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應用管理技巧克服認知偏差，建立有改性且有效率的

團隊。

Applied Management Techniques to Overcome

Cognitive Distortions, and Build Resilient and Effective

Teams.

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Applied Management Techniques to Overcome Cognitive Distortions, and Build Resilient and Effective Teams

本論文係尹伯倫君（R10749063）在國立臺灣大學企業管理碩士專班完成之碩士學位論文，於民國 112 年 5 月 30 日承下列考試委員審查通過及口試及格，特此證明

This is to certify that the Master thesis above is completed by_____Oliver Geoge Ibbetson (R10749063) during his/her studying in the Global MBA Program at National Taiwan University, and that the oral defense of this thesis is passed on ___(30/5/2023)___ in accordance with decisions of the following committee members:

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"For there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."

Hamlet, Act 2, Scene 2, 239-251 William Shakespeare.

i. Acknowledgements

Returning to university for a master's degree has significant implications for one's personal, family, and professional life. It requires intellectual curiosity, deep thinking, and a lot of time.

The author acknowledges and thanks the support of his wife, Grace, and son Charlie. To his parents, Shona, Peter, and in-laws Apollo and Vanessa. Without their help, none of this would be possible.

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ii. Abstract

Marcel Proust, in his celebrated work "The Remembrance of Things Past," once wrote that "a little dreaming is dangerous; the cure for it is not to dream less but to dream more, to dream all the time." This sentence succinctly captures the essence of human aspiration, revealing our innate desire to transcend our current limitations and strive for something greater. However, realising these dreams requires harnessing the power of our minds and developing prescience to navigate the path ahead. Proust's insight has significant implications for leaders seeking to cultivate positive, productive, and healthy outlooks among their team members. By encouraging individuals to open their minds and dream of a better future, leaders can help overcome mental roadblocks and foster a sense of cohesiveness within the team. But to do this effectively, leaders must equip their people with the tools necessary to develop resilience in the face of challenges. Unfortunately, many young people entering the workforce today lack the resilience and cognitive distortions necessary to succeed in a demanding work environment. To address this issue, leaders must provide their teams with resources that promote mental fortitude, enabling them to weather storms and emerge stronger on the other side. In short, this reference to Proust is an allusion to Cognitive Based Therapy and highlights the importance of pushing ourselves to achieve our goals. By helping others do the same, leaders can build more resilient and effective teams, fostering a culture of success and growth.

Keywords: Cognitive Based Therapy, Cognitive Distortions, Leadership, Management, Resilience-Building

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1.0 Introduction And Motivation

It can be unsettling for a parent to realise that their abundance of love, care, and kindness may inadvertently stifle their child's ability to develop resilience and independence.

This is where our story starts with the introduction of Greg Lukianoff and Dr Jonathan Haidt's influential 2018 book, *The Coddling of the American Mind*. In the most concise summary possible, this work posits rising levels of anxiety and depression among young people in wealthier countries are causally linked to a risk-averse culture. Specifically, young people born approximately after 1995 have grown up with less psychological strengthening that comes with setbacks, free play, and overcoming difficulties and hurdles (Greaves, Callister 2020).
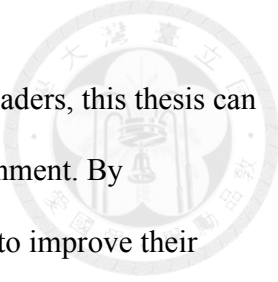
The American Psychology Association has defined cognitive distortion as *'faulty or inaccurate thinking, perceptions, or belief"* (American Psychology Association).

For this thesis, we will accept the broad outlines of this argument. That is, there is a non-trivial number of people in the workforce experiencing cognitive distortions.

1.1 Problem statement

The problem statement of this thesis suggests that staff members in an organisation may struggle with cognitive distortions, which can negatively impact their work performance and overall well-being. Cognitive distortions are errors in thinking that can lead to negative emotions and behaviours, such as anxiety, depression, and decreased motivation.

The thesis aims to address this problem by exploring the tools available to leaders in managing staff with cognitive distortions. The goal is to identify methods and techniques managers can use to help their team members build psychological resilience and overcome cognitive distortions, improving their overall productivity and performance.

By providing insights into the tools and techniques available to leaders, this thesis can help organisations to create a more supportive and effective work environment. By addressing cognitive distortions, managers can help their team members to improve their mental health and well-being, which can in turn have a positive impact on their job satisfaction, motivation, and productivity.

Overall, the thesis aims to contribute to the development of effective strategies for managing staff with cognitive distortions, which can benefit both individual employees and the organisation as a whole.

1.2 The Role of Managers

The role of managers is undergoing a significant shift as organisations recognise the importance of mental health support, particularly in addressing cognitive distortions, within the workplace. Several factors contribute to this evolving role. Firstly, research has increasingly highlighted the significant impact of mental health on employee well-being, job satisfaction, and productivity. Cognitive distortions, in particular, can impair decision-making, problem-solving, and interpersonal relationships, ultimately affecting team dynamics and overall organisational performance. Consequently, managers are being called upon to take an active role in promoting mental health and supporting employees in managing cognitive distortions.

One influential example highlighting the changing role of managers in this regard is Google's Project Oxygen. This internal research initiative at Google sought to identify the key traits and behaviours of effective managers within the company. Surprisingly, technical expertise ranked relatively low on the list of important qualities. Instead, the research revealed that managers who demonstrated emotional intelligence, empathy, and effective communication skills had the most significant impact on team performance and employee

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satisfaction. These findings emphasise the crucial role of managers in creating a

psychologically safe work environment that fosters open dialogue and support for mental

health concerns, including cognitive distortions.

Initiatives like Google's Project Oxygen have shed light on the importance of

emotional intelligence and empathy in managerial effectiveness. With the changing nature of

work and the increased focus on work-life integration, managers are well-positioned to create

a supportive environment, detect signs of cognitive distortions, and facilitate access to

appropriate resources. By embracing this expanded role, managers can contribute to a

healthier, more productive workforce and foster a positive organisational culture that values
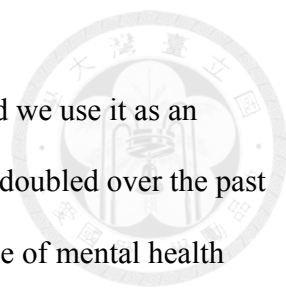
mental health and well-being.

1.3 Current Context

We first need to build the case that there is a problem to solve. That there are

increasing numbers of people with cognitive dissonance entering the workplace. While

causation is peripherally interesting, it is not our key focus.

Our concern is the increasing manifestation of the issues associated with it. Therefore,

it is worth diving deep into the data on mental health issues.

Mental morbidity refers to the presence of mental health disorders or conditions, such

as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, or substance use disorders, that have a negative impact

on an individual's well-being and daily functioning (Goldberg, D. 1996).

According to the World Health Organisation, a staggering 16% of all injuries to

young people aged 10-19 is attributable to mental morbidity such as depression and anxiety.

They posit 10-20% of all young people will experience these issues (Moffitt, T. E., Caspi, A,

et al 2010).

In a New Zealand context, for the author is a New Zealander, and we use it as an example of Western democracy, mental morbidity rates have more than doubled over the past two decades. For both males and females in New Zealand, the prevalence of mental health morbidity was 5% in 2011/12, rising to 14.5% in 2018/19 (Ministry of Health, 2020).

The data from America are consistent; there is an increasing incidence of depression and anxiety experienced. According to the Centre for Disease Control, the incidence of children "ever having been diagnosed with either anxiety or depression" amongst children aged 6-17 years increased from 5.4% in 2003 to 8% in 2007 and 8.4% in 2011-2012 (Bitsko RH, Holbrook JR et al).

The increasing number of young people who lack psychological strengthening and experience cognitive distortions is one of these anxiety-driving factors. Therefore, we must understand cognitive distortions to derive ways to ameliorate them.

However, before doing so, it is incumbent on us to spend some time defining cognitive distortions. What does it mean to have *'faulty or inaccurate thinking, perceptions, or belief'?* (American Psychological Association). Simply put, a 'cognition' is a thought, the instinctive mental reaction to a given situation. A cognitive distortion is where our mind allows our emotions to drive automatic thought rather than a logical process.

