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Influence of Bribery Intensity on Business Ethics Lack on Thailand's Pharmaceutical Sector

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Abstract

A high degree of bribery and isomorphism can decrease and diminish the positive level of ethics in a business that directly influences the operational performance of the sector. However, the main goal of this research paper is to analyze the diminishing of business ethics in the pharmaceutical sector of Thailand due to the role of isomorphism dimensions which further include mimetic, coercive and competitive isomorphism. In this research study normative bribery belief, overall business constraints and competitive pressure have also been evaluated through the mediating role of bribery intensity. For this intention, almost all of the data and information of the study were collected from 360 pharmacist of different pharmaceutical firms in Thailand. The measurements of the results through SEM techniques revealed that institutional coercive is one of the strongest and significant determinants of bribery. However, the effect and impact of the pressure of isomorphic dimensions on the bribery practices and intensity vary across different pharmaceutical firms of Thailand. Thus, the given research study suggests to the managers of pharmaceutical firms that they must consider and take some significant actions for mitigating bribery in different pharmaceutical firms.

Keywords: Business Ethics Lack, Normative Bribery Belief, Competitive Pressure, Overall Business Constraints, Bribery Intensity.

Introduction

In a business field, many companies at a lower level copied the brand and product features of the large organizations and their business oriented strategic approach in their own activities in order to earn a profit. In a pharmaceutical industry, many local pharmacies and their related staff worked on the isomorphism factor in their operating activities, which is totally opposite to the business ethics. Such unprofessional and unethical business approach is mostly common in developing countries, where the laws and regulations regarding the business activities are quite weak and not followed properly (Tang, Fu, & Yang, 2019). Majority of the business scholars consider bribery as a major factor of this unethical business activities (Kane, 2018; Kaptein, 2017; Martínez-Ferrero & García-Sánchez, 2017).

It's true that a corrupt system generates many evil activities in a society which make human life in danger. In the pharmaceutical industry, such fake and corrupt pharmaceutical companies enhanced the health related threatening factor within a state (Capaldi, Idowu, & Schmidpeter, 2017). According to the management, such unethical business activities reduce the confidence level of the targeted customers to remain with the company for a long run. Also, in any adverse situation, such bribery activities within an organizational administration system may create a huge economic loss and results in many social issues within a state (Bu, 2018). Many developing and developed nations make some effective environment based business ethics and regulations

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in order to overcome the isomorphism factor within a state.

In Thailand, many important steps made by the governmental authorities in order to overcome the diminishing of business ethics that directly hit the confidence level of the multinational companies to effectively operate in this state (Aven, Morse, & Iorio, 2019). In the year of 2019, a research study was conducted by Phisalprapa, Supakankunti, & Chaiyakunapruk, to critically evaluate the number of salaries of the professionals in the pharmaceutical industry. According to this survey, major regulations are made by the state to fix the monthly salaries of the professionals in Thailand, so that the intensity of bribery can become reduces and enhance the importance of efficient operating activities of any doctor and pharmacists (Phisalprapa, Supakankunti, & Chaiyakunapruk, 2019). Its survey based quantitative data is given below;

