

In everyday life, each of us often experienced cognitive dissonance (CD) without even realizing it. CD is the state described for the first time by Leon Festinger in 1957, in which two contradictory elements (cognitions) collide in our cognitive system.

A good example may be the situation in which, even though we are on a diet, we eat a pizza. The contradiction that arises in our mind has consequences in putting us in discomfort, which must be reduced quickly, and we can regain our psychological coherence. However, there are different paths to reduce dissonance. We can assume that eating pizza once in a while does not mean breaking diet or go to the gym to burn unwanted calories. In the original theory effort that we put into regaining cohesion depends only on the magnitude of dissonance, the greater the cognitive discrepancy, the higher the effort invested in the reduction process.

The pizza example shows, however, that there is variance in difficulty levels of the paths that allow an individual to reduce dissonance more easily (recognition that we have not broken the diet) or more difficult (visit the gym). Also, not everyone attending the gym requires the same amount of effort invested in the training (couch person vs. sport person). Hence, we concluded that there is a theoretical gap in thinking about the nature of the effort invested in the reduction of cognitive dissonance. The main aim of this project is to propose a more comprehensive model of dissonance reduction taking into account factors such as the difficulty of the path that leads to the recovery of cohesion or the individual skills (abilities) needed to perform it.

Our assumptions will be tested in experimental methodology using cardiovascular measures.