

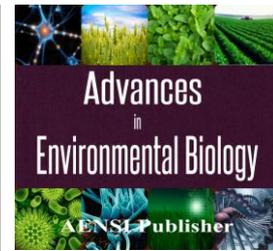


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An Analysis of the Consumer's Spiritual Intelligence on its Post-Purchase Cognitive Dissonance and Satisfaction: Consumers of home Appliances in Naein City as a Case Study

Ranjbarian B., Safari A., Karbalaee R. and Jamshidi M.

Department of Management, University of Isfahan Hezarjerib Street, Isfahan, Iran

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, due to the presence of numerous and innumerable brands, consumers often have doubt about suitability of what she/he buys. In fact, consumers in this state are suffering from post-purchase cognitive dissonance. Because of importance of the subject matter, an innovative model was developed which analyze the impact of spiritual intelligence as the antecedent of post-purchase cognitive dissonance and then the influence of post-purchase cognitive dissonance on consumer satisfaction among consumers' of home appliances in Naein city. This research was descriptive - survey. Data was gathered by a questionnaire from a sample size of 210 individuals. In order to examine the hypotheses, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and Amos graphic have been used. The results imply that consumers' spiritual intelligence affect post-purchase cognitive dissonance and consumers' post-purchase cognitive dissonance influence on their satisfaction. The results indicate that the spiritual intelligence have a positive impact on post-purchase cognitive dissonance. On the other hand, post-purchase cognitive dissonance has a negative impact on consumer satisfaction.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic business environment, marketers try to gain new customers and to retain existing ones by creating value and meeting their needs. Research suggests that customer retention is strongly related to customer satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction is the most important goal of every businesses. Customers' satisfaction is often associated with their perceived related value. If consumer feels that he/she cannot get the value, for sure will not be satisfied [10]. Home appliances consumers often must choose among several products and brands. In some cases, it is convenient to select the one which has an advantage over others. Otherwise, the choice won't be easy; so that each brand has its own advantages and disadvantages. When a person is faced with a difficult choice, he experiences cognitive dissonance. In this situation, a consumer maybe confronted with questions and doubts that the selected item might has some shortcomings in compare to items which had not been chosen.

The term cognitive dissonance, originally introduced by psychologist Festinger, And refers to the hardships experienced that occurs when there is inconsistency between beliefs and new information. Cognitive Dissonance often occurs when a person must choose one among options which are equally attractive. This will lead to a mental hardships state [10]. Usually in purchase situations, the negative state occurs when there is a substantial difference between the expected and actual performance of the product purchased. These negative feeling of the consumer, which is caused due to improper functioning of purchased products, leads to consumers' change of attitude toward the product and also future behavior in accordance with the opinion of dissonance reduction. The severity of cognitive dissonance depends on the customer's unique characteristics, and variables that cause the cognitive conflicts [12]. Cognitive dissonance has a great influence on post-purchase behavior. For this reason, this study sought to examine a range of individual factors that influence on consumers' post-purchase cognitive dissonance and ultimately, their post-purchase satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Given that every research has its own limitations and can't review all the effective variables, this study investigate the effect of spiritual intelligence variable and mental conflict on the cognitive dissonance and ultimately its impact on consumers'

Corresponding Author: Ranjbarian B., Department of Management, University of Isfahan Hezarjerib Street, Isfahan, Iran

satisfaction among home appliances consumers in Naein city that had not been examined by other researches. The purpose of this study is to answer the question whether there is a relationship between consumer's spiritual intelligence and the level of post-purchase cognitive dissonance they experience and also with their satisfaction which they experience from their purchase ?

Spiritual intelligence has been considered as an influencing variable on consumers' post-purchase cognitive dissonance. Spiritual intelligence is the adaptive application of spiritual information to solve problems in daily life and the process of achieving the goal [2]. Spirituality involves the highest level of cognitive, moral, emotional and individual development. In other words, spirituality is itself a context for development and attitude and requires to the most human experiences [8]. Individuals with high spiritual intelligence are free from all dependences and develop self-confident. Feeling of self-confident is based on their abilities, strengths and inherent competencies [3]. George believes that spiritual intelligence is necessary for individuals because it creates calm for the people and creates concentration in the face of crisis and chaos. Also, spiritual intelligence helps individuals to deal with issues easier [11]. These people usually know what they want and they choose the most appropriate possible path to achieve their goal [25]. So, according to the provided explanations ,when a consumer has a higher spiritual intelligence level, he should experiences less post-purchase cognitive dissonance, since he has more self-confidence and ability to deal with stress and would be assured towards his choice.