Unfortunately, emotions are trained, and depending on one's level of psychological strengthening, they can be misleading. Paula Odriozola-González and Francisco J. Ruiz provides an excellent overall picture of the impact of cognitive distortions. They posit cognitive distortions are;

> [D]epressogenic schemas would skew the information processing system, leading to
>
> the production of negative automatic thoughts that constitute the cognitive triad (i.e.,
>
> negative views about oneself, the world, and the future). These negative automatic

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thoughts are unstable and state-dependent and considered to be the most proximal cause of depressive symptoms (Ruiz, FH & Odriozola-González, 2016 page 441).

A better understanding of *'negative automatic thoughts'* is essential so that we will categorise and describe the thoughts below. These are all fruits of the poisonous tree of the mind, and our objective here is to ameliorate at the root level of said tree.

One explicit limitation of this thesis, is that the focus is largely on developed countries with a lean in towards western democracies. The reason for this is because the canon of literature largely comes from this context.

There are also information gaps in the research into the mental morbidity of developing countries for a variety of complex reasons. Including limited access to mental health services, research and appropriate facilities.

1.4 Overview Of The Thesis

This work is designed as an academic review of the literature available to posit methods and techniques that managers can undertake to help build on the psychological strengthening of their staff. The literature review gives an overview of the research that was examined for this work. It includes research into the topics of cognitive based therapy, as well as alternative approaches including Myers Briggs and Goal settings approaches. These are other potential methods used in management.

There is then an overview of the full method, which reviews all the research, and synthesises the literature into a logical framework to be approachable to the reader; followed by a discussion on the literature.

In the final chapter, there is an application methodology that outlines the application of cognitive based therapy in the workplace, and how managers are able to use these techniques to better improve the outcomes for their staff.

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2.0 Literature Review

A literature review serves as a vital component of this thesis, enabling the synthesis of various ideas and perspectives on cognitive distortions in general, but management and psychological strengthening techniques in particular. Through an extensive exploration of diverse resources, the author has gathered a wealth of knowledge and insights from primary and additional sources. The literature review aims to bring together these ideas, weaving them into a cohesive tapestry that forms a central theme. By carefully examining a wide range of studies, theories, and works, the author endeavours to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

This process involves analysing the research findings, identifying key concepts, and recognising patterns and connections within the literature. The literature review not only highlights the existing knowledge on the topic but also uncovers gaps and discrepancies, which can inform the development of new frameworks or approaches. In this particular work, the synthesis of these collective ideas aims to provide a valuable set of tools for managers in effectively addressing and managing cognitive distortions among their staff.

This work has used many resources to form its conclusions. There have been some primary resources which have informed the author's thoughts on the topic.

1. Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt. 'The Coddling of the American Mind'

2. Dr David Burns: Feeling Good

3. Beck, J. S. Cognitive behaviour therapy.

4. Cutts, M. Plain English: A modest proposal.

5. Herbst, P. G. The Use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator in Management Training.

6. Johnson, C. L., & Johnson, T. E. 'Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to Improve Self-Awareness and Teamwork in a Graduate Interdisciplinary Course.'

7. Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P (their collected works over decades in goal setting)

There are also some additional resources that the author has used which have helped to form his thoughts on the topic. They are not explicitly referenced in this work. The authors used them for general background in CBT, Myers Briggs, and Goal Setting, including the following authors.

1. The collected works of Dr Jordan Peterson in the context of his podcasts and literature.

2. Robin's and Judge's works on 'The Essentials of Organisational Behaviour'

3. Jimmy Carr's 'Before and Laughter'

4. John C Maxwell's '25 Ways to Win with People'

5. Romilla Ready & Kate Burton's 'Neuro-linguistic programming for Dummies'

6. Malcolm Gladwell's 'Outliers'

7. Richard Thaler 'Nudge: improving decision making'

The rest of the works relied on are explicitly referenced throughout the text and have been used to reinforce specific points and reference particular numbers or theories. They have used more specifically to add validity and impact to this work.

This work has attempted to synergise a wide range of studies, authors and theories to develop a set of tools that a manager can use to manage staff suffering cognitive distortions

2.1. Cognitive Distortions

To better elucidate these distortions, it is useful to do a deep dive into some of the most common distortions. What they are, how they manifest, and examples of them in practice. The following are the ten most common distortions (Burns D, 1981) according to Dr

David Burns, one of the first and most prominent proponents of cognitive-based therapy who

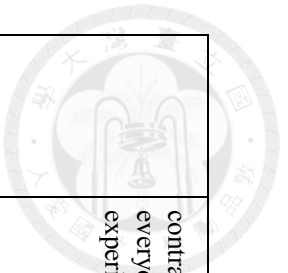wrote the book, which brought the treatment to millions.
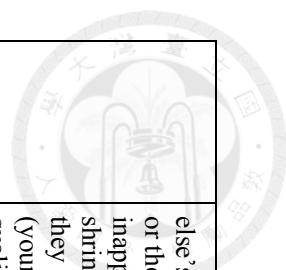
Table 1: *Cognitive Distortions*

Distortion	Explanation	Example	A Manager's CBT approach	A Manager's MBTI approach	A Manager's Goal Setting approach
All-or-nothing thinking/catastrophizing	A person sees things in black-and-white categories. If their performance falls short of perfect, they see themselves as a total failure.	Situation: Emma completes a project but receives constructive feedback highlighting a few areas for improvement. Cognitive distortion example: Emma views herself as a total failure because her performance did not meet her unrealistic expectation of perfection.	1. Challenge the all-or-nothing thinking: The manager guides Emma in challenging the belief that failing short of perfection automatically makes her a total failure. They help her understand that human performance is rarely perfect and that there is a range of possibilities between success and failure. 2. Acknowledge shades of grey: The manager encourages Emma to acknowledge the shades of grey between black and white thinking. They help her recognize that her performance can have both strengths and areas for improvement, without invalidating her overall competency or worth.	MBTI does not directly apply in this situation as it focuses more on understanding personality preferences rather than addressing cognitive distortions or self-perception.	Yes, the goal-setting approach can apply in this situation by helping Emma set realistic goals for improvement based on the constructive feedback received, breaking them down into actionable steps, and monitoring her progress towards achieving them.
Overgeneralization	A person sees a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.	Situation: John makes a mistake during a presentation, causing him to stumble over his words and receive some constructive feedback. Cognitive distortion example: John interprets this single negative event as evidence that he is a failure and that he will always make mistakes in future	1. Identify the cognitive distortion: The manager helps John recognize the cognitive distortion of overgeneralization, where he sees a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat. They explain that this type of thinking can be overly harsh and distort his perception of his abilities. 2. Challenge the overgeneralization: The manager guides John in challenging the belief that one mistake signifies a permanent pattern of failure. They help him understand that everyone makes mistakes from time to time and that a single event does not define his overall competence or	MBTI does not directly apply in this situation as it focuses more on understanding personality preferences rather than addressing cognitive distortions or interpreting specific events.	Yes, the goal-setting approach can apply in this situation by helping John set goals related to improving his presentation skills, such as practising more, seeking feedback from others, and implementing specific strategies to

	presentations.	potential for success.		address the areas where he stumbled. Setting goals and taking actionable steps can help him build confidence and improve his future presentations.
Mental filter	A person picks out a single negative detail and dwells on it exclusively so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like the drop of ink that colours the entire beaker of water.	Situation: James receives a rejection letter after applying for a promotion. Cognitive distortion example: James interprets the rejection as evidence of his perpetual failure and believes that he will never succeed in his career. 1. Reframe the event: The manager assists James in reframing the negative event. They encourage him to see it as a learning opportunity rather than a reflection of his abilities. They help him identify lessons he can take from the experience and how he can grow and improve for future opportunities. 2. Focus on strengths and development: The manager directs James' attention to his strengths and areas for development. They help him identify his unique skills and qualities that contribute to his professional growth. They encourage him to focus on continuous improvement and skill-building rather than dwelling on a single negative event.	MBTI does not directly apply in this situation as it focuses more on understanding personality preferences rather than addressing specific interpretations of events or cognitive distortions.	Yes, the goal setting approach can apply in this situation by helping James set new career goals, reassess his strengths and areas for improvement, and identify actionable steps to enhance his skills and qualifications for future opportunities.
Disqualifying the positive	A person rejects positive experiences by insisting they 'don't count' for some reason. In this way, they can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by their everyday experiences.	Situation: Lisa receives praise from her colleagues for her excellent performance in a recent project. Cognitive distortion example: Lisa dismisses the positive feedback 1. Seek external validation: The manager encourages Lisa to seek external validation and feedback from trusted sources. This can help her gain a more objective perspective on her abilities and accomplishments, providing further evidence that contradicts her tendency to	MBTI does not directly apply in this situation as it focuses more on understanding personality preferences rather than addressing	No, the goal setting approach may not directly apply in this situation as it focuses more on setting goals and taking actions to achieve them.

