Determinants of emotional regulation among marketing staff in the Jordanian banking sector

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This study empirically verifies the determinants of emotional regulation as observed among marketing staff in the Jordanian banking sector. In particular, it examines the relationship between participants' cognitive flexibility capabilities, their levels of response inhibition and their levels of mindfulness on the degree of emotional regulation they exhibited. Data was collected from a sample of 120 respondents who were administered four standardized survey questionnaires. Multiple linear regression was used to analyze the data, and results show no significant relationship between cognitive flexibility, inhibition levels, and a combination of both factors on emotional regulation. However, it found that mindfulness had a low but significant and positive relationship with emotional regulation.

Introduction

The ability to regulate emotions is not just a cliché applicable to humans as they interact with each other at the social level, nor is it a mere necessity for coexistence. It is a phenomenon that transcends the personal lives of individuals and permeates both their family and professional lives as well (Kemp and Kopp, 2011). Due to the fact that a corporate organization's marketing activities are often very dynamic and involves a wide range of interactions with the different internal and external stakeholders they are often responsible for; the need for emotional regulation among staff members of an organization's marketing team cannot be overstated.

Extant literature contains a couple of studies which have bordered around emotional regulation mostly as a determinant of the marketing performance or overall performance of organizations. None have focused on empirically examining or verifying the determinants of emotional regulation itself. This study aims to do this from an interdisciplinary perspective-relying on concepts from the field of psychology. The significance of this study is that its findings will present organizations with information on key determinants of emotional regulation which can then prompt managers to incorporate these antecedents into the selection process when hiring a prospective marketing staff; or, during training and development of thier existing marketing staff. To achieve the aims of this study, the following research questions were posed:

RQ1- Are marketers who are better at cognitive shifting and inhibition functions also better at emotional regulation?

RQ2- Do marketers who practice mindfulness efficiently have better emotional regulation skills?

Literature review

This section provides an overview of conceptual definitions of the constructs under study followed by a review of related literature. This is followed by a statement of the gap in the literature which this study intends to fill. It ends by providing some textual information regarding the industry under study as well as hypotheses based upon the literature review which the study tests in order to answer the research questions.

The literature review provides a myriad of conceptual definitions for the constructs under study, however the most concise of them are presented to give the reader a sense of the variables under study. Cognitive flexibility refers to the ability to switch between different thoughts and actions (Martin and Rubin, 1995); while Response Inhibition is the ability to suppress thoughts and actions which at a given period are deemed either inappropriate detrimental to goal-motivated behaviour Carver and White (2013). Mindfulness refers to the state of being attentive to and aware of what's happening in the present Brown and Ryan (2003); while Emotional Regulation refers to an individual's ability to effectively and adequately manage and respond to the emotional experience (Gross and John, 2003).

Extant literature which have previously examined the interplay between emotions and marketing have restricted themselves to examining the ability of members of sales teams to perceive and understand how their customers feel; an understanding and categorization of the types of emotions, feelings and moods evident during each interaction between a salesperson and client or customer, how emotional regulation as a strategy can enable sales people effectively manage emotions during sales and strategies that could help sales people manage stress on the job (kiwell et al., 2007; Verbeke and Bagozzi, 2000; Rozell et al., 2006; Doney and Cannon, 1997; Lewin and Sager, 2008, Kemp et al., 2012). Despite all of these studies, none of them have focused on actually identifying and robustly examining the antecedents of emotional regulation itself. Kemp et al., (2012) in their paper which examined the role of emotional regulation on the perceived burnout selling behaviour and perceived performance of sales people, presented only one antecedent. Cognitive reappraisal was used to measure emotional regulation, and listed this fact as one of their paper's limitations while suggesting that future researchers examine more factors that could better explain changes in emotional regulation.

