associates are mostly satisfied with their new role while being assigned to them. |
| Level of Satisfaction | Most of the Associates in their new role complete their commitment period without exiting the project, midway. |
| Level of Satisfaction | Associate's satisfaction depends on additional perks when asked to change to a new role. |
| Stress | Associates very often request for a change in current work allocation due to stress. |
| Stress | Very less number of associates is able to sustain in a stressful work environment. |
| Stress | Projects with stressful work environment very often have change in associates/job profile requests. |
| Perception | Associates mostly feel that a change to a new role is better than sticking to a role of their comfort to improve their career |
| Perception | Associates mostly feel an internal change to a new role is a better means to achieve salary and designation hikes. |
| Perception | Associates feel pressurized when requested to change roles/acquire new skills for the job requirements. |
| Perception | Associates mostly feel that RMG understand their associates' requirements and help them to get the most suitable roles. |
| Work Place Behaviour | Associates who have changed to a new role have mostly displayed success |
| Work Place Behaviour | Associates who have changed to a new role have never raised stress concerns in their new role |
| Work Place Behaviour | Associates, who have changed to a new role, rarely return back to their earlier role. |
| Work Place Behaviour | Associates who have changed to a new role have mostly expressed a positive attitude and acceptable behaviour in their new work environment |
| Work Place Behaviour | Most of the Projects have expressed positive feedback about the associates who were made to fit in the new role by RMG. |

1. Analysis

The array of statistical tools employed in this study encompasses Linear Regression, Correlation, One-way ANOVA, and the Independent T-Test, as the analysis revolves around a singular dependent variable, namely Workplace Behavior, juxtaposed with six independent variables, which include Emotional Trading, Attitude, Level of Satisfaction, Stress, Expectations, and Perception, in addition to several demographic factors such as gender and the respondents' experience. To elucidate the nature of the linear association between the dependent variable and its independent counterparts, Multiple Linear Regression is utilized, thereby quantifying the degree of this relationship. Correlation serves to articulate the linear interconnection between the dependent and independent variables. The One-way ANOVA is employed to scrutinize the means across different groups—specifically, Workplace Behavior in relation to the respondents' experience—thereby assessing whether these means exhibit statistically significant disparities. Furthermore, the Independent T-Test is instrumental in evaluating whether the average values of two distinct groups, categorized by gender, diverge significantly when analyzed in the context of workplace behavior.

2. Results

The data obtained from the administration of questionnaires underwent meticulous analysis, and the statistical significance was rigorously evaluated to draw informed conclusions.

Table 2: Correlation

| | Emotional Trading | Attitude | Expectations | Level of Satisfaction | Stress | Perception |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------|--------------|-----------------------|--------|------------|
| Pearson Correlation | -0.554 | 0.328 | 0.748 | 0.572 | 0.620 | 0.710 |
| Sig (1 Tailed) | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |

Table 2 elucidates that each of the independent variables—namely Emotional Trading, Attitude, Level of Satisfaction, Stress, Expectations, and Perception—exhibits a statistically significant correlation with the dependent variable, which pertains to workplace behavior, as evidenced by a p-value that falls below the threshold of 0.05, indicative of the established confidence level. Notably, Emotional Trading manifests a negative correlation, in stark contrast to the other variables, which all demonstrate positive correlations. Emotional Trading, characterized by the tumultuous interplay of conflicting thoughts within an individual, can adversely impact employees' performance. Consequently, in alignment with our hypothesis, we accept the null hypothesis, H01, for Emotional Trading, while concurrently endorsing the alternative hypotheses (H2, H3, H4, H5, and H6) for the remaining independent variables.

Table 3: Linear Regression

| R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| .962 ^a | 0.925 | 0.922 | 0.18377 |

Table 3 delineates the values of R and R square, where the R value, denoted in the “R” column, signifies the straightforward correlation and is quantified at 0.962, thereby reflecting a substantial degree of correlation. Conversely, the R square value, as presented in the “R Square” column, elucidates the extent to which the independent variables account for the total variability observed in the dependent variable, Workplace Behavior. In this instance, the R square value is an impressive 0.925, indicating a considerable proportion of explained variance.

Table 4: ANOVA Table

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|
| Regression | 57.091 | 6 | 9.515 | 281.764 | .000 |
| Residual | 4.626 | 137 | 0.034 | | |
| Total | 61.718 | 143 | | | |

Table 4 confirms that the regression model predicts the dependent variable significantly well. The “Sig.” column in the-Regression row- indicates the statistical significance of the regression model that was run. Here, p value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, and indicates that, overall, the regression model significantly predicts the outcome variable (i.e., it is a good fit for the data).