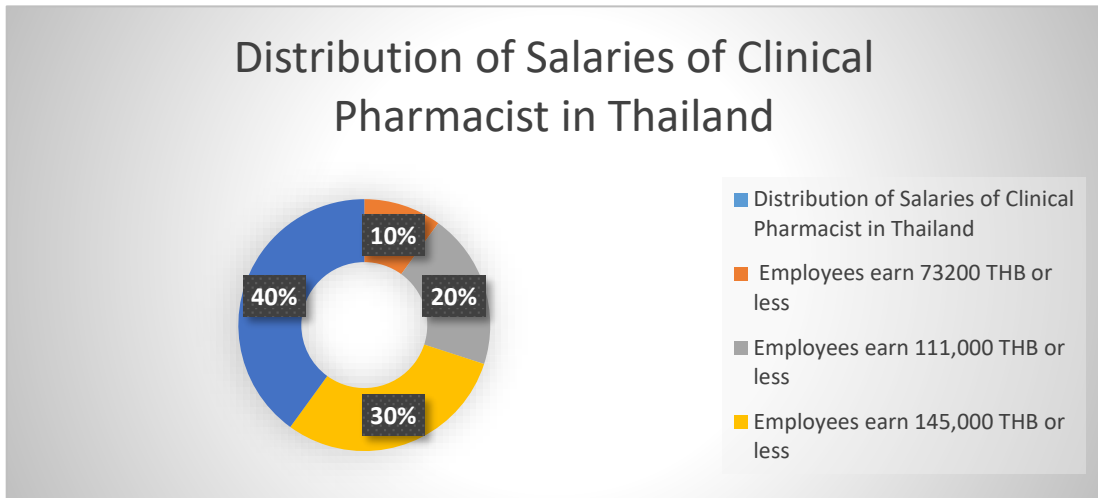


Figure 1: Distribution of Salaries of Clinical Pharmacist in Thailand

According to the above figure, it becomes clear that majority of the medical field professionals earn 168000 THB annually from their healthcare related activities. The major aim of this governmental step is to reduce the threat of bribery and isomorphism in the operating activities of a pharmaceutical companies within this state (Muchukota, Bhoomika, Dinesh, Yadav, & Mathappan, 2019; Phisalprapa et al., 2019; Pongpunna, Pratipanawatr, & Jarernsiripornkul, 2019). In Thailand, many effective business ethics related efficient policies are generated by the management in order to reduce the negative impact of organizational isomorphism and corruption rate within a state (Pongpunna et al., 2019). These steps will secure the future of pharmaceutical companies within this state and result in a sustainable growth of its economy.

Literature Review

Normative Bribery Belief and Business Ethics Lack

According to Ufere, Gaskin, Perelli, Somers, & Boland, a bribery is an unethical practice which increased the wealth inequality and motivates the development of corrupt regimes. According to them, a firm normative belief on the bribery factor made a negative impact on the business ethics within a state (Ufere, Gaskin, Perelli, Somers, & Boland Jr, 2020). According to the scholars, the higher intensity of bribery factor creates a threatening situation in front of the foreign business person to enter in the corrupt society, which shows that how much a business ethics and a state reputation is badly affected due to this factor (Laczniak & Murphy, 2019; Liu et al.,

2017; Ufere et al., 2020).

In 2018, Horak stated that lack of honesty and integrity result in the misuse of excessive power by the authorities due to lack of accountability in their operating activities (Horak, 2018). Girard concluded that government and business community should made some moral entities by making some moral and ethics regarding business field and upgrade the accountability factor (Girard, 2019). So, these studies proposed a following hypothesis;

H1: There is a significant relationship between Normative Bribery Belief and LBusiness Ethics Lack

Mediating Role of Bribery Intensity between Normative Bribery Belief and Business Ethics Lack

In case of bribery, the productivity of a business field is badly affected (Ufere et al., 2020). According to scholars, there is a need to make some effective strategies in order to overcome the threatening effects of bribery which is derived from the corrupt system (Ekici & Ekici, 2019). In current technological world, the hacking and other illegal activities become common in developing states which reduces the implication of business ethics (Eddleston, Banalieva, & Verbeke, 2019; Ekici & Ekici, 2019). In the end, Chapman, Jensen, Malesky, & Wolford concluded that there is a need to make some bold steps by the government in order to overcome the negative impact of the normative bribery belief on the business ethics factor (Chapman, Jensen, Malesky, & Wolford, 2019). Hence, a following hypothesis is suggested;

H2: Bribery Intensity plays a significant mediating role between Normative Bribery Belief and Lack of Business Ethics

Overall Business Constraints and Lack of Business Ethics

According to business scholars, an overall business constraint factor result in enhancing the accountability factor within a business field. The reason is that if the business regulations are forcefully implemented in the organization, then the moral values of business become weakened (Burnham, Jeon, & Zeng, 2018; Charoensukmongkol, 2016). The researchers concluded that the overall business regulations reduces the weakness in business ethics' adaptation and enhanced their efficiency (Brewster & Dryden, 2017; Fathallah, Sidani, & Khalil, 2019). Hence, a following hypothesis is proposed from the above studies;

H3: There is a significant relationship between Overall Business Constraints and Lack of Business Ethics

