



RESEARCH ARTICLE

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The Economics of Cognitive Negligence

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Abstract

The essence of the decision-making mechanism of rational individuals in economics is to ensure the balance between benefits and costs. The benefit received from a decision is expected to be higher than its cost. It is so in cognitive activities. Any cognitive practice may require effort, expenses, and time-use to some extent. However, the actors do not always do all they can. A significant reason for not using cognitive abilities adequately in verbal, written, and visual information production is the individuals' not wholly bearing the negative consequences of their cognitive actions. Such a cognitive attitude differs from similar notions of rational ignorance, rational inattention, and mental laziness. This paper introduces a new concept, *cognitive negligence*, that refers to the tendency of individuals to avoid the cost and maximize benefits in cognitive activities by making an implicit or explicit cost-benefit analysis. The paper presents why and how cognitive negligence emerges. It defines the factors affecting it, such as the position of the actor, perception of importance, context or type of activity, time of action, social distance, and the diversity of the audience. Its relationship with lying, distortion, and critical thinking is discussed. Finally, the consequences of cognitive negligence are evaluated.

Keywords: Cognitive negligence, lying, mental laziness, rational ignorance, rational inattention

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1. Introduction

Pure rational individuals consider the benefits and costs while making economic decisions. It is expected that the benefit received by the individual from any choice would be higher than the cost of that choice in the short or long run. It can be argued that this sort of cost-benefit comparison is made not only for economic activities in daily life, as can easily be realized, but in many other fields of life, including cognitive activities. As in various similar processes, cognitive practices also require preparations, efforts, expenses, and time usage in compliance with the predetermined standards. In this paper, it is asserted that when individuals do not have to bear all the negative consequences of their cognitive activities, including negative externalities in general, they do not realize all their potential capabilities due to *cognitive negligence*.¹

The concept of *cognitive negligence* is introduced in this paper. The concept refers to the tendency of individuals to avoid the costs and maximize benefits in their cognitive activities by making an implicit or explicit cost-benefit analysis. Nowadays, all cognitive activities have been eased and intensified due to the diversified and decreased cost of production, transmission, and storage of information. The issue became more critical by the rise in the tendency of negligence and the increased destructiveness of the negative consequences of cognitive negligence. We suppose that an important reason for not using cognitive abilities adequately in the production of verbal, written, and visual information is the individuals' not entirely bearing the negative consequences of their cognitive actions or practices. The reason for the individuals' turning into someone else on the Internet, where names and identities are possible to hide, and writing and making comments that they would not pronounce in face to face relations, is more explainable within the framework of cognitive negligence.

Cognitive negligence is relevant to the concepts of *rational ignorance* (Downs, 1957) or *deliberate ignorance* (Hertwig & Engel, 2016), *rational inattention* (Sims, 2003), and *mental laziness* (Birkelund, 2016). It is essential to be able to use the produced information sufficiently for the effective use of cognitive abilities. In order to use a piece of information timely and appropriately, it has to be owned first. However, individuals may make a rational analysis and prefer to get some information superficially or not look for any by taking the risk of bearing its negative consequences. Thus, they may behave as *rational ignorant*. Rational ignorance is the individuals' conscious choice of not getting information in cases when the cost of gathering information is higher than the benefit of owning it.² While rational ignorance is the individuals' choice depending on the cost-benefit analysis of getting information, cognitive negligence mostly emerges during the use of previously gotten information in cognitive activities.

On the other hand, the concept of rational inattention stands for the individuals' selective use of attention. Since the amount of attention a decision-maker can pay is limited, an optimal allocation of attention can help to utilize the economic data efficiently (Wiederholt, 2010). Mental laziness, a kind of mechanical thinking, is also supposed to be used as a rational

¹ The issue is mostly studied in the context of *social loafing* in sociology and psychology. The approach of social loafing asserts that individuals are less willing to contribute to group activities when their contribution is not apparent. See also Karau and Williams (1993).

² For the implications of rational ignorance on voter behavior, see Downs (1957), Martinelli (2007), and Demir (2009).

decision device when time is limited, supply is abundant, and decisions have to be made (Birkelund, 2016).