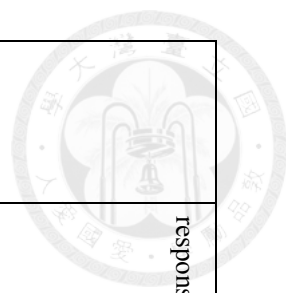|			specific interpretations of events or cognitive distortions.	
	contradicted by everyday experiences. and insists that it doesn't count because she believes she got lucky or that her colleagues were being overly generous.	discount positive experiences. 2. Practice self-acknowledgement: The manager encourages Lisa to practise acknowledging and accepting her own successes. They help her develop a habit of recognizing her achievements and giving herself credit for the positive outcomes she has contributed to. This can help counter the tendency to discount positive experiences.	specific interpretations of events or cognitive distortions.	No, the goal setting approach may not directly apply in this situation as it focuses more on
Jumping to conclusions	A person makes a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support their conclusions. Mind reading. You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you, and you don't bother to check. Mind reading. You immediately jumps to negative conclusions and engages in mind reading and the fortune teller error.	Situation: Rose sends an email to her colleague, John, asking for assistance on a project. Cognitive distortion example: Rose sends the email and receives no immediate response from John. She immediately jumps to negative conclusions and engages in mind reading and the fortune teller error. 1. Active listening: The manager can practise active listening by giving the employee their full attention and demonstrating empathy. By actively listening, the manager can understand the employee's concerns and feelings, providing a supportive environment for open communication. 2. Reflective questioning: The manager can use reflective questioning to help the employee explore their negative interpretations and assumptions. By asking open-ended questions, the manager can guide the employee to examine the evidence supporting their conclusions and challenge their distortions.	MBTI does not directly apply in this situation as it focuses more on understanding personality preferences rather than addressing specific interpretations of events or cognitive distortions.	No, the goal setting approach may not directly apply in this situation as it focuses more on setting goals and taking actions to achieve them
Magnification	A person exaggerates the importance of things (such as your goof-up or someone	Situation: Grace completes a project successfully and receives positive feedback from her 1. Practice self-compassion: The manager can encourage Grace to practise self-compassion and treat herself with kindness and understanding. Help her understand that making mistakes is human, and it does not define her	MBTI does not directly apply in this situation as it focuses more on understanding	No, the goal setting approach may not directly apply in this situation as it focuses more on understanding

	else's achievement), or they inappropriately shrink things until they appear tiny (your desirable qualities or the other fellow's imperfections). This is also called the 'binocular trick'.	supervisor and colleagues. Cognitive distortion example: Despite the positive feedback, Grace engages in the binocular trick by exaggerating the importance of a minor mistake she made while minimising her overall achievement.		
		worth or competence. Emphasise the importance of learning and growth from these experiences. 2. Encourage reflection and gratitude: The manager can prompt Grace to reflect on her achievements, including the successful completion of the project and the positive feedback she received. Encourage her to express gratitude for the learning opportunities and acknowledge her growth throughout the process.	personality preferences rather than addressing specific interpretations of events or cognitive distortions.	setting goals and taking actions to achieve them.
Emotional Reasoning	A person assumes that their negative emotions necessarily reflect how things really are: 'I feel it, therefore it must be true'	Situation: Alex receives feedback from their manager pointing out areas for improvement in their performance. Cognitive distortion example: Alex assumes that because they feel disappointed and discouraged about the feedback, it must mean they are truly a failure and incapable of meeting expectations. 1. Cognitive restructuring: The manager helps Alex reframe their negative thoughts and develop more balanced and realistic interpretations. They encourage Alex to consider alternative perspectives and acknowledge that everyone experiences setbacks and areas for improvement. 2. Practice self-compassion: The manager emphasises the importance of self-compassion and understanding toward oneself. They encourage Alex to be kind to themselves, acknowledging that negative emotions are a natural response to challenging situations but do not define their worth or abilities.	MBTI does not directly apply in this situation as it focuses more on understanding personality preferences rather than addressing specific interpretations of events or cognitive distortions.	No, the goal setting approach may not directly apply in this situation as it focuses more on setting goals and taking actions to achieve them.
Should Statements	A person tries to motivate themselves with shoulds and	Situation: Sarah is working on a project and faces a setback, 1. Identify the cognitive distortion: The individual's manager helps Sarah recognize the cognitive distortion of using "shoulds" and	MBTI does not directly apply in this situation as it	Yes, the goal setting approach can apply in this situation by

			MBTI	Goal setting
	shouldn'ts, as if you had to be whipped and punished before you could be expected to do anything. 'Musts' and 'oughts' are also offenders. The emotional consequence is guilt.	causing her to fall behind schedule. Cognitive distortion example: Sarah starts using "shoulds" and "musts" statements, feeling guilty and self-punishing, believing she should have avoided the setback entirely. 2. Challenge the "shoulds" and "musts": The manager guides Sarah in challenging the validity and helpfulness of these rigid beliefs. They help her understand that setbacks and imperfections are a normal part of any project or endeavour, and it is not realistic or fair to hold herself to an unattainable standard. "musts" as motivators. They explain that these statements often lead to guilt, self-punishment, and negative emotions.	focuses more on understanding personality preferences rather than addressing specific interpretations of events or cognitive distortions.	helping Sarah set realistic goals and expectations for her project, acknowledging setbacks as a normal part of the process, and focusing on problem-solving.
Labelling and mislabeling	This is an extreme form of overgeneration. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself. "I'm a loser" when someone else's behaviour rubs you the wrong way; you attach a negative label to him. 'He's a goddamn louse'	Situation: Mark makes a mistake at work, resulting in a minor delay in a project. Cognitive distortion example: Mark attaches a negative label to himself, believing that he is a complete failure and incapable of getting anything right. 1. Encourage positive self-talk: The manager supports Mark in developing positive self-talk and affirmations. They help him replace the negative labels with more realistic and self-affirming statements, such as "I made a mistake, but I am capable of learning from it and improving." 2. Foster empathy and understanding: The manager promotes empathy and understanding towards others. They help Mark recognize that everyone has their own struggles and imperfections, and it is important to approach others with a more compassionate and open mindset.	MBTI does not directly apply in this situation as it focuses more on understanding personality preferences rather than addressing specific interpretations of events or cognitive distortions.	No, the goal setting approach may not directly apply in this situation as it focuses more on setting goals and taking actions to achieve them.
Personalisation	A person sees themselves as the cause of some negative external event which you were not primarily	Situation: Nini team project receives negative feedback from a client. Cognitive distortion example: Nini blames 1. Explore the factors involved: The manager guides Sarah in exploring the various factors that contributed to the negative feedback. They help her understand that team projects involve multiple individuals and variables, and it's	MBTI does not directly apply in this situation as it focuses more on understanding personality	No, the goal setting approach may not directly apply in this situation as it focuses more on setting goals and

responsible for.

herself for the negative feedback, even though there were multiple factors involved that were beyond her control.

rarely the sole responsibility of one person. They highlight the importance of considering the broader context.

2. Challenge the self-blame: The manager assists Sarah in challenging the belief that she is solely responsible for the negative outcome. They help her identify other contributing factors such as team dynamics, client expectations, or external circumstances. They emphasise that attributing the entire blame to herself is an inaccurate and unfair assessment.

preferences rather than addressing specific interpretations of events or cognitive distortions.