This study does exactly that but goes further to distinguish itself by examining three constructs (cognitive flexibility, response inhibition levels and mindfulness) and their individual and combined influences on the emotional regulation using constructs already established in psychology literature and for which standardized measurement instruments exists for their identification and measurement. Moreover, this study does not take the approach of the salesperson alone, instead it takes the perspective of all marketing staff of organizations regardless of whether they are involved in personal selling or not. Contextually, the setting of this study is the Jordanian Banking sector, which is one of the leading contributors to the Jordanian economy (Oxford Business Group, 2015). Consisting of approximately 26 banks of which 22 are conventional banks and 4 are Islamic banks. Also, out of the 26 banks, 15 are listed on the Amman Stock Exchange (ASE). The industry contributed approximately 18.82% of the Jordanian GDP in 2015 (Oxford Business Group, 2015), and although it outperformed most other sectors of the Jordanian economy, there are recent signs that the industry is looking to consolidate as announcements of mergers and acquisitions have been made by a couple of banks (Oxford Business Group, 2015). Marketing activities in the banking sector involves direct and indirect selling and most importantly account management (Kemp et al., 2012) and, as

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such, involves emotional exchanges at every level. Thus building on extant literature on the desirability of emotional regulation on the overall marketing performance of organizations, this study sets out to understand the determinants of emotional regulation as observed in marketing staff employed in banks operating in the Jordanian banking sector. After reviewing the existing literature, the following hypotheses will be tested in order to obtain answers to stated research questions.

Research hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H$_0$: Marketers with more efficient cognitive shifting and inhibition functions are not better at regulating their emotional states when compared to the group with less efficient cognitive shifting and inhibition.

H$_1$: Marketers with more efficient cognitive shifting and inhibition functions are better at regulating their emotional states when compared to the group with less efficient cognitive shifting and inhibition.

Hypothesis 2

H$_0$: Marketers who have more efficient mindfulness capabilities will not be more efficient in emotional regulation when compared with marketers who are less efficient in practicing mindfulness.

H$_2$: Marketers who have more efficient mindfulness capabilities will be more efficient in emotional regulation when compared with marketers who are less efficient in practicing mindfulness.

Methodology

To test the hypotheses stated above, a deductive and quantitative research approach was used. In particular, the statistical technique of multiple linear regression was used as recommended by Emeagwali (2015) because all of our constructs were measured using standardized Likert scale questionnaires which though ordinal can be treated as interval scale data according to Baggaley & Hull (1983), Maurer & Pierce (1998), and Vickers (1999). The research model involved one dependent variable (emotional regulation) and three independent variables (cognitive flexibility, response inhibition, and mindfulness).

Data

We tested the stated hypothesis through the collection of survey data. The standardized Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), developed by Brown and Ryan (2003), was adopted and used in measuring the degree of mindfulness exhibited by the participants. The Cognitive Flexibility Scale (CFS), developed by Martin & Rubin (1995), was used to measure cognitive flexibility among respondents. The Behavioral Avoidance/Inhibition Scales (BAS/BIS), developed and standardized by Carver and White (2013), were used to measure the degree of response inhibition exhibited by the respondents. Finally, the Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), developed by Gross and John (2003), was adopted and used to measure emotional regulation among the respondents.

Respondents were drawn from six out of thirteen conventional banks in Jordan; the other 7 banks declined the invitation to participate in the study. The six banks which participated include the Arab Bank, Bank of Jordan, Cairo Amman Bank, Jordan Kuwait Bank, Jordan Ahli Bank and Société Générale. While these banks agreed to participate, they all -in what seemed like a tradition -demanded that the random distribution of the

instruments be conducted by their human resource department and declined to give any official statistic on the number of marketing staff in their employ, citing confidentiality grounds. Thus, while random sampling was carried out, one can only confidently say that convenience sampling was the over-arching technique used. While a total of 124 questionnaires were returned, only a 120 were deemed useful for deployment in this research. For confidentiality purposes the author does not have permission to present any data identifying any of the six banks. Thus, comparative analysis of one bank with another was not carried out; neither could any information which would identify any of the banks by name be presented in this paper.