In turn cognitive dissonance affects consumer's satisfaction. Therefore, in this research ,consumer's satisfaction is investigated as an influencing variable on consumers' post-purchase cognitive dissonance .Cognitive dissonance is likely to occur when the level of consumer's satisfaction is low or if the consumer is dissatisfied with his shopping. In fact, there must be a direct relationship between the two variables of cognitive dissonance and consumer's satisfaction. In fact, the reduction of cognitive dissonance is a necessary prerequisite for consumer's satisfaction [22].

Literature Review:

Cognitive Dissonance:

The theory that states when a person simultaneously holds two inconsistent cognitions, would lead to cognitive dissonance, was first presented by Leon Festinger , in1957. Cognitions includes such things as thoughts, opinions, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that one is aware of them [13]. Festinger argued that cognitive dissonance may arise from logical inconsistency of cultural practices, the contradiction between a cognition and a broader one which is based on past experiences .The importance of cognitive dissonance actually depends on the significance of the cognitive elements (eg , knowledge, beliefs and attitudes) which are inconsistent .When a person believes in the importance of some of these elements ,the differential relation between these elements would be greater .Accordingly, he would exert some pressures to reduce or eliminate the difference. Whatever the degree of inconsistency increases, the pressures to reduce and avoid the inducing situations , will increase [16].

To have a better understanding of that how inconsistency influence on a purchase decision , It is needed to consider how consumers are involved in these process .Consumers are often faced with more than one options with different features. The final purchase decision depends on the consumers' willingness to prefer certain features such as utility, usefulness, value, and potential capacity [4]. Dissonance theory suggests that when there are disparate elements in a purchase decision(Negative aspects of the purchased goods and services and positive aspects of the neglected options) there would be post purchase tension in consumer mind. In many situations ,ultimately, consumers choose an option regardless of other. The importance of the ignored options despite of having desirable and unique features, and uncertainty about appropriateness of the chosen option, all play a role in creating cognitive dissonance about a purchase.

In some consumption situations, such as durable goods(such as automobiles), or some services such as long-term contracts(such as housing), experience of dissonance may persist in all stages of consumption after purchasing the item, and customer never can get rid of that completely ,even when he/she is done with its consumption [18]. Therefore, consumers constantly are looking for ways in order to reduce post purchase cognitive dissonance.

Chisnall believes that, in order to reduce cognitive dissonance, consumers may adopt selective perception. Or ,feel free to gather information that is tailored to optimally select and reject him unpleasant truths . Russo & Bourne have identified five different strategies for reducing dissonance that maybe undertaken by the consumer. These strategies include :adopting an extreme position, the continuous increase of knowledge, the perceived importance of an understanding to deny or ignore the relevance of inconsistency [17].

Spiritual Intelligence:

Spiritual Intelligence is a construct which combines spirituality and intelligence structures into a new structure. Structure of spirituality is associated with the search and experience of the sacred elements, meaning, peak alertness and excellence.

While spiritual intelligence involves the ability of making use of such spiritual matters, it helps individuals easily to comply with different situations, to improve the performance [7]. King argues that spiritual intelligence is set of intellectual capacity, which helps individuals to fully understand and adapt spiritual aspects, and help the person to be superior and leads to an output such as deep thought, enhance sense, identify the universe of moral superiority and domination modes [14]. In studies conducted by Smith, it has been found that spiritual intelligence is necessary for better compatibility with the environment. And those who had higher level of spiritual intelligence, stand against the pressures of life and develop higher ability to adapt to the environment [21]. Mc Sherry and colleagues emphasized that intelligence is an intellectual underpinning beliefs that influence the performance, so it formulates person's actual life. Spiritual intelligence increases the flexibility and awareness so, the individual would have more tolerance and shows more patience in the face of difficulties and hardships of life [15]. Elkins & Vavendish also believe that spiritual intelligence makes a man with better vision of problems, so he face them with care, greater efforts to find a solution, endure the hardships of life, and provide dynamism and movement to his life [6].

Consumer satisfaction:

Consumer satisfaction and quality services are considered as an important measure for today business competitiveness ;because customers are a major driver of business organizations who are seeking major improvements in their progress trend. Customers, who are more satisfied with the organization expressed their positive experiences to others and so, it will be a means of promoting the organization as a result it reduces the cost of attracting new customers. Therefore, customer satisfaction is the most important task for organizations and enterprises because it has a direct correlation with customer retention, market share and organizations revenue [23]. Consumer satisfaction is not a new concept, many studies have been conducted to find the antecedents and consequences. Because satisfaction is an important indicator to measure the success of the company as well as , It is a leading indicator for financial performance and, also regarded as the value of their stock [1]. According to the Oliver satisfaction is the realization and success of consumer response. Its judgment about the questions that, do the characteristics of a product or service provides a satisfying level of consumption-related fulfillment [9]. In fact, consumer satisfaction is the consumer's evaluations of the different characteristics of the product. Consumer satisfaction cause consumer loyalty as a result, it will increase the company's reputation and to enhance future profitability of the company. Providing consumer satisfaction, obtained when, provided the real demands of the consumer and his needs are met in way he wants ,in time. For the meantime, we should not forget that organizations also have moral obligation to satisfy consumers' need and wants according to their expectations [20].