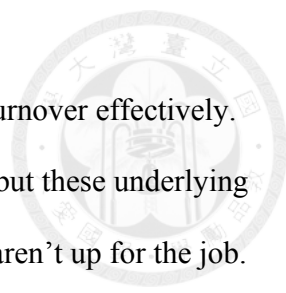taking actions to achieve them.

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2.2. Impact

As we've outlined, cognitive distortions manifest themselves in several different ways. They are spontaneous emotional reactions to situations which don't necessarily compute with genuine, experienced reality. However, the feelings for the sufferer are just as real, resulting in real-world consequences.

Cognitive distortions increase vulnerability to depression (Dozois, DJA & Beck, A 2008). The *negative automatic thoughts* experienced by the sufferer lead to emotional and behavioural responses. This is because the individual believes these negative thoughts to be manifestations of reality rather than simply false thoughts, which creates negative core beliefs about themselves. Over time, and without treatment, these increasing symptoms of depression begin to occur (Rnic, K et al 2016).

It is also consequential for leaders and the workforce, an increasing phenomenon. A growing incidence of people entering and in the workforce suffering these cognitive distortions. An argument could be mounted that these are personal problems and, therefore, irrelevant to the company or organisation. But this does not reflect best practice or the current literature on the subject.

Anybody who experiences cognitive distortions can, over time, begin to manifest depression and anxiety, and are distracted from their work. At the extreme level, this can lead to self-harm and substance abuse, which we'd universally wish to protect our colleagues from. At the less extreme level, those manifesting these symptoms can and do begin to participate in destructive behaviour in the workplace.

Destructive behaviour generally manifests itself in two distinct ways in the workplace. There is either an *exit response* or a *neglect response* (Nyberg AJ & Ployhart R.E. 2013).

An *exit response* is when someone leaves their job. Quitting or turnover effectively. They may well be capable workers who are effective at doing their job, but these underlying cognitive distortions have been eating away at them, and they feel they aren't up for the job. They take what they believe to be the easy way out and leave their job. Often they believe if they change their job, change their scenery; then perhaps they will be happier elsewhere.

If they are capable workers, an exit response is highly undesirable. It costs time, money, and energy and focus to find new team members. Generally, it takes months to advertise, recruit, onboard and train new team members. It is more efficient for all parties to keep the team together and help the individual alleviate the pressures which get them to leave.

The other response is considerably more destructive, particularly in countries with strong labour laws. A *neglect response* is usually manifest in chronic absenteeism, reduced effort, increased error rate, and lack of interest/participation. While it is ideal not to get out of this circumstance, an exit response is usually more desirable in this case.

Cognitive distortions can lead to destructive behaviour in the workplace, and managers are concerned with any form of destructive behaviour. Therefore, there is a need for managers to have an understanding of cognitive distortions, and have some tools available to them which will help to reduce the manifestation of these occurrences in their teams.

2.3 Alternative Approaches (MBTI)

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a personality assessment tool developed by Katharine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers. The MBTI is based on the theories of Carl Jung, who proposed that there are four fundamental psychological functions: sensation, intuition, feeling, and thinking (Furnham, A.).

The MBTI uses a questionnaire to identify an individual's personality type based on four dichotomies:

Extraversion (E) vs. Introversion (I)

This measures where an individual directs their energy. Extraverts tend to focus their energy outward and draw energy from social interactions, while introverts tend to focus their energy inward and draw energy from solitary activities.

Sensing (S) vs. Intuition (N)

This dichotomy measures how an individual perceives information. Sensors tend to focus on concrete details and rely on their senses, while intuitive types tend to focus on abstract patterns and possibilities.

Thinking (T) vs. Feeling (F)

This dichotomy measures how an individual makes decisions. Thinkers rely on logic and objective analysis, while feelers tend to rely on personal values and subjective considerations.

Judging (J) vs. Perceiving (P)

This dichotomy measures how an individual approaches the outside world. Judgers tend to prefer structure and order and like to make decisions quickly, while perceivers tend to be more flexible and open to new experiences.

The MBTI questionnaire consists of a series of statements that the individual rates on a scale from "agree" to "disagree." The results of the questionnaire are used to identify the individual's personality type based on the four dichotomies. There are 16 possible personality

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types, each with its own set of strengths, weaknesses, and communication preferences (Pittenger, D. J).

Myers Briggs can be a powerful tool to help manager staff's cognitive distortions. First and foremost its value is in better understanding staff members, their motivations, and how best to deal with them.

2.4 Myers Briggs Intervention

There are some concrete ways that a manager can use Myers Briggs to better manage staff. Across the Myers Briggs interventions, they include the following. Recognising individual differences, using communications strategies that work for each individual, encouraging individuals, offering support and guidance, and facilitating training and development.

Recognise Individual Differences

MBTI can help managers recognise that staff members may have different personality types, and, therefore may interpret situations differently. By recognising these individual differences, managers can tailor their approach to help staff members reduce cognitive distortions (Permatasari, D., Pranadji, T. A., & Aditya, Y.).

Use Communication Strategies That Work For Each Individual

MBTI can provide insight into staff members' communication styles, preferences, and strengths. By understanding these factors, managers can adjust their communication strategies to reduce misunderstandings and cognitive distortions (Cutts, M.).
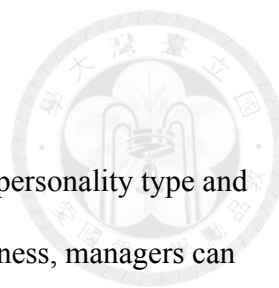
Encourage Self-Awareness

MBTI can help staff members become more self-aware of their personality type and how it affects their thoughts and behaviours. By encouraging self-awareness, managers can help staff members recognise cognitive distortions and work to overcome them (Johnson, C. L., & Johnson, T. E.).

Offer Support And Guidance

Managers can use MBTI to identify the areas where staff members may need additional support and guidance. This can help staff members reduce cognitive distortions caused by stress or other factors (Johnson, C. L., & Johnson, T. E.).

Facilitate Training And Development

Managers can use MBTI to identify areas for training and development in their staff members. This can help staff members improve their communication skills and reduce cognitive distortions caused by misunderstandings or misinterpretations (Herbst, P. G.).

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a valuable tool for managers to better understand their staff members' personalities, communication styles, and decision-making processes. By recognising individual differences, using communication strategies that work for each individual, encouraging self-awareness, offering support and guidance, and facilitating training and development, managers can help reduce cognitive distortions among their staff.

MBTI can be a powerful tool for managers to better understand their staff and create a more harmonious and productive work environment.

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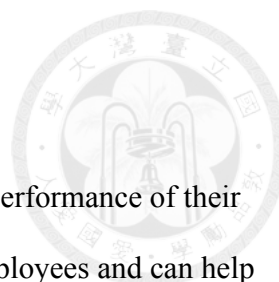
2.5 Alternative approaches: Goal-Setting

A manager can use goal-setting to improve the motivation and performance of their staff. Setting clear and challenging goals is a powerful motivator for employees and can help them to focus their efforts and improve their performance. Here are some ways a manager can use goal-setting to improve motivation and performance. They include setting specific and challenging goals, involving employees in goal-setting, providing regular feedback, supporting, and celebrating success.

2.6 Goal Setting Intervention

Setting goals is a key aspect of organisational performance management. Goals provide employees with a clear direction and purpose, and motivate them to strive towards achieving specific targets. However, not all goals are equally effective in driving performance. According to the work of Locke and Latham, goals should be specific, measurable, and challenging to be most effective (2002). In addition to setting effective goals, involving employees in the goal-setting process, providing regular feedback, providing support, and celebrating successes can also help to increase motivation and drive performance. In this paper, we will discuss each of these strategies in more detail and explore how they can be applied in the workplace to improve employee performance and organisational success.

Set Specific And Challenging Goals

Goals should be specific, measurable, and challenging. This gives employees a clear target to aim for, and helps to motivate them to work towards achieving it (Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P, 2002).