Cognitive negligence has distinctions from rational ignorance, rational inattention, and mental laziness in many aspects. The following sections discuss the cause and way of its emergence, the factors affecting it, its relationship with lying, distortion, and critical thinking, and its consequences.

2. Cognition, Cognitive Benefit, Cognitive Cost

Cognition is the process of conscious or unconscious transformation of notices received from various sources, such as perception and experience, to information. It is quite a broad concept and involves the sub-processes of learning, attention, memory, language, reasoning, and decision-making (Sternberg & Sternberg, 2016). Negligence, on the other hand, means not giving enough care or attention to someone or something (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020).

Considering that individuals usually conduct cognitive activities with cost-benefit incentives, it can be stated that their relevant attitude depends on conditions. While producing information, forming opinions, or using owned information, if the possibility of bearing the negative consequences of their action is high, the individuals tend to be more attentive and consistent. If it seems that they will not face the negativities much, they tend to be less attentive and consistent. This response means that the possibility of paying a bill, either in monetary or non-monetary terms, disciplines an individual's attitude in using cognitive abilities as in other fields of attitudes and behaviors. The motivation of cognitive punishment and reward stimulates the individuals' desires and efforts in cognitive activities more appropriately and precisely. As the possibility of negative affection by the produced or disseminated information decreases, the desire to do everything that can be done within the cognitive limits of the individuals also decreases. We call this *cognitive negligence*.

It is easy to comprehend that individuals can make cost-benefit analyses in information production and utilization of beliefs and values as they make in *pure* economic activities. In basic economic terms, we can state that some *cognitive benefit* is expected from all cognitive activities. The cognitive benefit may be either an unexplained emotional satisfaction, reputation in the community, a leading role, a high status, or simply income or some other material gains.

On the other hand, all cognitive activities, more or less, have some cost. The *cognitive cost* may comprise mental effort, emotional disturbance, expending time, spending money, or being condemned, blamed, or belittled. The human actions of producing an idea, view, thought, or information, developing an attitude or behavior, and making a choice requires some cognitive activities and bearing their consequences. In other words, cognitive activities are not the same as whistling in the dark, but they are purposeful activities expected to have some results.³ For such intended cognitive activities, one has to spare enough time, utilize the required resources, and act studiously by following the relevant standards. In the ordinary course of life, individuals are assumed to balance between the expected benefit and the borne cost of all cognitive activities.⁴ It is plausible to conduct a cognitive activity when its expected

³ Whistling in the dark may also be considered a cognitive activity with intended results, such as enjoying loneliness, coping with fear, or letting the people around know that somebody is there.

⁴ It is not easy to explain why this is so. We can say that in explaining a decision, we have no rationally stronger explanatory way, instead of making a balance between the costs and benefits of it (although this is itself a tautological explanation).

total benefit is higher than its cost. Thus, the cognitive activities that do not provide the expected benefit tend to diminish and disappear in the end.

The consequences of cognitive activities vary according to the individuals' cognition basis, learning environment, prior knowledge, and expectations from the cognitive activities. For this reason, although there is a consensus on the nature of some cognitive activities, people's approach to others highly diversifies in a wide range. The things that are considered *right, good, and beneficial* by some people may be claimed with the same sincerity to be *wrong, bad, and harmful* by others. However, attitudes that emerge due to cognitive differentiation are not always *cognitive negligence*. Cognitive negligence is a specific form of cognitive differentiation. The central assertion of this paper is that, although it depends on many factors, the balance between cognitive benefit and cognitive cost is effective in the differentiation of cognitive activities. The effects of cognitive negligence differ due to the type of cognitive activity (production of information, making a decision, or developing an attitude).

