

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Dues of Ambivalence Hamper the Psychological Well-Being When Mediated By Creativity of Employees

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Abstract: Ambivalence or simultaneously positive and negative thoughts, emotions and intentions of an individual are an explored state in organizations. This duality reflects in inconsistent behaviors or perceptions such as psychological well-being. The results yield the impacts of ambivalence on psychological well-being in presence of creativity. The research article covers the working area of service sector employees. The essence of this study relies on the assumption that the perspectives of creativity are more applicable to the one who play a role of demonstrator. 402 employees including bankers, doctors, lecturers and other service sector firms of Pakistan as respondents of research are contacted to get answers about their creativity and its interaction. The data was collected through online questionnaire and analyzed by using SEM. Baron and Kenny approach was adopted for mediation effect. The results indicate the significant and positive relationship between creativity and productivity of teachers and lecturers working in Pakistan.

Keywords: Ambivalence, Psychological Well-being, Creativity

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1 Introduction

There is a high likely chance of existence of ambivalent thoughts, emotions and intentions intermingled with opposing behavior. The prevalence of both positive and negative attitudes in forms of ideas and thoughts explicitly impact the ability to perform and excel. The phenomenon based on the notion that attitudes are the antecedents of behaviors. Attitudes as the internal matter of concern- form the outer expressions termed as behaviors. Similarly ideas and thoughts are internal course of actions which endorse the concerned behaviors respectively (Jussim et al., 1989).

The common axiom about human mind is that it is impossible not to think till cognition as mental process is continuous and persistent. Individual may confront opposing or conflicting ideas and thoughts at the same time while working on a single project or task. Cognition is a person's ability to acquire and understand the knowledge through experience and thoughts. It involves a conscious intellectual activity such as thinking, remembering and reasoning. So far cognitive ambivalence focuses on the disagreement between beliefs. An individual having conflicting thoughts and two way opinions confront ambivalence in cognition. This taxonomy of duality is known as ambivalence (Ashforth et al., 2014; Durso et al., 2016). When this duality comes in thoughts and ideas (Piderit, 2000) it may be derived as cognitive ambivalence.

Present research indents to endorse the prevalence of ambivalence and its impacts are unavoidable. For this reason, this effort by researchers made them able to answer questions like how it occurs and whether creative actions help managers to settle the dizzying nodes. The point of interest for this research is to explore the existence of dual thoughts, emotions and intentions at the same mind along with the importance and consequences when it occurs.

2 Literature Review

Managers' attitudes toward firms and experiences are often mixed with both positive and negative reactions. For example, individuals may love eating foods that are expensive and tasty, but may dislike these items because they are fatty and unhealthy (Rothman et al., 2017). Similarly, a person might like certain brands for their excessive quality, but they may not like these brands because they are expensive than others. The objective of this research is to study the existence of ambivalence to direct that it is going to affect individual's preference; then how ambivalent attitudes can be made analytical of behavior.

2.1 Ambivalence

The difference or mixture of positive and negative feelings termed as ambivalence. Although attitudes incline to escort attitude-relevant behavior, those held with combination of two opposite feelings tend to do so to a lesser extent. The less certain an individual is in their attitude, the more sensitive it becomes, hence making imminent actions less anticipated and/or less conclusive (LaRowe, 2010). Employees with dual feelings think more about attitude-relevant information which comprehend further in multiple circumstances. Mostly, ambivalence can be designated as the instantaneous and opposing emotional responses of employees towards their self and work: love-hate, like-dislike, good-bad and anger-sensitivity, pity- cruelty and satisfaction-dissatisfaction (Sonnentag et al.,

2013). It is a usual phenomenon that employees working on areas opposite to their domain/skills, emotions and their work often feel their desires are directed against themselves.

At the organizational context one may confront a contradictory state of mind weather to leave or proceed. Ambivalence is at its puzzling height when individuals feel the instincts to both harm and protect, when the employees instantaneously have an aspiration of intimacy and distance relative to their work, to both abandon and nurture. The less sure a person is in his attitude, the more sensitive it becomes, therefore making imminent actions less anticipated and less conclusive (LaRowe, 2010) and causes turbulent state of mind (Toribio-Flórez et al., 2020).

Further Bailey & Raelin (2015) cited and instanced that an employee may be cognitively in favor of a change whilst being uncertain about the principled problem convoluted. A change may be good for the business, but is it right? The query arises for managers and change agents when there is ambivalence between these dimensions whether it can be resolved by the individual and whether or not it is open to influence change interventions of manager.