Mediating Role of Bribery Intensity between Overall Business Constraints and Lack of Business Ethics

According to Rink, a bribery intensity reduced the implication of the business regulation in a society (Rink, 2016). In 2019, they stated that the higher range of bribery reduced the relationship between the organizational regulations and its implication in the society (Peiffer, Marquette, Armytage, & Budhram, 2019). According to Lord, Jordanoska, & Benson, many developing countries and its business administration are facing such bribery intensity within their operating activities that badly impact on the economic growth of a company. So, there is need to make some efficient policies in order to overcome this threatening factor in business community (Lord, Jordanoska, & Benson, 2018). According to the researchers, if the intensity of bribery and its tradition is controlled by the administration, then the opportunities to launch

new business in the developing and developed state can become enhanced. So, these studies suggested a following hypothesis;

H4: Bribery Intensity plays a significant mediating role between Overall Business Constraints and Business Ethics Lack

Competitive Pressure and Business Ethics Lack

According to Wright & Schultz, a competitive pressure results in many productive activities within a workplace, but sometimes such threatening factor results in many illegal activities and other shortcuts to attain a large amount of profit (Wright & Schultz, 2018). In 2017, researchers stated that lack of ethical activities in a business field is usually developed because of unequal distribution of power in the business field and excessive pressure for the rival company (Aziz, Mohtar, & Othman, 2017). According to business scholars, in some recession phases such external pressure motivates the organization to adopt some illegal shortcuts in order to retain their position in the customer market (Tyler et al., 2018). They concluded that there is a need to make a moderate competitive pressure on the firm performances, so that such unethical managerial activities can be overcome (Dupire & M'Zali, 2018; Helmig, Spraul, & Ingenhoff, 2016)

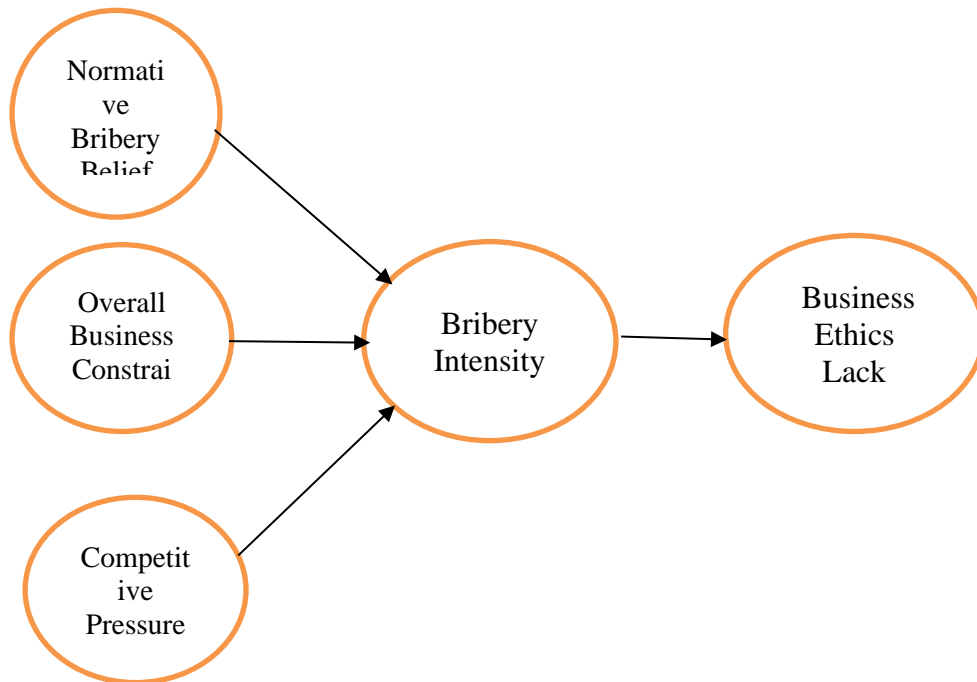
H5: There is a significant relationship between Competitive Pressure and Business Ethics Lack

Mediating Role of Bribery Intensity between Competitive Pressure and Business Ethics Lack