When the consequence of information production as a type of cognitive activity has the potential to affect their attitudes, the individuals conduct the information production processes meticulously. For example, they make the preliminary preparations better, care about the logical consistency of their expressions, and cite the agreed information more. In other words, the responsibility level of the producer of information affects both the *course* of the information production process and the *features* of the produced information. When it is not required to justify, it is easier to produce an idea or take up a position. On the contrary, e.g., rumors or opinions are not found adequate to accuse somebody of a crime, but evidential information is required. Therefore, the extent of the *quantity* and *diversity* of cognitive activities depend on the possible returns (e.g., admiration, satisfaction, compliment, and reward), their cost (e.g., mental effort, consuming time, and spending money), and being able to cope with their consequences (e.g., falling into contempt, being condemned, and facing punishment).

3. Factors Affecting Cognitive Negligence

The size of the cost of knowledge acquisition about an issue or difficulty in understanding the issue's features may rise to cognitive negligence. It is common to build opinions and comment on complex issues with superficial information. When it is required to use cognitive abilities intensely, an individual automatically evaluates the possible benefits and risks of acquiring detailed information and suggesting an idea by using this information. When the risk is expected to be low, she tends to act carelessly as a *rational ignorant*. However, the negligence of individuals on an issue may differ from each other. The tendency to cognitive negligence diversifies due to the actors and the instruments used for the activity. Although not the same for all cognitive activities, six factors may be considered to be effective in negligence: the *position* of the actor of activity; the *importance perception* of the activity; the *realization context* or *type* of the activity; the relevant *time period*; the *social distance* between the cognitive product and the actor; and the *diversity of the parties*. These factors may have various effects. Thus, each of them should be handled separately. The factors affecting cognitive negligence and their impact directions are summarized in Table 1.

3.1 The Position of the Actor

The position of the actor in each cognitive activity has a strong effect on the benefits and costs. So, the expectations from the actor of a cognitive activity vary due to the position of the actor. The position involves the hierarchical level of an individual in the relationship network and the foreseen cognitive capacity of the individual at that level. That is why a competent and credible individual's tendency to cognitive negligence would not be so high. On the contrary, others that are not experts and express opinions as *novices* or *amateurs* tend to behave more imprecisely. Experts pay or are expected to pay attention to their comments on TV talks more than conversations at home with their friends. It is so because the ones with an attributed status of knowing and interpreting a discussed issue better than others try not to make any mistakes or, at least, avoid comments that can be easily refuted.

Table 1

The Factors Affecting Cognitive Negligence and Their Impact Directions

Factor	Impact direction of the factor
Position	As expertness increases, cognitive negligence decreases. As responsibility increases, cognitive negligence decreases.
Perception of the importance of the subject	As the perception of the importance of the subject increases, cognitive negligence decreases.
Context or type of activity	As the strictness of the evaluation criteria increases, cognitive negligence decreases.
Time	As the time that refers to the subject matter of cognitive activities moves away from today, cognitive negligence increases.
Social distance	As social distance increases, cognitive negligence increases.
Diversity of the audience	As the diversity of parties increases, cognitive negligence decreases.

The relation between the position and cognitive negligence is relevant to two different facts: *the area of expertise* and *the responsibility level* in a social or organizational hierarchy. At first, an individual's inclination toward negligence depends on whether the considered issue is in the *area of expertise*. For example, the cognitive negligence inclination of a math teacher in solving a math problem is far less than in answering a question of history. It is so because due to the cognitive capacity implied by the area of expertise of the teacher, the cost of making a mistake in the solution of the math problem is very high compared to the cost of wrongly answering the history question, and this may lead to a decrease in her reputation. However, responding incorrectly to a history question does not have such a risk ever.

Secondly, the individuals' careless behaviors in cognitive activities are affected by their *responsibility level*. In general, the ones with more responsibilities tend to behave with less cognitive negligence. For example, an ambassador is expected to incline to cognitive negligence less than a researcher in commenting on the international relations between two countries. Therefore, by force of her position, the ambassador sensitively comments on the

current state by considering the probable consequences of her interpretations. On the other hand, the researcher, whose statements are assumed not to affect the relations of the countries, may deduce much from a small piece of information and make hard comments on the subject by behaving with cognitive negligence more than the ambassador behaves.