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Involve Employees in Goal-Setting

Employees are more likely to be motivated to achieve goals if they feel they have a say in setting them. Involve employees in the goal-setting process, and encourage them to contribute their ideas and suggestions (Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P, 2006).
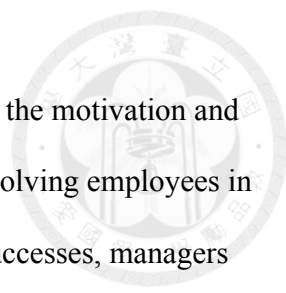
Provide Regular Feedback

Regular feedback helps employees to understand how they are progressing towards their goals and helps to keep them motivated. Provide both positive and constructive feedback, and make sure it is specific and actionable. Locke and Lathan highlight the importance of regular feedback that is 'specific, timely, and relevant' (Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P., 1990).

Provide Support

Make sure employees have the resources and support they need to achieve their goals. This may include training, mentoring, or additional resources. The staff should not be unable to achieve their goals because they don't have the resources available to them to be able to achieve them.

Celebrate Successes

Celebrating successes helps to motivate employees and reinforces the importance of achieving goals. Recognise and reward employees for their achievements, and encourage them to strive towards their goals (Grant, A. M., & Gino, F.).

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Goal-setting is a powerful tool that managers can use to improve the motivation and performance of their staff. By setting specific and challenging goals, involving employees in goal-setting, providing regular feedback, and support, and celebrating successes, managers can create a work environment that fosters employee growth and development. It is essential to ensure that the goals are achievable and that employees have the necessary resources and support to achieve them.
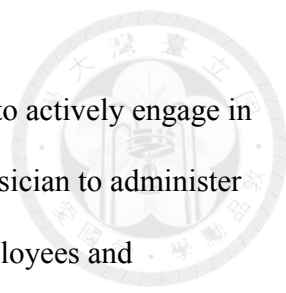
Additionally, involving employees in the goal-setting process not only increases their motivation but also encourages them to take ownership of their work and contributes to a positive work culture. Regular feedback helps employees stay on track and understand how they are progressing towards their goals. Furthermore, support from managers can significantly enhance employee performance and job satisfaction.

By implementing these goal-setting techniques, managers can foster a workplace culture of growth and development, which ultimately contributes to improved business outcomes. Employees are more likely to be invested in the organisation's success when they feel valued and supported in their work. Therefore, it is imperative that managers prioritise the development and success of their employees through goal-setting and consistent support.

2.7 Research question

What we've outlined so far is that cognitive distortions are increasingly recognised as a prevalent concern in workplaces worldwide.

These distorted patterns of thinking can have detrimental effects on individuals' well-being, job performance, and overall organisational outcomes. However, there is promising potential for addressing cognitive distortions through Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT). CBT offers a non-invasive and evidence-based approach that focuses on identifying and challenging cognitive distortions, replacing them with more realistic and adaptive thoughts.

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Importantly, CBT can be self-initiated, empowering individuals to actively engage in their own therapeutic process. This eliminates the need for a trained physician to administer the treatment, making it more accessible and cost-effective for both employees and organisations.

Given these factors, it raises our thesis question: Can managers incorporate CBT as part of advanced management techniques to effectively support employees experiencing cognitive distortions?

By equipping managers with the knowledge and skills to understand and address cognitive distortions, they can play a crucial role in fostering a psychologically healthy work environment and promoting employees' well-being and performance.

3.0 Method

The author conducted a comprehensive literature review to create a valuable and evidence-based resource, contributing to academia. This involved following a systematic approach to identify and analyse relevant research on the topic.

**3.1 Identifying The Research Question**

By identifying the specific question, the review can then proceed to identify relevant sources of information and data to support the research, as well as establish clear criteria for selecting studies to be included in the review. It also helps to ensure that the review remains focused on the specific topic of interest, providing a clear and well-defined framework for the analysis and interpretation of the literature.

3.2 Conducting Comprehensive Search

This work was the result of a comprehensive search of all relevant literature. Using academic databases, published works and books, podcasts by knowledgeable and experienced individuals, and the result of consuming many articles.

3.3 Evaluating The Literature

This work has evaluated the literature and used here in the report and considered the credibility of the authors and the validity of their research methods where appropriate.
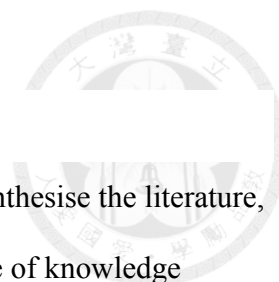
3.4 Synthesising The Literature

After significant reading and evaluation, I've done my best to synthesise the literature, its key findings, and drew a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge around managing staff members with cognitive distortions.

3.5 Organising The Literature

I've organised the literature and broken my conclusion into three clear and distinct areas where different levels of expertise and knowledge contributed to different sections of the conclusion.

3.6 Analysing And Interpreting The Literature.

I've done my best to draw conclusions and recommendations based on the guiding principles of managing someone struggling with cognitive distortions. I've tried to keep in mind that, ultimately this is an MBA work, and I wanted to create a powerful toolkit of ideas that could also have practical applications for managers reading this work.

Overall, the literature review for the thesis has involved a comprehensive search for all relevant literature and an evaluation of their relevance. By using a literature review as a main method, I believe I can draw a deeper understanding of how managers can best manage staff struggling with cognitive distortions.
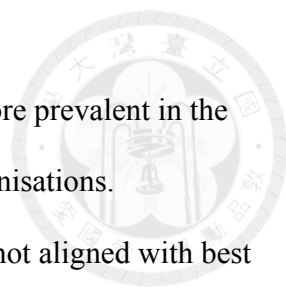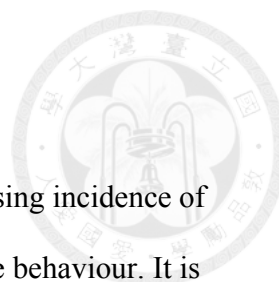
4.0 Discussion of literature

In this section, we will discuss the literature related to the increasing incidence of mental health issues and the impact of cognitive distortions on employee behaviour. It is important to note that these mental health issues are a concern for everyone, but mostly for the individuals affected. As leaders and managers, it is crucial to understand the root cause of these issues and have the tools to manage staff experiencing them.

Firstly, research indicates that cognitive distortions are a root cause of mental morbidity (Burns, 1981). Although this is conceptually confusing as the distortions are both a result and a factor of the altered mood state, it is essential for leaders and employers to recognize that team members may react oddly to minor criticisms or corrections due to underlying cognitive distortions. If not managed properly, these distortions can lead to destructive behaviour, including turnover and absenteeism (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013).

Therefore, it is imperative for leaders and managers to have an understanding and a set of tools to manage staff experiencing these issues. In this work, we engaged in a significant literature review to determine possible interventions to manage these challenges in the workforce. After thorough evaluation, we consider the following three interventions to be the most effective:

4.1 A Cognitive Based Therapy Intervention

Cognitive distortions are significant factors that contribute to vulnerability to depression, impacting individuals' emotional and behavioural responses (Dozois & Beck, 2008). The negative automatic thoughts associated with cognitive distortions create a distorted perception of reality, leading to negative core beliefs and increasing symptoms of

depression (Rnic et al., 2016). As these cognitive distortions become more prevalent in the workforce, they have consequential effects on both individuals and organisations.

Ignoring the impact of cognitive distortions on the workforce is not aligned with best practices or current literature. Individuals experiencing cognitive distortions may suffer from depression, anxiety, and reduced productivity, which can escalate to self-harm or substance abuse (Dozois & Beck, 2008). Even at a less extreme level, these individuals may engage in destructive behaviour within the workplace, negatively affecting the overall work environment.

Destructive behaviour in the workplace often takes the form of an exit response or a neglect response (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013). An exit response occurs when individuals decide to quit their jobs due to the underlying cognitive distortions affecting their well-being. This turnover creates significant costs in terms of time, resources, and efforts required to find and train new employees. To prevent this, it is more efficient to address the underlying cognitive distortions and support employees in managing them effectively.