In order to explore the impact of excessive bribery factor within the operating activities of business activities, a research was conducted in 2017 where a scholar majorly worked to evaluate its impact on the enforcement of unethical activities of a firm's management (O'Shannassy, 2017). According to Kaptein, such bribery intensity enhanced the negative outcomes of competitive pressure on the operating activities of a rival company. Due to this factor, many local businessmen preferred to use the brand name of the developed country in their operating activities and earn profit (Kaptein, 2017). According to the business law, it is unethical activity of a business person to use the brand name of other identity without their permission or confirmation (Husser, Andre, & Lespinet-Najib, 2019). They concluded that there is a need to make a proper governmental law regarding this bribery factor, and also there is a need to create a healthy competition in a business field which will boost the economy. So, from these following hypothesis is suggested;

H6: Bribery Intensity plays a significant mediating role between Competitive Pressure and Business Ethics Lack

Theoretical Framework



Methodology

This survey-based research was conducted in Thailand's pharmaceutical sector, to explore the diminishing business ethics and increasing bribery. Objective behind selecting Thailand is that there is no proper mechanism to monitor business conduct so, unethical business practices are very common such as bribery for getting licenses. Data for this study was obtained from Thai pharmaceutical firms employees, based on purposive sampling technique 360 pharmacist were included in final sample and for collection of data, self-administrative questionnaires were adopted to pull information from the participants. A questionnaire survey was directed to collect data, before running the survey questionnaire, 20 top manager were interviewed in Bangkok, capital of Thailand conducted to learn potential problems due to lack of business ethics. The questionnaires were distributed by a team in the workplaces, who also provided basic information about the contents and objectives of the research. Respondents participation was voluntary and they were ensured that this participation will not affect their job. The majority of participants were male 54.3% having more than 2 to 5 years of experience in health service (42.9%) and aged between 25 to 35 years of age.

Variables and Measures

For validating proposed model several items and scale relevant to this study were carefully chosen that were consistent to previous researches and supports the research objectives, some items were picked without any changes and some were changed according to the context. Each item was measured on 5 Point-Likert scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree

The bribery intensity construct was measured by adopting Gao (2010) scale. The scale included a 6-item measure, Sample item is “Do you think bribery present any obstacle to current operations of your business?” respondents rated the level of bribery on five Point-Likert scale with composite reliability $\alpha = 0.950$. Items for measuring Normative Bribery Belief were derived from (Tian, 2008). Three items were used to evaluate the belief regarding bribery effecting firm business conduct. For example, “It is common for firms in this line of business to have to pay informal payments and give gifts to get licenses”. Responses were recorded on 5-point response scale, results showing $\alpha = 0.904$. For evaluating competitive pressure three-item scale of competitive pressure was embraced from Boone (2000) previous work. One of the five items for measuring this construct was “Practices of competitors in current sector present any obstacle to operations of your business” respondents rated the pressure their firm face from competitors on five scale with $\alpha = 0.952$ composite reliability for this construct. Eight items were adapted to measure overall business constraints from Carter and Van Auken (2005) work on constraints . Sample question of this scale is “Do you think the functioning of the federal/state/local courts present any obstacle to current operations of your business”. Participants indicated the legal, financial and infrastructural constraints on 5 Point scale ranging from 1= no obstacle and 5= sever obstacle. Results yielded $\alpha = 0.975$.

Analysis Techniques

Data was analyzed using software analysis techniques. The scales were tested by cross loading. Followed by calculations of Cronbach’s alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) At last, calculated the square root of the AVE (SQAVE). Software analyzed was operated for testing and analyzing, we performed CFA and descriptive statistics test on data.

Findings

Demographics

The finalized sample consists of 360 respondents. A total of 54.3 percent male and 45.7 percent female respondents characterize the sample. Where the age of 73.3 percent individuals is distributed between 25 and 35 and the working experience of 74.8 percent people is between 2 and 8 years. The disparity in gender distribution is due to the fact than gender equality in employment programs are being developed in the country and the age and experience data represents the fact that employees of all levels and experience were targeted for collecting data.