Methodology:

It has been proved that cognitive dissonance has a great influence on post-purchase behavior. Therefore and due to the importance of post-purchase cognitive dissonance , this article has tried to investigate the antecedents and consequences of cognitive dissonance among consumers' of home appliance of Naein city . The research hypotheses and the conceptual model has been developed as follow:

Hypotheses:

H1: The individual spiritual intelligence level influences on his post-purchase cognitive dissonance among consumers of home appliances in Naein city

H2: The individual post-purchase cognitive dissonance affects on his post-purchase satisfaction among consumers of home appliances in Naein city .

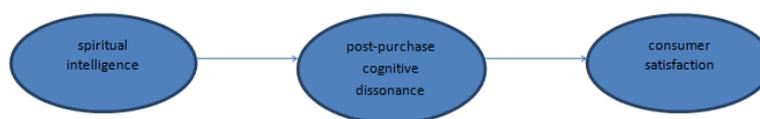


Fig. 1: The research Conceptual Model.

In the process of developing the research paper , consumers of home appliances of Naein city has been chosen as the statistical population of the study.

Since, Structural Equation Modeling was used to analyze the collected data, the sample size was require to be 5 to 15 times of the numbers of items include in the survey questionnaire $5q \leq n \leq 15q$, $q=32$. Thus the proper sample size was calculated to be between 160 to 480 . Even though a 230 questionnaires were distributed, but only 210 acceptable questionnaires were considered for the final analysis. The data collection instrument was a researcher-developed questionnaire which it items where rated according to 5 point Likert scale. In order to evaluate the validity of the data achieved through instrument (questionnaire) readers, advisors,

and experts, and also factor analysis is used. To get reliability coefficient before final implementation, a sample was randomly chosen and the questionnaire was conducted. Cronbach's alpha was assigned to be 0.853 which is an evidence for reliability of the questionnaire .

In table1 our research the reliability of the items is checked through Cronbach's alpha that is 0/853 which shows that our research variables are reliable and there exists internal consistency between them.

Table 1.1: reliability coefficient of research variables related to given hypotheses.

Variable	Number of question	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Spiritual intelligence	20	0/91
Post- purchase cognitive dissonance	9	0/84
Consumer satisfaction	3	0/81
Total	32	0/853

Descriptive data:

This study attempts to understand the relationships among spiritual intelligence with post- purchase cognitive dissonance and post- purchase cognitive dissonance with consumer satisfaction. Table 1 present the percentage distribution of participant demographic data in (n = 210). The social demographic qualification of the participants are as follows: 57 male (% 27.6) and 152 female (% 72.4) participated in the research. The educational background of the participants was as follow; 59 with high school diploma(% 28.1), 47 with some college courses (% 22.4),66 with bachelor degree(% 31.4), 38 with master and higher(% 18.1).

Table 2.2: Demographic qualifications of participants.

Variable name		Frequency	(0/0)
Gender	Female	152	72.4
	Male	57	27.6
		210	
Education	high school	59	28.1
	with some college courses	47	22.4
	Bachelor	66	31.4
	Master and higher	38	18.1
		210	100

Table 3, shows the mean and standard deviation of the research variables.

Table 3.3: Means and standard deviations of studied variables.

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
Spiritual intelligence	3.6690	.4728
Post- purchase cognitive dissonance	2.5804	.5991
Consumer satisfaction	3.4032	.6661

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Test of structural model:

In this study, we used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for data analysis. The conceptualized model of research ran as a structural model to test research hypotheses. The method of maximum likelihood estimation in Amos Graphics 20 software was used to analyze data and hypotheses testing. To assess the fitness of the proposed model, Cmin or chi-square/df, the Tucker –Lewis index (TLI), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Relative Fit Index, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) were used. After refining the initial structure model, all of the goodness of fit indexes was found within acceptable range indicating that the model of the research has a good fitness.

Table 4.4: fitting model.

Index	Name and Standard Value	Values in model	result
absolute fit	$P \geq 0/05$	0/07	Fitting is acceptable
	$I < Cmin / df < 3$	2.585	Fitting is acceptable
comparative fit	$GFI \geq 0/90$	0/90	Fitting is acceptable
	$PCFI \geq 0/50$	0/637	Fitting is acceptable
Parsimony fit	$RMSEA \leq 0/08$	0/074	Fitting is acceptable
	$CFI \geq 0/90$	0/91	Fitting is acceptable
	$PNFI \geq 0/50$	0/555	Fitting is acceptable
	$TLI \geq 0/90$	0/91	Fitting is acceptable

Hypothesis Testing:

Table 5.5: The results of Hypotheses Testing.