Empirical results

First of all, the above-mentioned research questions and their corresponding hypotheses involve examining the effect of three independent variables (Cognitive Flexibility, Inhibition and Mindfulness) on one dependent variable (Emotional Regulation). According to Emeagwali (2015), the appropriate statistics to test the stated hypothesis is Multiple Linear Regression.

To ensure that the first hypothesis (H1) was appropriately tested, a Multiple Linear regression using an interaction term was conducted because this hypothesis sought to examine the effect of two independent variables (Cognitive Flexibility and Inhibition) on the dependent variable (Emotional Regulation).

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF BOTH MODELS

Model	R	R squared	Adjusted R squared	Std. Error of the estimate	Change statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R squared change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F change	
1	.332[a]	.110	.087	.50599	.110	4.801	3	116	.003	
2	.333[b]	.111	.080	.50802	.001	.074	1	115	.786	2.277

Source: SPSS generated.
a. Predictors: (Constant), Mindfulness, Inhibition, Cognitive Flexibility
b. Predictors: (Constant), Mindfulness, Inhibition, Cognitive Flexibility, Cf_X_Inhibition
c. Dependent Variable: Emotional Regulation

The Model summary typically accounts for the ability of a regression line or equation to account for the variance observed in the dependent variable. In Table 1, due to our use of an interaction variable, we had to model two regression lines expressed in Model 1 and Model 2. The regression line equations for both models are presented below:

$$\hat{Y} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X3 \tag{1}$$

$$\hat{Y} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta 4 X_1 X_2 \tag{2}$$

Where *a* is the constant, β is the standardized regression coefficient, *X* is a representation of each observed variable in the study, and $\hat{Y}$ is the predicted value of the dependent variable.

Thus, Table 1 summarizes the ability of both models to account for the observed variation in Emotional Regulation. We notice from the reported R^2 value in Model 1, the regression line represented in this model accounted for only 11% of the variance observed in Emotional Regulation. Interestingly, however, the fact that with the inclusion of the interaction variable in Model 2, R^2 only changed by 0.001; thus, the amount of variance explained remained the same. However, the changes observed when testing the multiple regression models is noteworthy. However, before discussing these changes, it is important to ~~first~~ test the ability of each of the presented models to better account for or explain the variances observed in the dependent variable. For this purpose, we look to the ANOVA (Table 2), below.

TABLE 2. ANOVA TABLES FOR BOTH MODELS

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.687	3	1.229	4.801	.003[b]
	Residual	29.699	116	.256		
	Total	33.386	119			
2	Regression	3.706	4	.927	3.590	.009[c]
	Residual	29.680	115	.258		
	Total	33.386	119			

Source: SPSS generated
a. Dependent Variable: Emotional Regulation
b. Predictors: (Constant), Mindfulness, Inhibition, Cognitive Flexibility
c. Predictors: (Constant), Mindfulness, Inhibition, Cognitive Flexibility, Cf_X_Inhibition

The primary test is the global test (or F statistic), basically used to investigate the possibility that the actual regression coefficients of all of independent variables are each zero.

Global Test of Model 1

Ho: $\beta_1 = \beta_2 = \beta_3 = 0$

H1: Not all the β_i 's are 0

Global Test of Model 2

Ho: $\beta_1 = \beta_2 = \beta_3 = \beta_4 = 0$

H2: Not all the β_i 's are 0

In both models, we statistically reject or accept the null hypothesis (Ho) that all regression coefficients are zero in two primary conditions: (a) when the regression mean square is larger than the residual mean square (see the section highlighted in yellow and blue in both models) and (b) if the F-statistic value is greater or less than zero respectively with a significance level of $P<0.05$.

For Model 1, we inspect the ANOVA table above and find that (a) the regression mean square (1.229) is larger than the residual mean square (0.256), and (b) we wee a reported F-statistic (4.801) is non-zero with a significance level (P= 0.003) less than 0.05. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis that all the regression coefficients in Model 1 are zero, and

confirm the appropriateness of this model to explain the observed variance in the dependent variable (Emotional Regulation).