Descriptive Analysis

The mean values are centered on 3 and are approaching 4, outlining the assertion of respondents with the statements of the questionnaire. No outliers were detected in the data as the minimum and maximum values are according to the utilized measurement scale, a five point Likert scale. The skewness values are within the range of -1+1 which is an indication of data normality.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
LackBE	360	1.00	5.00	3.2452	1.03142	-.180	.120

NorBibBe	360	1.00	5.00	3.3059	.97423	-.360	.120
OverBusC	360	1.00	5.00	3.5376	1.15252	-.568	.120
CompPre	360	1.00	5.00	3.2075	1.20727	-.274	.120
BribInten	360	1.00	5.00	3.5499	1.13185	-.466	.120
Valid (listwise)	N 360						

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Table 2 represents that two important preconditions of factor analysis are being met. The first is that the KMO value is supposed to be greater than 0.6 and close to 1. The second is the significance of Bartlett's sphericity. As both conditions are being fulfilled the data can be used for factor analysis.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.911
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6560.015
	df	153
	Sig.	.000

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Factor Analysis

A loading value greater than 0.7 is an indication of factor significance. The dilemma of cross-loading hasn't been detected as well.

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
BE1			.830		
BE2			.877		
BE3			.835		
BE4			.795		
NB1				.740	
NB2				.798	
NB3				.776	
OB1	.850				
OB2	.851				
OB3	.829				
OB4	.883				
OB5	.906				
CP1					.884
CP2					.898
BI1		.806			
BI2		.838			
BI3		.868			
BI4		.851			

Table 3: Rotated Component Matrixa

Construct Validity

CV is determined on the basis of CR and AVE values (Hassan, Hameed, Basheer, & Ali, 2020; Iqbal & Hameed, 2020) whereas DV is determined on the basis of MSV and the correlation diagonal. CR values are more than 0.7 which are an indication of internal consistency and AVE is greater 0.5 indicating the variance extracted from these variables. The MSV figures are less than AVE and the correlation diagonal represents high self-correlation values. Therefore both discriminant and convergent validity is present.

	CR	AVE	MSV	CP	BE	NB	OB	BI
CP	0.882	0.789	0.254	0.888				
BE	0.917	0.734	0.368	0.332	0.856			
NB	0.820	0.605	0.371	0.337	0.607	0.778		
OB	0.960	0.828	0.260	0.504	0.481	0.510	0.910	
BI	0.924	0.753	0.371	0.299	0.480	0.609	0.491	0.868

Table 4: Convergent and Discriminant Validity

CFA

It is the final test conducted before observing the degree of variation produced or influenced by the latent variables. The test uses CMIN, CFI, IFI, RMSEA and GFI values as indicators. The values of these are measures are according to the threshold ranges defined in the table.

Indicators	Threshold range	Current values
CMIN/DF	Less or equal 3	2.601
GFI	Equal or greater .80	.918
CFI	Equal or greater .90	.969
IFI	Equal or greater .90	.969
RMSEA	Less or equal .08	.062

