Chapter 8
Cognitive Biases:
General Implications

ABSTRACT

This chapter will describe some implications of using cognitive biases in the decision-making process in social areas such as economic, legal, education, and political. The cognitive bias would be a pattern of deviation in judgment, in which the inferences that we make about other people and/or situations can be illogical. Moreover, different studies have found that even strategic decisions that affect the society can be influenced by these biases. Therefore, it is important to be aware of them to try to detect and reduce them. Above all, it is necessary to teach how to detect them in order to reduce them in public professionals.

INTRODUCTION

At present, as it has been seen throughout the book in different chapters, it has been widely evidenced that human being does not always make rational or deliberative judgment, but many times individuals make decisions based on intuitive judgments above all under ambiguity and uncertainty (Gary, Dosi, & Lovallo, 2008; Haselton & Andrews, 2015; Zunshine, 2015). Although some cognitive biases might prove efficient and helpful for decision making or judgment, they can lead to commit big and small mistakes in our decision making (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974; Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier, 2011; Juárez Ramos, 2014).

For example, over the years it has been experiencing a serious economic crisis (great recession of 2008). This crisis has been due in part to making bad decisions. Now, if we could analyze some of these decisions likely we would see as many of them have been due to the use of these mental shortcuts that are cognitive biases such as overconfidence bias, bias jumping to conclusion, among others. So, the cognitive bias would be a pattern of deviation in judgment, in which the inferences that we make about other people and/or situations can be illogical (Haselton, Nettle, & Andrews, 2015; Kahneman, 2011). Besides, several studies have found that even strategic decisions can be influenced by these biases (Schwenk, 2006; Billet & Qian, 2008). For example, confirmation bias has been found in experts. For example, Dunbar et al, (2013; 2014) found that CIA analysts agents showed cognitive biases in their decision making.

Knowing this, it is easy to see how these biases can have a major impact on many areas of our life and of our world (Kahneman, 2011; Zamir, & Teichman, 2014; Van der Toorn, Tyler & Jost, 2010). We just have to think how many decisions and judgments have to be taken every day, how fast people have to be made these decisions and the severe impact that can have them. There it is importance being aware of them and teaching to different professionals and in the end any citizen what are the cognitive biases, how they work, how are evoked and teaching them to avoid. To understand this need throughout the chapter it will describe examples of different implications in different areas such as political, economic, legal or education.

POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

The political environment is difficult, ambiguous, with high uncertainty where much of the information is hidden. In political makes a decision is very tough by their big impact of this. Firstly, sometimes the decisions are made ignoring of the potential consequences due to it is not possible quantitatively measuring them. Moreover, decision making is done under uncertainty context which can contain mixed emotions. Finally, these are decisions that not only affect to one individual but to every citizen of the country, and sometimes even citizens of other countries. For example, in these years of crisis many governments in different states have had to cut social spending. As a result, it has led to protests and strikes by citizen. These decisions were carried

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