On the other hand, a neglect response manifests as chronic absenteeism, reduced effort, increased error rates, and lack of interest or participation in work tasks. While an exit response may be preferable to mitigate the negative impact of cognitive distortions, neglect responses pose significant challenges, particularly in countries with robust labour laws.

Given the potential for cognitive distortions to lead to destructive behaviour in the workplace, managers have a vested interest in understanding and addressing these distortions within their teams. It is crucial for managers to have the necessary knowledge and tools to reduce the occurrence and manifestation of cognitive distortions among their employees.

In conclusion, cognitive distortions have real-world consequences, including increased vulnerability to depression and destructive behaviour in the workplace. Managers need to acknowledge the impact of cognitive distortions and actively work towards reducing

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their manifestation within their teams. By addressing these distortions and providing appropriate support, managers can create a more positive work environment, enhance employee well-being, and improve overall organisational performance.
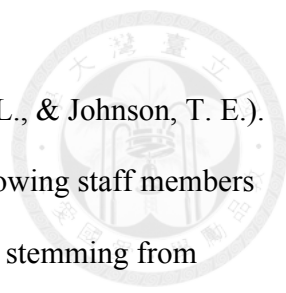
4.2 A Myers Briggs Intervention

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), developed by Briggs and Myers and based on Jungian theories, is a widely used personality assessment tool (Furnham, A.). It categorises individuals into 16 personality types based on four dichotomies: Extraversion vs. Introversion, Sensing vs. Intuition, Thinking vs. Feeling, and Judging vs. Perceiving (Pittenger, D. J.). While the MBTI offers valuable insights into individuals' communication styles and preferences, decision-making processes, and self-awareness, its direct impact on reducing cognitive distortions may not be fully addressed in the literature.

One notable application of MBTI in management is recognizing individual differences among staff members (Permatasari, D., Pranadji, T. A., & Aditya, Y.). Managers can acknowledge that different personality types interpret situations differently, potentially influencing the occurrence of cognitive distortions. Understanding staff members' communication styles and preferences is another relevant aspect that can aid in reducing misunderstandings and cognitive distortions in the workplace (Cutts, M.). By tailoring their communication strategies to accommodate diverse personality types, managers can enhance effective communication and minimise cognitive distortions caused by misinterpretations.

Encouraging self-awareness is another way in which the MBTI can contribute to reducing cognitive distortions (Johnson, C. L., & Johnson, T. E.). By making staff members aware of their personality types and how they shape their thoughts and behaviours, they can better identify and address cognitive distortions that may arise. Additionally, offering support and guidance based on MBTI results can assist staff members in coping with stress and

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reducing cognitive distortions triggered by various factors (Johnson, C. L., & Johnson, T. E.). Furthermore, MBTI can identify areas for training and development, allowing staff members to enhance their communication skills and mitigate cognitive distortions stemming from misunderstandings (Herbst, P. G.).

In conclusion, while the literature acknowledges the usefulness of MBTI as a management tool for understanding staff members and promoting effective communication, its direct impact on managing and reducing cognitive distortions may not be extensively explored. Nevertheless, considering its ability to recognize individual differences, adjust communication strategies, encourage self-awareness, provide support and guidance, and facilitate training and development, the MBTI remains an excellent resource for managers in creating a harmonious and productive work environment.

As evidenced in table one, the MBTI has useful interpersonal values, but isn't a tool that can be easily applicable for managers to use when dealing with staff members. it focuses more on understanding personality preferences rather than addressing specific interpretations of events or cognitive distortions.

However, further research is warranted to explore the specific ways in which the MBTI can effectively address and mitigate cognitive distortions in the workplace.

4.3 A Goal Setting Intervention

Goal setting is widely recognized as a valuable management tool that positively influences employee motivation and performance (Locke & Latham, 2002). Setting specific and challenging goals provides employees with a clear direction and purpose, driving them to strive towards achieving measurable targets (Locke & Latham, 2002).

Involving employees in the goal-setting process has been shown to increase their motivation and commitment to achieving the set goals (Locke & Latham, 2006). By giving

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employees a voice in the goal-setting process, managers empower them to take ownership of their work and contribute to a positive work culture.

Providing regular feedback is crucial for employees to understand their progress towards their goals and maintain motivation (Locke & Latham, 1990). Specific and timely feedback helps employees make necessary adjustments and stay on track. Constructive feedback helps them identify areas for improvement, while positive feedback acknowledges their achievements and reinforces the importance of goal attainment.

Support from managers plays a vital role in ensuring employees have the necessary resources and assistance to achieve their goals (Grant & Gino, 2010). Providing training, mentoring, and additional support helps employees overcome obstacles and increases their chances of success. When employees have the resources and support they need, they are better positioned to achieve their goals and perform at their best.

Celebrating successes is an effective way to motivate employees and reinforce the significance of goal achievement (Grant & Gino, 2010). Recognizing and rewarding employees for their accomplishments cultivates a sense of accomplishment and encourages them to continue striving towards future goals.

While goal setting is a powerful management tool, it may not directly address the thesis's central focus on managing and reducing cognitive distortions. Cognitive distortions refer to irrational thought patterns that can negatively impact decision-making and overall performance. To effectively manage and reduce cognitive distortions, additional strategies are necessary.

Strategies such as promoting self-awareness, providing cognitive-behavioural interventions, encouraging critical thinking, and fostering a supportive work culture that values diverse perspectives can directly target cognitive distortions (Beck, 1976; Tversky &

Kahneman, 1974). These strategies help employees recognize and challenge their distorted thinking patterns, leading to more accurate perception and decision-making.

In conclusion, while goal setting is an excellent management tool for enhancing motivation and performance, it may not directly address the thesis's focus on managing and reducing cognitive distortions.

As evidenced in table one, the Goal Setting approach may not directly apply in many situations as it focuses more on setting goals and taking actions to achieve them, rather than be directly correlated to management uses.

To comprehensively tackle cognitive distortions, managers should consider incorporating additional strategies that specifically target these biases. By combining goal setting with interventions aimed at reducing cognitive distortions, managers can create a work environment that supports employees in making sound decisions and achieving optimal performance.

4.4 Conclusion of Discussion

This discussion of the literature has highlighted the significance of cognitive distortions in the workplace and their impact on employee behaviour. It is essential for leaders and managers to understand the root causes of these distortions and have the necessary tools to manage staff experiencing them. While the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and goal setting interventions are valuable management tools, they do not directly address cognitive distortions.

The MBTI offers insights into individual differences and communication styles, which can aid in reducing misunderstandings and potentially influence the occurrence of cognitive distortions. However, its direct impact on managing and reducing cognitive distortions is not
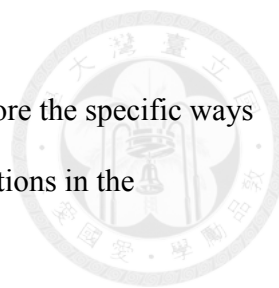
extensively explored in the literature. Further research is needed to explore the specific ways in which the MBTI can effectively address and mitigate cognitive distortions in the workplace.

Goal setting interventions are widely recognized as effective in enhancing employee motivation and performance. However, they may not directly target cognitive distortions, which refer to irrational thought patterns that impact decision-making. To comprehensively manage and reduce cognitive distortions, additional strategies such as promoting self-awareness, providing cognitive-behavioural interventions, encouraging critical thinking, and fostering a supportive work culture are necessary.

Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, the focus will be on a cognitive-based therapy (CBT) intervention. CBT directly addresses cognitive distortions and their impact on emotional and behavioural responses. By identifying and challenging these distortions, individuals can develop more accurate perceptions of reality, leading to improved well-being and decision-making. Thus, the thesis will delve into the application of CBT as an effective intervention for managing and reducing cognitive distortions in the workplace. Myers-Briggs and goal setting interventions will be ruled out as they do not directly deal with cognitive distortions, aligning with the thesis's central focus.

5.0 A Cognitive Based Therapy (CBT) Intervention

A Cognitive Based therapy Intervention seeks to identify distorted thinking in individuals and challenge its validity. It was first brought to prominence by Albert Ellis and Aaron Beck. and is used all around the world (Jessen A.K. 2018).