Table 5: Confirmatory Factors Analysis

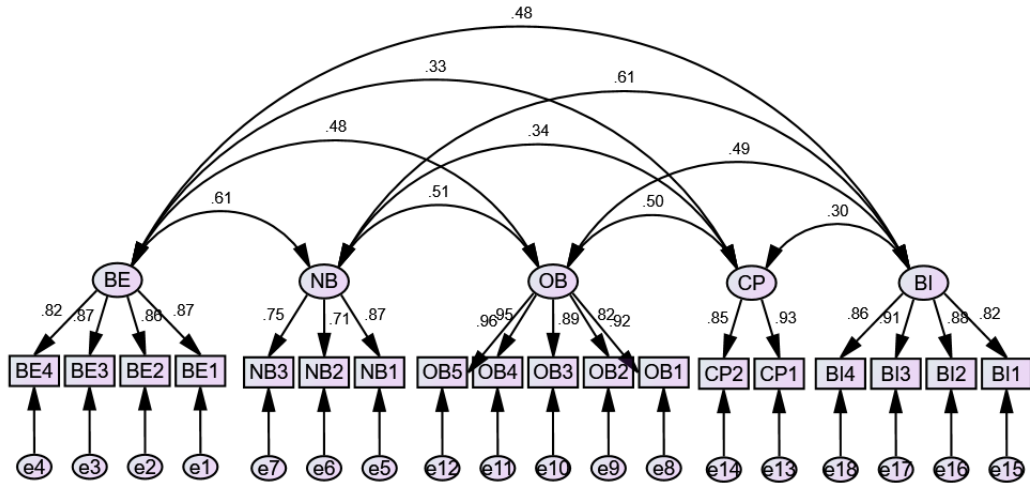


Figure 1: CFA

SEM

A unit increase in NorBibBe and OverBusC produces a variation of 33.5 and 21.4 percent in LackBE. The hypotheses are accepted as the relationships are significant. A unitary change in CompPre produces a variation of 7.2 percent in LackBE, the relationship is insignificant therefore the hypothesis is rejected. The mediation produces similar results. The mediation of BribInten through OverBusC and BorBibBe influences changes of 3.6 and 5.9 percent whereas through CompPre it produces only 0.7 percent change. The first two hypotheses are accepted due to significant relationships whereas the last one is rejected.

Total Effect	CompPre	OverBusC	NorBibBe	BribInten
BribInten	.049	.252**	.412***	.000
LackBE	.079	.250**	.394***	.144**
Direct Effect	CompPre	OverBusC	NorBibBe	BribInten
BribInten	.049	.252**	.412***	.000
LackBE	.072	.214**	.335***	.144**
Indirect Effect	CompPre	OverBusC	NorBibBe	BribInten
BribInten	.000	.000	.000	.000
LackBE	.007	.036*	.059*	.000

Table 6: Structural Equation Modeling

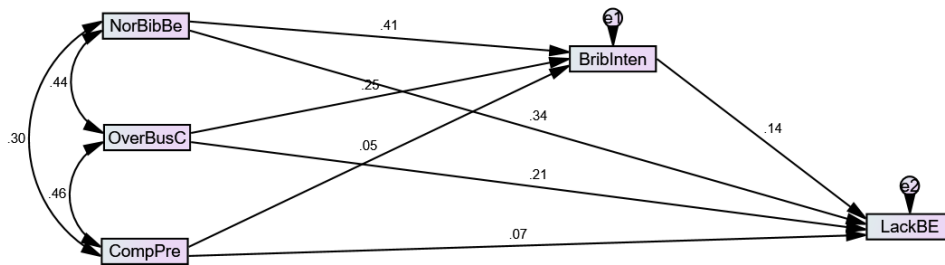


Figure 2: SEM

Discussion

Lack of business ethics can generate serious problems and issues for the firms because a lack of business ethics can lead to wealth challenges and also negatively impacts the working of the environment of the firm. Lack of business ethics can also damage the reputation level of the firm or sector (Sampath, Gardberg, & Rahman, 2018). The given research study found proof and draw the conclusion that there is a direct and significant relationship between three dimensions of firm isomorphism and bribery: three dimensions of firm isomorphism are mimetic, competitive and coercive. A research study by Wang, Yuan, and Wu (2017) explains that coercive is an important dimension of firm isomorphism which is a strong determinant of organizational bribery because coercive change mainly involves pressure and challenges from other firms and sectors in which they are dependent upon expectations that are cultural in nature.

Conclusion

The results and findings of the study also manifest that policy instruction should focus on minimization of situational constraints that mainly promotes bribery and also promotes the development of significant mechanisms of the market. Thus, all the hypothesis related to the role of isomorphism dimensions has been accepted and provide some beneficial suggestions.

Implications and Limitations

The findings of this research paper will be very beneficial and provide effective material for those sectors and firms that are facing challenges in ethics and bribery. The given study clearly highlight's the role of isomorphism dimensions and the institutional constraints in the pharmaceutical sector of Thailand with the diffusion of bribery. The significant results of this study also help many fellow researchers and scholars to understand the relationship between organizational isomorphism and lack of ethics.

Some limitations and restrictions should be noted and considered when interpreting the findings of this research study. First, the data and information that this study drew are self-reported, thus, future studies should use another type of data collection technique and methods. Another limitation of the study is its cross-sectional nature of the analysis, which did not collect and capture the change of isomorphic over time. Therefore, it is recommended to future studies and analysts that they should conduct a study that is longitudinal in nature for more effective results and outcomes.

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