Table 5: Table of Coefficients

| | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | -0.983 | 0.297 | | -3.308 | 0.001 |
| Emotional Trading | -0.195 | 0.057 | -0.147 | -3.385 | 0.001 |
| Attitude | 0.213 | 0.037 | 0.198 | 5.823 | 0.000 |
| Expectations | 0.779 | 0.034 | 0.643 | 22.867 | 0.000 |
| Level of Satisfaction | -0.008 | 0.046 | -0.007 | -0.172 | 0.864 |
| Stress | -0.047 | 0.054 | -0.043 | -0.874 | 0.384 |
| Perception | 0.400 | 0.033 | 0.463 | 11.956 | 0.000 |

In the meticulous examination of each variable in isolation, the Beta coefficient attributed to emotional trading, quantified at -0.147, intimates that a deviation of one standard deviation within the emotional trading variable will instigate a corresponding modification of -0.147 standard deviations in the dependent variable. This relatively

modest Beta value elucidates a negative correlation of the independent variable with the dependent variable, albeit one that retains statistical significance at the conventional alpha level of 0.05. In stark contrast, the Beta coefficient for 'Attitude' is recorded at 0.198, signifying that a one standard deviation fluctuation in the attitude variable will precipitate a change of 0.198 standard deviations in the dependent variable. This observation suggests a slight yet statistically significant influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable, as evidenced by a significance value of 0.000, which is markedly below the 0.05 threshold. Moreover, the Beta coefficient for 'Expectations' is noted at 0.643, indicating that a one standard deviation alteration in the expectations variable will yield a change of 0.643 standard deviations in the dependent variable. This revelation accentuates a considerable effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, further substantiated by a significance level of 0.000.

The Beta coefficient associated with 'Level of Satisfaction' is documented at -0.007, which indicates that a variation of one standard deviation in the expectations variable will engender a corresponding decrement of -0.007 standard deviations in the dependent variable. This negative Beta value implies that the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable is not only minimal but also detrimental, with a significance level of 0.864 reflecting a lack of statistical importance. In the context of 'Stress', the Beta value of -0.043 suggests that a one standard deviation fluctuation in the stress variable will precipitate a reduction of -0.043 standard deviations in the dependent variable, thereby exemplifying a negative yet moderate influence on the dependent variable, which is similarly regarded as insignificant due to the significance value of 0.384. In contrast, the Beta value for 'Perception' stands at 0.463, indicating that a one standard deviation alteration in the perception variable will yield an increase of 0.463 standard deviations in the dependent variable, thereby signifying a considerable positive effect, corroborated by a highly significant p-value of 0.000. The data delineated in Table 5 unequivocally illustrates that, apart from Level of Satisfaction and Stress, all other independent variables exert either a significant positive or negative impact on 'workplace behaviour' as the dependent variable. Notably, 'Expectations' emerges as the most influential variable, exhibiting a Beta of 0.643 and a t-value of 22.867.

Table 6: One Way ANOVA

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------|
| Between Groups | 14.638 | 2 | 7.319 | 21.919 | 0.000 |
| Within Groups | 47.080 | 141 | 0.334 | | |
| Total | 61.718 | 143 | | | |

As determined by one-way ANOVA ($F = 21.919$, $p = .000$), we do see a statistically

significant association between the experience of the respondents and their views on the impact on workplace behavior due to the factors contributing to the cognitive dissonance of the associate (Table 8). This means that the experience of the respondents significantly impacts their responses.

Table 7: Independent Sample T-Test

| Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | |
|---|-------|-------|------------------------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference |
| Equal variances assumed | 6.069 | 0.015 | 2.128 | 142 | 0.035 | 0.23778 |
| Equal variances not assumed | | | 1.967 | 86.521 | 0.052 | 0.23778 |

Based on the results shown in the above table (Table 9) which shows the significance value as 0.035, it is seen that there is statistically significant association between the gender and the responses on workplace behaviors when equal variances are assumed between the genders. When equal variances are not assumed, the statistical significance is more than 0.05 and can be considered that there is no significant impact on the responses.

1. Findings

The subsequent delineation encapsulates the findings derived from the analysis:

- In aggregate, the independent variables exert a substantial influence on workplace behavior.
- While all variables exhibit a correlation with workplace behavior, it is noteworthy that stress and satisfaction levels do not significantly affect workplace behavior in the context of our study; conversely, the remaining variables demonstrate a pronounced impact.
- A discernible negative correlation exists between Emotional Trading and workplace behavior.
- Upon the examination of 'Expectations' and 'Perception' as distinct independent variables, it becomes evident that they significantly influence workplace behavior, with ample evidence from the sample underscoring their preeminent correlation with such behavior.