The fundamental difference between cognition and emotions is the part of mental functions that deals with logics, processes of memories and attention, planning and problem solving. Whereas opposed to cognition, emotions are circumstances caused by rewards and punishers (Rolls et al., 2005). It can be defined as thinking and feeling.. The association between emotion and cognition has captivated the importance. Generally cognition and emotion has regarded separately in last two decades. A growing form of efforts has pointed the interdependence between these two (Pessoa, 2009).

According to Piderit (2000) managers and scholars both need to pay additional attention to the dynamic processes that aid to confess and withstand ambivalence without letting it impede. In this context, ambivalence may even be an opportunity for workers to reconsider how they vision their working life as they attempt to make sense. The experience of positive and negative orientation is quite common but poorly understood. The present research intends to explore the nature of ambivalence and offer a framework of cognitive attitudes which confront with duality trigger to impact the psychological well-being. Although ambivalence is uncomfortable for workers but it has the potential to improve the productivity as well as adapting and amending the behaviors.

2.2 Psychological well-being

In the context it can be anticipated in psychological well-being as state in which employees confess lives are going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. However, well-being does not entail individuals to feel good all the time; the experience of painful emotions (e.g. disappointment and failure) is a part of everyday life, and being able to cope these negative or painful emotions is vital for long-term well-being. Psychological well-being of an employee not only depends on professional environment but also depends on personal decisions. The employee should create a balance between personal and professional life. If the employee is not creating this balance then his well-being will become negative but if the employee has cognitive thinking to creates a balance between professional and personal life then his psychological well-being will be healthy. An employee of the firm should have cognitive thinking toward every aspect because this

attitude will generate positivity in the employee's mind and it will lead them to positive psychological well-being (Lu et al., 2018).

Cognition of employees plays a vital role in the psychological well-being of employees. Since firms are focusing to enhance the positive well-being of employees therefore the policy makers' well-being is the critical topic in new literature. It is because of emergence of positive psychology that focus on the happiness in the workplace is increasing day by day over the past two decades. With the present and past work experience employees work cognition involves the development of schema and thought patterns that have the aspects, features, feelings and idea association (James & James, 1989).

Employees mental and psychological well-being also depends on the team in which they are working. If the employee has a good relationship with the team members then the level of psychological well-being will be high and positive. But it also depends on the employee's attitude toward its team members (Bashir et al., 2017). If the employee has cognition towards its team member then the employee's psychological well-being will be high and positive. The prevailing concept of interest seems to be in line with the information processing theory (Anderson, 1971) derived from theory of planned behaviors (Ajzen, 1985); it explores the formation of attitudes and change in attitude through integration of new information with existing cognitions and opinions. The underlying idea is congruent to the concept of ambivalence (co-existence of positive and negative attitude).

Information integration theory considers the ideas that any information could be perceived as a persuasive message. Related information has two qualities characterized as value and weight, both factors influence the attitudes. The theory states that when new information is obtained it could be the matter to affect the perception or attitude (thought, emotions, feelings, intentions) (Anderson, 1990). So we assumed that the direct effects of cognitive ambivalence on psychological well-being would influence the participants whether positively or negatively but effect occurs.

H_{1a}: Cognitive ambivalence influences the psychological well-being.

H_{1b}: Emotional ambivalence influences the psychological well-being.

H_{1c}: Intentional ambivalence influences the psychological well-being.

2.3 Creativity

Creativity is a center of interest in many disciplines like technology, engineering, business, management, psychology and economics (Hendricks, 2019). It refers to the act of turning imagination in to reality, characterized by the ability to perceive the surroundings in new ways, to explore the unclear ways, to make connectivity between unrelated phenomenon (Naiman, 2019). Organizational creativity has been well-defined as "the product of novel and useful ideas" (George & Zhou, 2002; Pratt, 2000) and many organizational researchers have initiated creative ideas – they often ascend from employees' abilities to identify associations that others did not see. As Sutton (2002) marked, creativity in the business world most often comes when employees convey new ideas to innovative people, endorsing "knowledge brokering".

H₂: Creativity influences the psychological well-being.

The role of creativity as a potential mediator for the study is evident from the notion that the conscious efforts of creativity associates cognitive ambivalence with psychological well-being. Cognition as the implicit instincts of an individual or a state of mind as debated

earlier, infers the person's creativity which has elaborated as cognition based process. So far, the examining hypothesis is derived to explore the relationship whether it exists and further if the relationship is significant then intensity of the relationship by mean of it occurrence (positive or negative) is intended to be observed. Thus, based on discussion and presumptions, we arrived at the following hypothesis:

H_{3a}: Creativity mediates the relationship between cognitive ambivalence and psychological well-being.