It is based on the idea that a person's cognitive interpretation of an event can impact their emotions rather than the event itself. If someone's interpretation of an event is incorrect, then they can be impacted emotionally by said event.

Cognitive Based Therapy focuses on the belief aspect of this structure, to challenge why an event causes major negative emotions in the individual.

Ellis established the ABC model of thought adjustment. First, there is an 'activating event' (A), then a 'belief' (B), followed by a 'consequence' (C). Following the event (A), the interpretation of the event goes through the individual's beliefs (B), resulting in consequences (C). Therefore negative emotions (C) associated with event (A), are a result of the individual's beliefs (B) (Macrodimitris et al 2010).

A CBT programme can be undertaken with the support of a therapist or advisor, though there's also research to suggest that CBT has been effective as a self-directed programme. With the aid of workbooks or online tools to help correct the cognitions of a user over time (Cash TF, Lavallee 1997).

5.1. Resources Needed For CBT

It's important to be upfront that professional advice and trained experts are the best approaches for anyone in severe distress. Indeed, one of the tools for organisations to employ is some kind of Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), allowing staff to access these types of therapists if it becomes necessary. The resources with this approach are generally

significant, but not uncommon with major employers (Society for Human Resource Management. (2019). Employee benefits: 2019 survey).

5.2. How A Leader Can Model CBT

Cognitive distortions exist when a person's interpretation of an external event creates a negative emotion internally and leads to the individual being less happy. CBT works by reforming the way individuals think about external events in general. As outlined earlier in this work, reframing how people think about events, can result in less negative emotion and overall greater happiness and well-being.

5.3. Implementation of CBT

The central theme of cognitive distortions is where beliefs and realities are misaligned. It follows, therefore, that *aligning beliefs and realities is the goal of a CBT-oriented manager*.

So how does a leader help to align realities and beliefs? This work postulates three linked approaches that the leader can take, grounded in an understanding of cognitive therapy. If the poison to cognitive distortions is misaligned beliefs and realities, then the antidote must provide clarity. Or in other words, reducing the number or severity of 'activating events' according to the Ellis model.

The three key areas the manager needs to hone is the ability to **challenge negative thinking, encourage self reflection,** and to **teach communication skills.**

5.4 Challenge Negative Thinking

One of the challenges of more common cognitive distortions is negative thought patterns such as catastrophizing, or jumping to conclusions. These are both distortions where

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the individual creates a negative interpretation of a situation without really considering the evidence or possible outcomes (Beck, J. S.).

An example of catastrophizing is that you receive minor negative criticism at work, and begin to think you'll be fired and won't be able to pay your bills. An example of jumping to conclusions is that you send a message to your manager, don't get a response immediately, and so assume you're in trouble.

In several ways, a leader can challenge catastrophizing behaviour in their staff members to get the best out of them. Using David Burns as a guidepost, I've summarised three techniques a manager can use to challenge negative thinking and improve the performance and mindset of their staff member.

Encouraging Them To Focus On Facts.

When catastrophizing, they make assumptions without all the facts. Encourage them to take a step back and examine the situation objectively. For example, ask them to identify the facts and evidence that support their conclusions (Padesky, C. A., & Mooney, K. A.).

Help Them Reframe The Situation.

Catastrophizing often involves imagining a worst case scenario situation. The manager can help the staff member reframe the situation by encouraging them to consider other, more positive outcomes. For example, if they are worried about missing a deadline, the leader can ask them to think about what they can do to make sure they meet the deadline rather than just assuming they will fail (McEvoy, P. M., & Mahoney, A. E.).
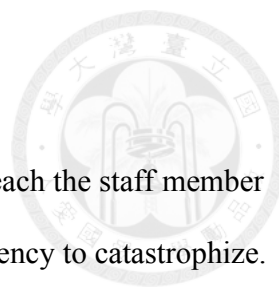
Teach Relaxation Techniques.

Catastrophizing can be a symptom of anxiety so the leader can teach the staff member relaxation techniques to help manage their anxiety and reduce their tendency to catastrophize. For example, techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and progressive muscle relaxation can be helpful (Olatunji, B. O., Cisler, J. M., & Deacon, B. J.).

These three techniques, encouraging a focus on the facts, reframing a situation, and teaching relaxation techniques, will help to reduce some of the catastrophizing behaviour exhibited, and as a result should improve self-reflection

5.5 Encourage Self-Reflection

Cognitive-based therapy techniques also encourage self-reflection and examining your thoughts. A manager can help to encourage staff to self-reflect, which can help people navigate complex personal and professional challenges, as they could gain insight into their behaviour.

We have identified five techniques that a manager can use to encourage self-reflection in their staff members.

Lead By Example

It will help for the manager to model self-reflection techniques themselves. For example, they can talk openly with staff about how they have helped them grow as a manager. When their staff members see someone modelling the behaviour, they are more likely to exhibit it themselves (Kuyken, W., & Tsivrikos, D).

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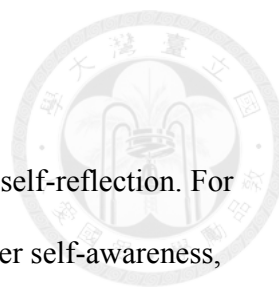
Explain The Upside

The manager can help a staff member understand the benefits of self-reflection. For example, they can explain that increased self-reflection can lead to greater self-awareness, better decision making, and more significant professional growth. This frank one on one discussion with the staff member will also help to form a bond of trust (Gaudiano, B. A., & Herbert, J. D).
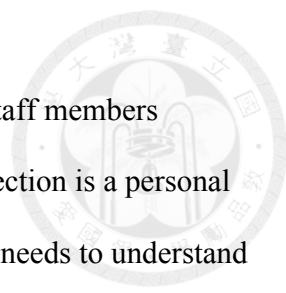
Provide Resources

The manager can share resources with the staff member. For example, articles, books, and podcasts, as well as providing funding for them to attend professional workshops to help them develop self reflection techniques. These resources will emphasise the importance the manager places on this technique (Beck J. S.).

Create A Supportive Environment

Workplace culture is important, and the manager can harbour a safe environment where staff are encouraged to share their reflections with each other in an open and honest way. This environment will have the added benefit of helping to bond staff members together (Luthans, F., & Peterson, S. J.).

Incorporate Self-Reflection Into Peer Evaluations.

The manager can encourage staff to reflect on their performance annually or six months, and identify areas of growth and improvement for themselves. The manager can also suggest self-reflection should be included in the performance evaluation by asking them to share their reflections and discussing their insights (Becks J.S.).

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These techniques will assist in the manager's ability to manage staff members struggling with cognitive distortions. It's important to note that self-reflection is a personal process, and not every staff member will be willing to try. The manager needs to understand and respect their perspective.

5.6 Teach Communication Skills

Clear communication is a tool that can be used to reduce cognitive distortions among staff members. Clear communications strike through cognitions that are misaligned with reality by reaching clarity. A manager can teach their staff member clear communication skills, which can help reduce staff cognitive distortions.

Encourage Active Listening

A manager can encourage their staff to actively listen to each other by paying attention to their words, tone of voice and body language. Active listening can help reduce cognitive distortions by promoting a better understanding of other people's perspectives and reducing misunderstanding (Henderson, S., & Brydon-Miller, M).

Model Clear Communications

The manager can model clear and effective communication by speaking clearly, using plain language, and avoiding assumptions. Managers need to be careful in their digital communications and read through their work to make sure their messages are clear before being disseminated (Cutts, M. 2014).

Challenge Cognitive Distortions

As a manager notices cognitive distortions in their team, assuming they have had some training in the recognition, the manager should confront them. For example, if someone

says, "This project is going to be a disaster" The manager could ask them to explain why they think that, and offer a more positive perspective (Becks J. S.).
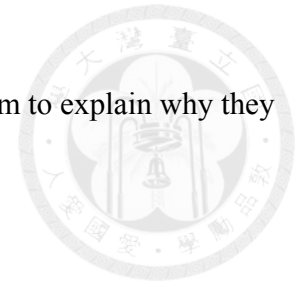
Use 'I' Statements

The manager should encourage his staff to use 'I' statements instead of 'you' statements to express their thoughts and feelings. 'I' statements can help reduce cognitive distortions by focusing on the speaker's perspective, reducing blame or judgement (Cramer, D., & Duncan, B. L.).