Upon meticulous examination of the survey responses, coupled with the aforementioned statistical analysis, the resultant findings can be elucidated in the following manner:

- The statistical examination presented elucidates that the various factors under consideration collectively exert a significant influence on the workplace conduct of an associate, particularly when confronted with the exigencies of critical decision-making in the recruitment process. This indicates that, when associates are beset by conflicting beliefs and practices, coupled with the compulsion to accommodate such disparities, they often experience a psychologically distressing state that undeniably affects their workplace demeanor. Nevertheless, when these elements are analyzed as discrete variables, it becomes evident that only 'expectations' and 'perception' manifest a direct correlation with workplace behaviors.
- The intensity of any given factor directly correlates with its consequential influence on the individual; thus, should an associate possess an elevated 'emotional trading quotient' in the context of a recruitment scenario, such as assuming a new position, the resultant effect on the individual will be significantly magnified, manifesting through various behavioral expressions in the workplace as a result of the cognitive dissonances experienced.
- It is often noted that individuals exhibit a propensity to pursue novel positions that may diverge from their current obligations, particularly when such prospects are accompanied by both tangible and intangible rewards; this phenomenon is aptly exemplified by the independent variable referred to as 'Expectations.'
- Professionals typically delineate their expectations to the recruitment team while seeking a suitable job profile. Prior to committing to any new opportunities, they meticulously evaluate all available options that align with their aspirations. This behavior underscores the tendency of associates to substantiate their choices based on specific factors that yield personal and professional advantages. In instances where no job roles align with their expectations, they exhibit a willingness to adapt to new opportunities.
- When confronted with such circumstances, associates often experience cognitive dissonance, characterized by a reluctance to articulate their responses and a tendency to deliberate before rendering any confirmation regarding their decisions. This is particularly prevalent when the job profile entails demanding requirements.
- Even in cases where associates acquiesce to a new role, their commitment to such decisions is frequently tenuous.

- In today's technology-driven landscape, associates demonstrate a keen interest in acquiring new skills, even amidst conflicting interests. This is particularly evident when individuals face changes; external positive pressures can facilitate the resolution of their cognitive dissonance. This was corroborated by a significant number of respondents who indicated that associates are inclined to embrace new roles when the advantages and disadvantages of the new responsibilities are thoroughly elucidated.
- Associates who have readily embraced new challenges without succumbing to indecisiveness have often thrived in their new positions, although the prevalence of associates reporting stress-related issues in their new roles remains a notable concern. Even though associates tend to display interest towards internal job offering, when subjected to such situation which might be of conflicting interest, the associates tend to look for role profiles from the external market too.

2. Suggestions

Cognitive dissonance significantly influences a myriad of value judgments, decisions, and evaluations, serving as a pivotal element in the intricate tapestry of human cognition. Cultivating an awareness of the ways in which contradictory beliefs affect the decision-making process can substantially enhance an individual's capacity to render swifter and more precise choices. In light of this understanding, the following points delineate potential areas of focus for the organization to examine the ramifications of cognitive dissonance on workplace behavior.

- It is imperative to elucidate the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance to recruiters, thereby enabling them to grasp the intricate and often stressful decision-making processes that associates endure; this understanding fosters a profound sense of empathy, allowing recruiters to adopt a perspective akin to that of the candidates themselves.
- Furthermore, it is essential to equip recruiters with the skills necessary to discern the psychological triggers associated with cognitive dissonance among associates, thereby facilitating the early identification of individuals who may be grappling with such dilemmas, thus enabling timely and appropriate interventions.
- Additionally, instilling a sense of urgency regarding the new role can be achieved by articulating its advantages, thereby assisting associates in comprehending the potential benefits of the transition and its implications for their future trajectories.
- Senior management must champion a transformative shift in organizational mindset, eschewing the notion of coercively retrofitting job positions with associates who

may lack the requisite skills or willingness. This objective can be further advanced through the implementation of cross-skilling initiatives and the cultivation of a competitive atmosphere that encourages associates to pursue learning and skill enhancement, rather than remaining ensconced in their comfort zones.

- Moreover, leveraging technology to create comprehensive digital profiles of associates from diverse sources, rather than solely relying on self-reported updates within internal systems, is crucial.
- Lastly, the application of data analytics and predictive modeling is vital for accurately gauging market demand and internal organizational needs, thereby preventing any shortfalls in resource allocation when it is most critical.

3. Conclusion

Cognitive dissonance is an omnipresent phenomenon that manifests in various forms throughout the human experience. It is not uncommon for individuals to encounter a sense of unease and an urgent desire to reconcile conflicting cognitions, particularly when these beliefs hold significant importance or are in stark opposition to one another. Should this dissonance remain unaddressed for an extended period, it has the potential to alienate individuals from their organizational milieu, fostering a perception that the sole recourse available is to pursue a claim for workplace stress. Indeed, there are instances where such a course of action seems to be the only viable alternative. The presence of particular incidents and corroborating witnesses can substantially heighten the probability of these stress claims, often culminating in costly and far-reaching repercussions. However, addressing this cognitive dissonance can frequently catalyze beneficial transformations; it does not invariably necessitate sweeping reforms but may simply require a shift in perspective or the cultivation of novel cognitive frameworks.

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