For Model 2, where we have the interaction variable, we also inspect the ANOVA table above and find that (a) the regression mean square (0.927) is larger than the residual mean square (0.258), and (b) we see a reported F-statistic (3.590) is non-zero with a significance level (P= 0.009) less than 0.05. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis that all the regression coefficients in Model 2 are zero, and confirm the appropriateness of this model to explain the observed variance in the dependent variable (Emotional Regulation).

Thus, both models are appropriate for use in accounting for the variance observed in the dependent variable (Emotional Regulation). However, it is important to note, as seen in Table 1, that the move from Model 1 to Model 2 or the introduction of the variable interaction into the model only affected a change in the decreasing terms of 0.074 in the F-statistic. But the fact that the F values reported in both models were significant upholds the decision to reject the null hypothesis in both cases, thus confirming the appropriateness of both regression lines.

TABLE 3. REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS FOR THE TWO MODELS

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std.Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.661	.309		8.619	.000		
	CognitiveFlex	-.029	.042	-.067	-.692	.490	.810	1.234
	Inhibition	-.081	.052	-.145	-1.559	.122	.888	1.126
	Mindfulness	.143	.065	.220	2.223	.028	.785	1.274
2	(Constant)	2.658	.310		8.570	.000		
	CognitiveFlex	-.029	.042	-.067	-.685	.495	.810	1.235
	Inhibition	-.079	.053	-.141	-1.486	.140	.863	1.158
	Mindfulness	.145	.065	.222	2.228	.028	.780	1.281
	Cf_X_Inhb	-.011	.042	-.024	-.272	.786	.970	1.031

Source: SPSS generated output.

Test of Hypothesis 1

H_0: Marketers with more efficient Cognitive Shifting and Inhibition functions are not better at regulating their emotional states when compared to the group with less efficient cognitive shifting and inhibition.

H_1: Marketers with more efficient Cognitive Shifting and Inhibition functions are better at regulating their emotional states when compared to the group with less efficient cognitive shifting and inhibition.

To test hypothesis 1, we look at the second model in the table above, represented by the regression equation below:

$$\hat{Y} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta 4 X_1 X_2$$

(2)

$$\hat{Y} = 2.658 - 0.067\ X_1 - 0.145 X_2 + 0.222 X_3 - 0.024 X_1 X_2$$

To test this hypothesis, we evaluate the significance of the interaction variable, using the 0.05 significance level. In terms of the hypothesis:

Ho: $\beta4 = 0$

H1: $\beta4 \neq 0$

First of all, it is important to note that the interaction variable 'Cf_X_Inhb' which represents the interaction between Cognitive flexibility (or cognitive shifting) and Inhibition, has a standardized beta coefficient of -0.024. This shows a very negligible and negative combined effect of Cognitive Flexibility and Inhibition on Emotional regulation. To further test the significance of this negligible effect, we notice that in the second model (in tables above) where we have the interaction variable, we have 115 degrees of freedom, using the 0.05 significance level and a two-tailed test, the critical values of t are -1.660 and 1.660. We reject the null hypothesis if t is less than -1.660 or t is greater than 1.660. Because the reported value of t (-0.0272) for the interaction variable above is less than 1.660, we do not reject the null hypothesis. Also, the p-value of .786 is way above 0.05, thus we can conclude that there is no significant interaction between Cognitive Flexibility and Inhibition, and the combined negligible negative effect of both variables on emotional regulation is not significant.

Test of Hypothesis 2

H₀: Marketers who have more efficient mindfulness capabilities will not be more efficient in emotional regulation when compared with marketers who are less efficient in practicing mindfulness.

H₂: Marketers who have more efficient mindfulness capabilities will be more efficient in emotional regulation when compared with marketers who are less efficient in practicing mindfulness.