Provide Feedback

The manager can provide feedback to their team members regularly. This can include comments on their communication skills, both positive and constructive. Regular feedback dedicated to communication style will help to change habits over time. Improving communications and reducing the incidence of cognitive distortions (Becks J.S.).

Effective communication is a skill that takes practice, and teaching it to a team, while trying to embed it into the company culture will take time. This is especially the case with getting staff members feeling comfortable expressing themselves and receiving feedback positively. However by promoting clear and effective communications, a manager can reduce cognitive distortions and improve collaboration and productivity in their teams.

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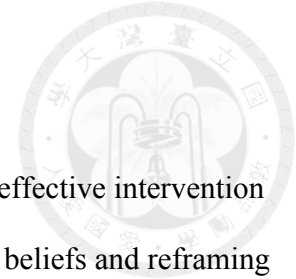
5.7 Concluding Comments

Cognitive Based Therapy (CBT) has been shown to be a highly effective intervention for individuals experiencing distorted thinking patterns. By challenging beliefs and reframing events, CBT can lead to significant improvements in mental well-being and overall quality of life.

While professional support is recommended for severe cases, there is also evidence to suggest that self-directed CBT can be effective when using workbooks or online tools. It's important to note that resources, such as an Employee Assistance Programme, should be made available to staff to access trained professionals when necessary.

As leaders, there are ways to model and implement CBT principles to help align beliefs and realities within the workplace. By challenging negative thinking patterns, encouraging self-reflection, and teaching communication skills, managers can help their staff develop a more positive mindset and improve performance.

Challenging negative thinking patterns involves encouraging staff to focus on facts, reframing situations, and teaching relaxation techniques. By doing so, managers can help reduce catastrophizing behaviour and improve overall performance.

Encouraging self-reflection can help staff develop greater self-awareness and identify patterns of negative thinking. This can be achieved through regular check-ins, encouraging journaling ,and offering feedback in a constructive manner.

Teaching communication skills, such as active listening, can also help reduce misunderstandings and improve relationships within the workplace. By doing so, staff can feel more supported and better equipped to handle challenging situations.

Overall, a CBT-based approach can provide significant benefits to individuals and organisations. By modelling and implementing these principles within the workplace, leaders

can help to create a more positive and supportive environment, leading to improved mental

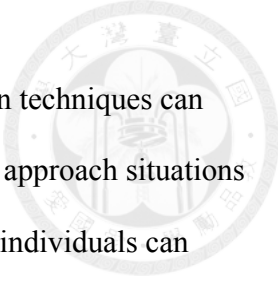well-being, job satisfaction, and productivity.

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6.0 Conclusion

This work has looked globally at the research into mental health and from reviewing the literature on people's cognitive distortions worldwide, it has become evident that a growing number of individuals are experiencing cognitive distortions, particularly those born after 1995. Dealing with employees who are suffering from cognitive distortions can pose unique challenges for managers, negatively impacting a company's commercial outcomes and creating issues within teams.

This study aims to identify several techniques that managers can use to improve their management of individuals suffering from cognitive distortions, without requiring extensive professional training. The techniques fall under three categories, namely Cognitive-Based Therapy, Myers-Briggs, and Goal-Setting Techniques.

The Cognitive-Based Therapy approach comprises three primary strategies, each of which is supported by a variety of specific tactics. The first strategy involves identifying and challenging negative thoughts, emotions, and beliefs that contribute to cognitive distortions. Managers can use this technique by teaching individuals to recognise and dispute negative self-talk or limiting beliefs that may be holding them back. The second strategy involves behavioural activation, encouraging individuals to engage in activities that bring them joy and a sense of purpose. Finally, the third strategy involves mindfulness, helping individuals develop awareness and acceptance of their thoughts and emotions.

6.1 Challenge Negative Thinking

In order to challenge negative thinking, it is important to encourage individuals to focus on facts rather than assumptions or negative interpretations. By helping them reframe the situation, you can guide them to view it from a different perspective, which can lead to

more positive and constructive thinking. Additionally, teaching relaxation techniques can help individuals manage their stress and anxiety levels, allowing them to approach situations with a calmer and more rational mindset. By combining these strategies, individuals can effectively challenge negative thinking patterns and cultivate a more optimistic and resilient outlook.

6.2 Encourage Self-Reflection

Encouraging self-reflection is important in fostering personal growth and development. Leaders can set an example by engaging in self-reflection themselves and highlighting the benefits. Providing resources, such as reflective prompts or journaling tools, can help employees engage in the process. Creating a supportive environment where employees feel safe to share their reflections and receive feedback is also key. Additionally, incorporating self-reflection into peer evaluations can provide a structured way for employees to reflect on their own strengths and areas for improvement.

6.3 Teach Communication Skills

The key elements to teaching communication skills include encouraging active listening, modelling clear communication, challenging cognitive distortions, and using 'I' statements. Active listening helps to foster a deeper understanding between parties, and modelling clear communication helps to set an example for others to follow. Challenging cognitive distortions can help to mitigate miscommunications and prevent conflicts from arising. The use of 'I' statements can help to keep communication open and non-judgmental, allowing for constructive dialogue to take place.

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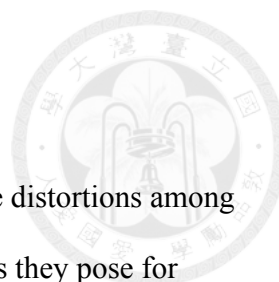
6.4 Conclusion

This study has highlighted the increasing prevalence of cognitive distortions among individuals, particularly those born after 1995, and the unique challenges they pose for managers in the workplace. To address these challenges, managers can employ several techniques without requiring extensive professional training.

The Cognitive-Based Therapy approach offers three primary strategies: identifying and challenging negative thoughts, emotions, and beliefs; promoting behavioural activation; and cultivating mindfulness. By teaching individuals to recognise and dispute negative self-talk, encouraging engagement in meaningful activities, and fostering awareness and acceptance of thoughts and emotions, managers can effectively address cognitive distortions.

Encouraging self-reflection is essential for personal growth and development. Leaders can lead by example, providing resources and creating a supportive environment where employees feel safe to share their reflections and receive feedback. Incorporating self-reflection into peer evaluations offers a structured way for employees to assess their strengths and areas for improvement.

Teaching communication skills involves encouraging active listening, modelling clear communication, challenging cognitive distortions, and using 'I' statements. These elements contribute to deeper understanding, effective communication, mitigation of miscommunications, and the prevention of conflicts. Open and non-judgmental communication allows for constructive dialogue to take place.

By implementing these techniques, managers can enhance their ability to manage individuals experiencing cognitive distortions, ultimately benefiting both the individuals and the organisation. Prioritising mental health and employing these strategies create a healthier

and more productive work environment, positively impacting commercial outcomes and team dynamics.

In conclusion, managers have the opportunity to support individuals suffering from cognitive distortions through practical techniques, contributing to improved well-being, performance, and overall success in the workplace.
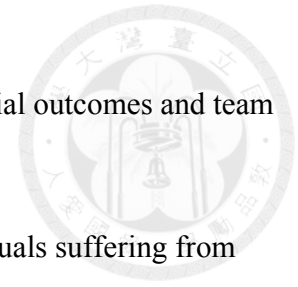
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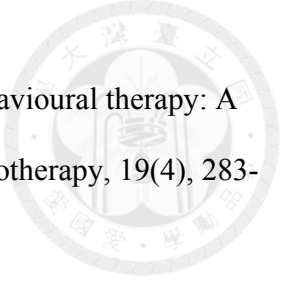Individual Differences, 21(2), 249-261.

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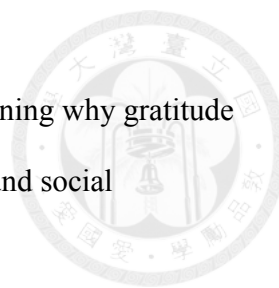
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