H_{3b}: Creativity mediates the relationship between emotional ambivalence and psychological well-being.

H_{3c}: Creativity mediates the relationship between intentional ambivalence and psychological well-being.

3 Methods

In order to get the response for the current study analysis, an online questionnaire through google form was designed and the questionnaire link was forwarded to 500 targeted respondents in Pakistan. Out of 500 respondents 402 entries were received, with the response rate of 80.4 percent. Of the respondents participating in this research almost 44 percent belong to Faisalabad whereas 56 percent respondents belong to big cities of Pakistan like Lahore, Karachi Islamabad and other small cities too incorporated in this study. Male respondents were dominated in the survey with 57 percent ratio and female contributed with the ratio of 43 percent. Most of the participants hold master degree with 45 percent and this percentage descended to bachelors at 22 percent whereas MPhil and other academic profile holders contributed in the study with 18 and 15 percent respectively. Averagely divided percentage ratio were seen between occupation of respondents like teachers, bankers, doctors and managers. The percentage falls as 34, 29, 13 and 14 percent correspondingly. 33 percent of respondents had less than one year of working experience, this was seen as highest percentage in the class. Moreover the highest percentage value which is 31 percent was found in the age group of 25 to 30. For income taxonomies 42 percent against 36K-45K was the highest ratio among other.

In a period of four months data was collected. Researchers consulted several administrators and evaluators to endorse the measurement instruments used in the study, as well as in data collection. Participants are contacted through their respective immediate bosses and are well informed about research objectives and filled in the measures through online google form in one session.

Psychological well-being- The scale of psychological well-being by (Ryff, 1989) composed of 42 items, in a Likert format with 5 alternative responses was used. The scale internal structure was analyzed by confirmatory factor analysis. The convergent validity of scale with limited items was studied through multiple studies having good results The analysis shows good fit indices as RMSEA = .054, CFI = .991, GFI = .986 and NFI = .982 at $P.000^{***}$.

Ambivalence- To measure the ambivalence, a construct of intense ambivalence developed by Raulin (1984) with 58 items has been used. The questions assess the perceptions of respondents regarding their self of being ambivalent. The study intends to classify the ambivalence into three dimensions such as cognitive ambivalence, emotional ambivalence and intentional ambivalence prescribed by (Piderit, 2000). Factor loading on three compo-

nents with some of items were observed Instrument for ambivalence has been defined and contributed in an earlier study (Bashir et al., 2017) through factor loadings.

Creativity- The measuring instrument of creativity with total of 13 items by (George & Zhou, 2002) was used. The response format is a Likert scale with 5 responses with state of agreement to disagreement. At first descriptive statistics of measures were observed, along Chronbach's alpha for reliability check. Then to meet the research objectives mediation analysis was incurred after simple linear regression. The condition of being ambivalent cognitively, emotionally and intentionally at the working time acted as the criterion variable. The analysis was run with those service employees who responded further their working requires a conscious effort of creativity to be incorporated with. The questionnaire was designed and validated after exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. Data analysis was done through the SPSS/AMOS 21. Preliminary analysis was run to check if there is any outlier. Normality was accessed by skewness and kurtosis of measures which remains to be in the acceptable range.

4 Results

Given that our variables were measured by self-reported questionnaire. We test the presences of ambivalence and categorized the perspective into three dimensions defined in literature. Each dimensions' items from scale were identified by factor analysis. By using AMOS, we conduct exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to observe the items of each factor and 26 items from the instrument of ambivalence were considered to forward to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Some of items were retained against each dimension with acceptable loadings which is 0.5 or greater (Hair et al., 2006). Similarly CFA was run on creativity and psychological well-being and items were retained with acceptable factor loadings presented in table 1.

Table 1: Factor loadings of ambivalence

| Cognitive Ambivalence | | Emotional Ambivalence | | Intentional Ambivalence | |
|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------|---------|-------------------------|---------|
| Factor | Loading | Factor | Loading | Factor | Loading |
| A16 | 0.56 | A25 | 0.61 | A22 | 0.64 |
| A11 | 0.69 | A21 | 0.51 | A18 | 0.55 |
| A10 | 0.59 | A20 | 0.58 | A14 | 0.61 |
| A7 | 0.64 | A19 | 0.75 | A13 | 0.51 |
| A6 | 0.65 | A9 | 0.64 | A12 | 0.6 |