To test hypothesis 2, we look at both, the first and the second models.

$$\hat{Y} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X3 \tag{1}$$

$$\hat{Y} = 2.658 - 0.067\,X_1 - 0.145X_2 + 0.220X_3$$

$$\hat{Y} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta4 X_1 X_2 \tag{2}$$

$$\hat{Y} = 2.658 - 0.067\,X_1 - 0.145X_2 + 0.222X_3 - 0.024 X_1 X_2$$

To test this hypothesis, we evaluate the significance of the coefficient of the Mindfulness variable using the 0.05 significance level. In terms of the hypothesis:

H₀: $\beta3 = 0$

H₂: $\beta3 \neq 0$

Again, it is important to note first of all, that the standardized beta coefficient of the Mindfulness variable $\beta3$ that represents the effect of mindfulness on Emotional regulation

is 0.220 in the first model and 0.222 in the second model. This shows a very weak to moderate effect of Mindfulness on Emotional regulation. To further test the significance of the observed effect, we notice that in the first and second models (in the tables above), we have degrees of freedom of a 116 and 115, respectively. Using the 0.05 significance level and a two-tailed test, the critical values of t at both degrees of freedom are -1.660 and 1.660. We reject the null hypothesis if t is less than -1.660 or t is greater than 1.660. Because the reported values of t (2.223 in model 1 and 2.228 in model 2) for the Mindfulness variable is greater than 1.660, we reject the null hypothesis. Also, the reported p-value of 0.028 is below 0.05, thus we can conclude that there is a significant positive effect of both Mindfulness on Emotional regulation.

Multicollinearity concerns

Multicollinearity concerns are often associated with multiple regression analysis involving a regression term. While a few scholars are of the opinion that multicollinearity stemming from the use of an interaction term does not affect the reported coefficients and, thus, advise that concerns about it be ignored (Friedrich, 1982); ample evidence abounds to indicate that multicollinearity often has an inflating impact on P-values, leading to lack of statistical significance of the interaction term (Francoeur, 2013). To overcome the multicollinearity concern, as recommended by Francoeur (2013), the interacting variables (Cognitive Flexibility and Inhibition) were 'centered' first, their deviations computed, and the interaction term generated from their deviation values. The deviation-based value of the interaction term was then included as a new independent variable, which was used to carry out a multiple linear regression. The result of this variable transformation process on multicollinearity is reflected in the 'Collinearity' statistics in the table above.

Two statistics were used to measure the presence or absence of high multicollinearity. The first one is the 'Tolerance' statistic. This statistic measures multicollinearity between variables by taking turns in making each variable the dependent variable and regressing all other variables on them. The resultant Tolerance level is $1-R^2$ when each of the variables are made the dependent variable. Since R^2 is the amount of variance explained by all other independent variables on the dependent variable, $1-R^2$ represents the amount of variance not explained by all of the independent variables. Thus, it is generally accepted that a Tolerance level below 0.20 is problematic because this indicates that at least 80% of the variance observed in that independent variable is shared with some other independent variables, indicating multicollinearity. Due to the transformations made to interaction variables prior to conducting this research, we can see that all reported Tolerance levels are very high (from 0.780-0.970), with the highest Tolerance level recorded for the interaction term (0.970), indicating a very low and dismal level of multicollinearity which is not a concern.

A second statistic often used to confirm the presence or absence of worrisome multicollinearity is the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). The value for this statistic is derived through the division of 1 by the reported Tolerance value (1/T). A VIF value greater than 3 indicates a probability of the presence of multicollinearity, one above 5 is universally considered to be likely evidence of multicollinearity, and one above 10 definitely confirms the presence of multicollinearity. Again, here, the computed VIF values for all independent variables in both models are less than 2, confirming the absence of multicollinearity.

Summary report of the research findings

A multiple linear regression involving two models was conducted to predict participants' Emotional Regulation based on their levels of Cognitive Flexibility, Inhibition and Mindfulness. The first model examined how independent variables individually and

collectively predicted Emotional Regulation while the second model was designed to measure the interaction effect of Cognitive Flexibility and Inhibition on Emotional Regulation. A significant regression equation was found for both models.

Model-1: ($F(3,116) = 4.801$, $p < .05$), with an R^2 of .110, and an adjusted R^2 of .087.