Hypotheses	Standardized regression coefficients	CR	P	Result
1	0/27	2/42	***	confirmed
2	-0.83	-6.273	***	confirmed

According to the data presented in Table 5 we have the following findings:

The first hypothesis claims that the impact of spiritual intelligence of consumer appliances in the city of Naein, on post-purchase cognitive dissonance them. Due to the critical value(CR 2.42) and the level of significance between the two variables spiritual intelligence and post-purchase cognitive dissonance, which is less than 0.05, assuming the relationship between these two variables cannot be rejected. So we can say that spiritual intelligence of the consumer, has an impact on post-purchase cognitive dissonance by the consumer. Estimated coefficient, 0.27 also indicates the significance of the impact, and a positive linear relationship between these two variables. Since no other study has examined the impact of spiritual intelligence on post-purchase cognitive dissonance. Therefore in this case, we cannot name any previous research that is indicative of this relationship. So the justification we can put forward for this finding is that persons with spiritual intelligence are free from all dependences and create feeling of self-confident . Of course the feeling of self-confident is based on their abilities, strengths and inherent competencies . spiritual intelligence can cause the necessary concentration for individuals in the face of crisis and chaos. Also, spiritual intelligence helps individuals to develop consistency and confidence so they deal with issues easier. These people usually know what they want and they choose the most appropriate possible path to achieve it. So, according to provided explanations, consumer with higher spiritual intelligence, experiences less cognitive dissonance after shopping through confidence obtained from this intelligence and ability to deal with stress and would be assured towards his choice.

Despite the fact that there is no justification even though that findings of the study showed a positive relationship between spiritual intelligence and post-purchase cognitive dissonance, but the researchers have no justification for the result. Therefore, further study on this relation is suggested so can compare their findings with the results of present study. Then it could be possible to make accurate conclusions about the relationship between these two variables.

The second hypothesis claims that consumers' post purchase cognitive dissonance influence their satisfaction among the Naein city consumers of home appliances. Due to the critical value-6.273, and the level of significance between the two variables post-purchase cognitive dissonance and consumer satisfaction, which is less than 0.05, it can assume that the relationship between these two variables is accepted. . So we can say that post-purchase cognitive dissonance has an impact on consumer satisfaction. The coefficient estimate,-0.83, is indicative of the significance of the impact and the negative relationship between these two variables. In other words, post purchase cognitive dissonance has a negative impact on consumer satisfaction. In other words, the higher level of consumer's post purchase cognitive dissonance, creates a greater negative impact on the consumer satisfaction and will cause consumer dissatisfaction. The results is also supported with the study by Sweeney *et al* [22] which had post-purchase cognitive dissonance influence on consumer satisfaction. In other words, when a consumer experience more post-purchase cognitive dissonance their satisfaction of purchase diminishes.

Conclusion:

This study had two main purposes. First it aimed to investigate the influence of spiritual intelligence on post-purchase cognitive dissonance as its antecedent and then it tried to examine the impact of post-purchase cognitive dissonance on consumer satisfaction as its consequence. In developing this research the consumers appliance of Naein city were selected as survey population. Results showed that all supposed hypotheses are accepted. As the results of this study show post-purchase cognitive dissonance has a negative impact on consumer's satisfaction; therefore, it is necessary that marketers and sellers also have a particular care towards this issue .In fact, when consumers are dissatisfied with a given purchase he will try not to purchase it again. Therefore, it is necessary for the marketers and retailers to care about following measures(a) listening to the consumer complaints and try to make a remedy actions, (b) marketers and retailers should try to make use of opportunities provided by IT, so a two-way and interactive communication with customers will be facilitated,(c) after sales service and warranty also should be ensured. In fact, some sort of reassurance should be created, so in case that a consumer has any problem with the product, they could show a quick response and more concern. Even though the study does not find the expected relation between spiritual intelligence and post purchase cognitive dissonance but further research has been suggested in this regard. But, the suggestion that can be raised here is that it is necessary to marketers and retailers consider their business values and ethics as well as apply these values and behavior in dealing with consumers, their words and actions is identical and take action to their obligations towards consumers and improve their own spiritual indices, consider their own specific criteria based on spiritual intelligence components and apply them in their work and towards consumers

Considering the valuable findings which have been resulted from the present research, it also has limitations. Given that this is a cross sectional study and the application of the results is limited to period his study; therefore, the generalization of the results should be done with the necessary precautions. Also, due to the impact of some uncontrollable factors such as the perceptions and attitudes of respondents and its impact on how they answer to the questionnaire may affect the accuracy of the results. Since no similar research in Iran had been conducted on the subject it was impossible to compare the results of other studies with present findings. Given that this study was conducted only in the field of home appliances, it is possible that its results weren't generalizable to other commodity groups.

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