In this context, the executives in private and public institutions tend to behave carelessly in expressing an opinion or making a decision related to that institution much less than their subordinates. Since the executives cannot shift the responsibility to the subordinates when a wrong decision is made, they frequently respond to the deductions and comments by asking: Are we sure? The more the subordinates feel that they will not be responsible, the more carelessly they are expected to behave in cognitive activities. Since the executives will be accountable, unless tightly supervised, the subordinates do not efficiently utilize their mental abilities in the work as they do in their private matters and incline to cognitive negligence more than their superiors. In general, the ones, who have less responsibility in a process, act more with cognitive negligence. The executives with more responsibility are the *sleep losers over worrying* about a potential or probable problem. Of course, it is *easier said than done* in all human activities.

3.2 Perception of Importance

The importance perception of the relevant persons about the process that involves cognitive activity has an essential effect on the course of evaluation of the attitude. If the subject of cognitive activity is related to too many people and the elite classes meticulously keep a close watch on it by *attaching importance*, the risk of cognitive negligence increases. Therefore, while producing information about or commenting on the issues to which most people or effectively organized groups are responsive, not considering social sensitivities and suggesting unconvincing ideas increases the possibility of being blamed, abused, condemned, and even sued. Thus, individuals are more attentive in such cases. On the contrary, commenting carelessly on issues that most people, effectively organized groups, and notables do not care about brings relatively low costs. Cognitive negligence is prevalent in such fields.

3.3 Context or Type of Activity

An individual's tendency to cognitive negligence may change due to the type of realized cognitive activity. For example, the cognitively negligible behavior of a writer in passing opinion is quite different in writing a textbook, a scientific article, a column, a web blog, a story, a novel, a fairy tale, a poem, or an epic.⁵ A textbook is expected to involve widely agreed information on the relevant subject. While certain information has to be used by reference in an article, the writer may use predictive information more and care about the consistency of the comments less in a newspaper column. Above all, while writing a story or a novel, some factoid assertions that cannot be underpinned by certain information may be made. Therefore, the inclination to cognitive negligence is expected to be higher in writing a textbook or a scientific article than in writing a column. Similarly, the anticipated cognitive negligence is higher in writing a column than in writing a novel or a fairy tale. It is so because the bearing capacity of each activity type to cognitive negligence is different from others, e.g., the inclination to cognitive negligence while making an economic analysis in a novel is higher than in an article.

⁵ The tendency to negligence differs using whether a real name or a nom de guerre in any of these works.

Regarding a cognitive activity, e.g., while passing an opinion, the formation of a cognitive negligence basis is not affected only by the identity of the audience and the extent of their interest. The wording used in the presentation of the opinion also impacts its emergence. The tendency to negligence in expressing an opinion, idea, or approach differentiates among the cases of making the assertion in a nonbinding free platform or not; expressing one own opinion or conveying another's; presenting a probable situation by confirming it or not; asserting in the form of literary work using humor or metaphor or not. Regarding the extent of negligence in expressing an opinion or a mental product, there is a high distinction between using a form of scientific certainty and using an artwork.

For this reason, factoid thoughts emerge first in the humorous or fictional fields of literature and art that do not have strict criteria rather than "serious" intellectual platforms. Thus, the costly risks are minimized, and the cost of negligence is decreased. Hence, the inclination to cognitive negligence is observed more in the fields with tolerant evaluation criteria than in intellectual medium that has relatively stricter norms.

3.4 Time

The *time* of the realization of cognitive activity is another factor in the emergence of a tendency to negligence. While conducting a cognitive activity, the time relevant to the subject of the activity affects the extent of behaving with cognitive negligence. In general, the cost of acting carelessly in cognitive activities increases as the time relevant to the subject of the activity gets closer to now. Since the cost of mistakes due to not caring enough in information production or making a judgment about current events is relatively high, as the time of the subject goes back, the inclination to cognitive negligence in information production about that issue increases. Therefore, cognitive negligence is more prevalent in thoughts and comments about relatively old events. A columnist's cost of being blamed for an anachronism of 20 years in 50 years of the historical period is higher than the cost of making an anachronism of a few centuries about an event of twenty centuries ago. For example, since the cost of using wrong information about the Ottomans would be higher than the cost of making a mistake about the Sumerians in a text written for Turkish readers, the inclination to cognitive negligence is expected to be less in writing on Ottomans.