Model-2: ($F(4,115) = 3.590$, $p < .05$), with an R^2 of .111, and an adjusted R^2 of .080.

In the first model, participants predicted emotional regulation would be equal to 2.661 - 0.029 (Cognitive Flexibility) - 0.081 (Inhibition) + 0.143 (Mindfulness) where all variables are measured in unit increases or decreases. The results in this model showed that emotional regulation decreased by 0.029 units for every unit increase in cognitive flexibility. It also decreased by 0.81 units for every unit increase in levels of inhibition. However, emotional regulation increases by 0.143 units with every unit increase in the level of mindfulness. It is important to note (as presented in the table below) that while Mindfulness is a significant predictor of emotional regulation ($p < .05$), Cognitive Flexibility and Inhibition levels were not significant predictors of emotional regulation ($p > .05$). Thus, it can be assumed that the decreases in emotional regulation levels reported for every unit increase in the levels of cognitive flexibility and inhibition among participants may have occurred by chance and cannot be relied upon.

In the second model, results showed that Emotional Regulation was predicted to be equal to 2.658 -0.029 (Cognitive Flexibility) -0.079 (Inhibition) + 0.145 (Mindfulness) -0.011 (Cognitive Flexibility* Inhibition) where all variables are measured in unit increases or decreases. Results in this model showed that emotional regulation decreased by 0.029 units for every unit increase in cognitive flexibility. It also decreased by 0.079 units for every unit increase in levels of inhibition, and increased by 0.145 units with every unit increase in the level of mindfulness, all of which are similar to results obtained in Model-1. However, the interaction effect of both Cognitive Flexibility and Inhibition (the subject of research question 1) revealed that for every unit increase in the interaction term, Emotional Regulation decreases by 0.11 units. It is however important to note that, while Mindfulness is a significant predictor of emotional regulation ($p < .05$), levels of Cognitive Flexibility, Inhibition, and the interaction term (Cognitive Flexibility and Inhibition exhibited together) were not significant predictors of emotional regulation ($p > .05$). Thus, it can be assumed that the decreases in emotional regulation levels reported for every unit increase in the levels of cognitive flexibility, inhibition, and both variables combined among the participants may have occurred by chance and cannot be relied upon.

TABLE 4. REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS FOR THE TWO MODELS

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
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	Mindfulness	.145	.065	.222	2.228	.028	.780	1.281
	Cf_X_Inhb	-.011	.042	-.024	-.272	.786	.970	1.031

Source: SPSS generated output

TABLE 5. SUPPORT FROM FINDINGS FOR THE STATED HYPOTHESES

HYPOTHESIS		SUPPORT STATUS
Hypothesis 1	H₀: Marketers with more efficient Cognitive Shifting and Inhibition functions <u>are not</u> better at regulating their emotional states when compared with those who are less efficient at cognitive shifting and inhibition.	*Supported.* We do not reject the null hypothesis.
Hypothesis 2	H₀: Marketers who have more efficient mindfulness capabilities <u>will not</u> be more efficient in emotional regulation when compared with Marketers who are less efficient in practicing mindfulness.	*Not Supported.* We reject the null hypothesis.

Discussion

It is not uncommon for marketing staff in their various capacities to be subjected to varying sources of stress in reference to their interactions with external and internal stakeholders. Hence, the ability to regulate emotions has been deemed of fundamental important to the success of marketing staff. However, there is little research on this phenomenon. The few which exist have focused on examining the impact of emotional regulation on the performance of sales staff, indirectly measuring emotional regulation with often varied and inconsistent constructs which they posit to imply emotional regulation (Kemp et al., 2012; Weitz et al., 1986; McQuiston and Morris, 2009; Walker et. al., 1979). The resulting effect is a handful of studies providing evidence on how the ability to regulate emotions affects the performance of a sales force, but none of them have focused on understanding the antecedents of emotional regulation in marketing staff in general. In other words, no study focused on identifying factors that predict the emotional regulation capability of marketing staff. Taking an interdisciplinary approach (psychology and marketing), this study aimed to shed some insight into this process. The findings presented above is important not only in the assessment of the emotional regulation capability of current marketing staff, but also in the recruitment of prospective marketing staff.