The mean, standard deviation and reliability of each measure considered in this article are within the acceptable range. For reliability acceptable Chronbach's alpha value is .70 (Classics Cronbach, 1951) for present study values are .813, .851 .885 respectively. Descriptive analysis shows that mean values of ambivalence's item ranges from 3.78 to 4.02 and standard deviation ranges from .72 to .89. Descriptive statistics for psychological well-being and creativity are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Item statistics and factor loadings of psychological well-being and creativity

| | Mean | Std. D | Factor loading | N |
|-----|--------|---------|----------------|-----|
| P5 | 3.9179 | 0.89092 | 0.7 | 402 |
| P8 | 3.9328 | 0.97242 | 0.71 | 402 |
| P11 | 3.9876 | 0.98737 | 0.71 | 402 |
| P14 | 3.9179 | 0.89092 | 0.69 | 402 |
| P16 | 3.9328 | 0.97242 | 0.8 | 402 |
| P17 | 3.9876 | 0.98737 | 0.62 | 402 |
| C1 | 3.7861 | 0.85275 | 0.82 | 402 |
| C2 | 4.0348 | 0.89542 | 0.8 | 402 |
| C4 | 4.0348 | 0.8982 | 0.73 | 402 |
| C7 | 3.7388 | 0.96261 | 0.74 | 402 |
| C10 | 4.0746 | 0.82323 | 0.68 | 402 |

Factor analysis and descriptive statistics endorse the data reliability so that we can have consistent results.

We found that all three kind of ambivalence had a significant positive correlation with psychological well-being ($r = .45, .46, .59$ $p < .000$) respectively. We also found that cognitive and emotional ambivalence had a significant and negative result but intentional ambivalence had positive association with creativity ($r = -.40, -.55, .64$ $p < .000$) respectively. Further creativity found a significant and positive association with psychological well-being ($r = .76$ $p < .000$). Thus the results support to test the established hypothesis. To test the hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c we conduct a structural model in AMOS and estimated effects are positively significant as given in figure 1.

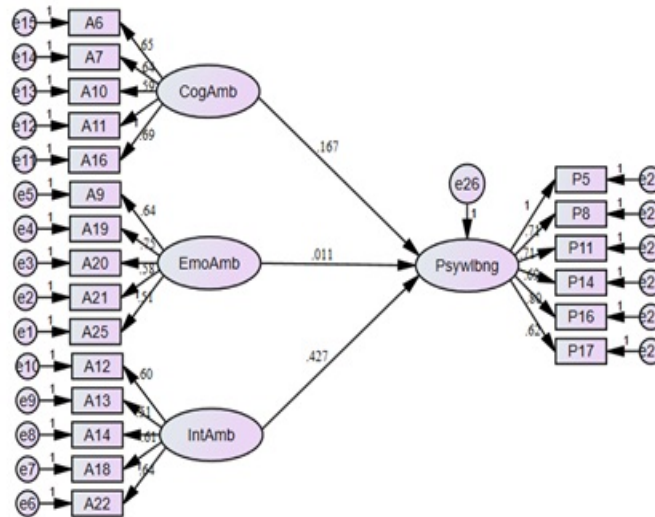


Figure 1: Structural model for direct effect

For mediating effects Baron & Kenny (1986) approach was used in a stepwise method. It requires the direct significant relationship between all variables. At first step cognitive, emotional and intentional ambivalence was regressed with psychological well-being and H_{1a} , H_{1b} and H_{1c} was supported (see Figure 1). Secondly ambivalence forms a significant relationship with creativity as $\beta_1 = -.112$, $\beta_2 = -.48$, $\beta_3 = .40$ at $P < .005$ respectively. At the third step creativity was regressed with psychological well-being and established a positive and significant relationship as $\beta = .237$ at $P < .005$. Thus H_2 was supported. These results are evident to establish a mediating relationship between variables.

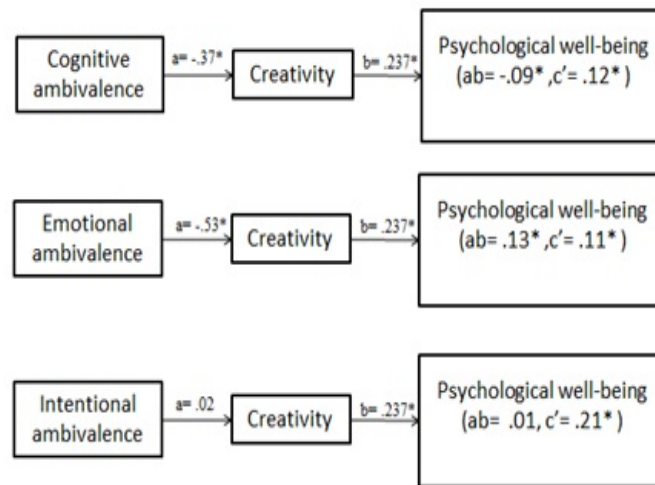


Figure 2: Path model of mediating relationship

Note: *ab* estimates represent indirect effect; *c'* estimates direct effects;

*denotes significant parameter estimates.