This study found that neither cognitive flexibility, inhibition, nor a combination of both had any significant impact on the ability of the marketing staff under study to engage in effective emotional regulation. This finding negates widely held notions in the field of psychology on the relationship between a combination of cognitive-flexibility and inhibition on emotional regulation, where a combination of both variables are often reported to have some impact on emotional regulation. The second and most crucial finding of this study is that only mindfulness had a significant impact on the emotional regulation for the marketing staff under study. In other words, the conscious and subconscious use of mindfulness techniques was key to the ability of marketing staff to effectively regulate their emotions on the job. While this finding is new in observing the antecedents of emotional regulation in the field of marketing, it finds enormous support in the psychology literature (Mayer et al., 2000; Napoli, Krech, & Holley 2005; Flook et al., 2010; Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000). It also implies that a key indicator of the emotional regulation capability of prospective and current marketing staff is their deliberate or unconscious use of mindfulness techniques.

Implications for practice

One of the practical implications of this study is its provision of empirical evidence which implies that mindfulness is a key antecedent of effective emotional regulation among marketing staff. This knowledge is significant because we know from extant literature, that emotional regulation is an important influencer of effective interaction between marketing staff and internal and external stakeholders and hence increasing their overall marketing performance. Thus, knowledge that increase in mindfulness improves emotional regulation of marketing staff is a crucial element during the training and development of existing marketing staff and equally useful during the recruitment and selection of prospective marketing staff -not necessarily as a criteria for hiring, but as a criteria for identifying those with highly developed mindfulness capabilities and those who will have to be trained and nurtured into the practice.

Limitations and recommendations for future studies

While this study has made significant contributions to the understanding of the antecedents of emotional regulation, especially in highlighting mindfulness as a key ingredient, like all empirical studies of this nature, it does have its own limitations. First, due to the fact the study was conducted in the Jordanian banking industry and data was collected in a cross-sectional manner, it follows the finding that mindfulness had a significantly positive relationship with emotional regulation is limited first of all by context, and secondly by its inability to imply causation. Thus, it is a natural recommendation that future studies will extend this study using an experimental approach in order to confirm and attempt establishing causation. Also, while this study has been motivated by extant literature in the field of psychology, it only examined three antecedents of emotional regulation; several other factors exist which might better explain changes in emotional regulation levels. For instance Kemp et al. (2012) recommended an investigation of response-based measures of emotional regulation as opposed to antecedent-based ones. Finally, future research can examine the moderating role of supervisors and compensation packages on the impact of antecedent or response-based factors on emotional regulation.

Conclusion

This study empirically examined the antecedents of emotional regulation as observed in marketing staff in the Jordanian banking sector. In particular, it assessed the relationship between participants' cognitive flexibility capabilities, their levels of inhibition and the levels of mindfulness they exhibited on the degree of emotional regulation they exhibited. Analysis confirmed no significant relationship between cognitive flexibility, inhibition levels and a combination of both factors on emotional regulation. However, it found that mindfulness had a low but significant and positive relationship with emotional regulation. This negate the general direction of extant psychology literature in finding no significant relationship between cognitive flexibility and inhibition on emotional regulation, but runs in tandem with it in the basis that mindfulness has a positive impact on emotional regulation. The findings however break ground in the marketing literature in that it is the first time that the relationship between the three antecedents (cognitive flexibility, inhibition level and mindfulness) and emotional regulation is being investigated. It shows that mindfulness is the only antecedent of the three to have a significant relationship with emotional regulation and is a novel contribution among the various studies on emotions and emotional intelligence in the field of marketing. The findings provide practitioners with one more arsenal for use during the training and development programs for existing

marketing staff, and an additional indicative tool for identifying the most promising prospective marketing staff.

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