The direct effect of cognitive ambivalence ($c' = .12$, $p > .005$), emotional ambivalence ($c' = .11$, $p < .005$) and intentional ambivalence ($c' = .21$, $p < .005$) were significant with psychological well-being. However, when testing the creativity as an intervening variable in the relationship between ambivalence and psychological well-being, we found significant indirect effects with cognitive ambivalence ($ab = .09$, $p < .005$) and emotional ambivalence ($ab = .13$, $p < .005$) but insignificant with intentional ambivalence ($ab = .01$, $p > .005$) (see Figure 2). Thus H_{3a} , H_{3b} was partially supported but H_{3c} was not supported.

5 Discussion

Based on the information integration theory (Anderson, 1971), the conceptual model for the present research was developed. This study intends to unleash the underlying mechanism of dualistic mindset and its consequences on psychological well-being. In addition to retaliate the conception, creativity was incorporated as suggested by Fong (2006). Dual or mixed feelings and thoughts are internal instinct of individuals which leads to the incon-

sistent behaviors and actions of employees at workplace that will eventually predict their productivity ([Asplund & Blacksmith, 2012](#); [Packer, 1985](#)).

The ambivalence categorized into three dimensions known as cognitive ambivalence, emotional ambivalence and intentional ambivalence for this study. These dimensions of ambivalence have been examined with psychological well-being. This study establishes some evidence that employees at workplace confront ambivalence as a general and natural phenomenon. The notion to describe the phenomenon is to facilitate that it does not always leave a negative impression but positive too. Particularly in our study, we found positive and significant relationships when three forms of ambivalence is associated with psychological well-being.

From the lenses of information integration theory ([Anderson, 1971](#)) rooted from theory of planned behavior ([Ajzen, 1985](#)) the state of mind becomes ambivalent when new information floats and is integrated with previous one influences the perception of being good and going well. The creative integration of information enhances the prevailing influence in a subjective manner. However, we found evidence for significant indirect effect of cognitive and emotional ambivalence on psychological well-being directly and also in presence of creativity but not in case of intentional ambivalence.

6 Conclusion

Ambivalent employees are more likely to have negative impact on their perception of living well which referred as psychological well-being. Being cognitively, emotionally and intentionally ambivalent influences the psychological well-being of service sector employees in Pakistan. The influence remains positive when the employees impede to deal ambivalence with conscious effort of creativity. Psychological well-being influenced positively in case of cognitive and emotional ambivalence which implies that employees with creativity balance their dual thoughts and emotions which enhance their perception of going good but when they have mixed intentions and aims their creative ability does not support them to maintain the psychological well-being.

The ambivalence is categorized into three dimensions known as cognitive ambivalence, emotional ambivalence and intentional ambivalence for this study. These dimensions of ambivalence have been examined with psychological well-being. This study establishes some evidence that employees at workplace confront ambivalence as a general and natural phenomenon. The notion to describe the phenomenon is to facilitate that it does not always leave a negative impression but positive too. Particularly in our study, we found positive and significant relationships when three kinds of ambivalence encounter with psychological well-being.

6.1 Implications

In particular, this contributes to the managers' work life and the individual productivity too. For case this study contributed to negate the perception about the negative consequences of ambivalence as it floats some positive too. [Zulfiqar et al. \(2020\)](#) signifies some negative prospects as silence, turnover and mobbing. Existence of both positive and negative instinct simultaneously moderate the exaggerations of extreme positivity and nega-

tivity to control or balance the work flow which may enhance the deviating attachment of employees at workplace.

6.2 Limitations and Future Research Direction

This study enriched the research on ambivalence, generated perspectives and its consequences with psychological well-being as a subjective outcome further incorporated with mediating role of creativity. The results need to be interpreted by taking the longitudinal research design into account. As suggested by previous research, there have been few cross-sectional studies that examined the ambivalence in different perspectives for service sector employees for instance call center (Fong, 2006). Thus, future research should consider adopting other design sectors or other units of sectors as study. A suggested study comparing the ambivalent behaviors' consequence of different sectors might be the product for future. Though factor analysis was examined using EFA and CFA (Hair et al., 1998). Future research should consider some other measurement techniques like common method variance (Podsakoff, 2003) to rule out potential biases raised from subjective interpretation of ambivalence and psychological well-being.

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