Because the consequence of cognitive negligence affects more, today and tomorrow are considered more sensitively to minimize the loss. The sooner the time is in the future, the less the cognitive negligence attitude related to time is. Election forecasters, for example, try to use their abilities more efficiently on the day of the election than on previous days. The result will become evident on the next day, and in case of a wrong forecast, it is not plausible to raise the effects of unexpected factors as a pretext on the day of the election. Therefore, since being branded as "not being able to follow the going-on" would bring costs, the forecasters use all their abilities to avoid the costs and try to forecast more accurately than ever. The probability of being branded similarly for not accurately predicting the result of an election that will be held five years later is far less, so the inclination to cognitive negligence is higher.

Similarly, the cost of an inaccurate economic forecast for the next quarter is higher than the cost of inaccuracy in forecasting two years later. Therefore, negligence is observed more in long-run forecasts.

3.5 Social Distance

The distance between the actor of cognitive activity and its subject also affects the tendency to cognitive negligence. The inclination to cognitive negligence in evaluating the lifestyles and values of other communities is higher than in commenting on a current issue of own community, such as its ethnic composition, religiosity, and spirituality. Therefore, the information and evaluation of other communities involve more stereotype judgments, and the justification of these judgments is not considered much risky and dangerous. The cognitive effort weakens as the field of the relevant activity, such as household, street, village, town, district, province, country, and continent, extends. People act responsibly to the responses from their communities and are more prepared to minimize the reactions. It can be said that as social distance increases, cognitive negligence can also increase.

3.6 Diversity of the Audience

Each cognitive activity has an actual and potential audience. Although some cognitive activities are relevant only to the actor of the activity, most of them are related to various current or future parties. When the diversity of the audience is low, namely when the audience is homogeneous, the inclination to cognitive negligence increases. The more the audience is heterogeneous in areas such as gender, ethnicity, religious belief, and educational level, the less the actor of the activity inclines to cognitive negligence. In that, it is easier to estimate the homogeneous audience's level of pleasure from the comments, explanations, and inferences on events, cases, and processes and to act accordingly. Since the chance of different affection by the parties would increase, and the costly reactions would emerge due to the increased diversity of parties, the cognitive activity requires more care. The inclination to use imperfect or biased information increases in specific cases. For example, commenting on gender discrimination when the audience is composed of the same gender; asserting an advantage of a belief when all the audiences believe in that; or stating the favorable characteristics of a nation, ethnicity, or townsman group when all the audience belongs to the same nation, ethnicity, or townsman group. Each of these establishes an environment adequate for cognitive townsman group.⁶ Each of these establishes an environment adequate for cognitive negligence.

In general, the pervasiveness of comments made with biased information and stereotype judgments weakens by the increased diversity of the audiences; the comments come under question from various aspects, and the cost of cognitive negligence increases. Therefore, the actors of cognitive activities feel comfortable when they act in small homogenous groups and incline to negligence. On the contrary, as the diversity of audiences in a cognitive activity increases, the inclination to cognitive negligence is expected to decrease. The cognitive negligence shown in writing a comment on a web blog of an Internet group with many members is naturally different from the negligence exhibited during a conversation among friends at home. It is evident that the cost of cognitive negligence at home is probably less than the cost of negligence on an open web blog.

⁶ The case may be illustrated best by imagining the differentiation of the speeches given on the same subject at the General Assembly of the United Nations and a local meeting of the members of a political party.

4. Cognitive Negligence, Lying, and Distortion

Cognitive negligence is quite different from *lying* and *intentional distortion*. These attitudes are intentionally made distinctions between the “actual” and the “expressed” with the motive of self-protection. Lying or intentional distortion is the attitude of expressing an opinion different from true knowledge, emotions, and thoughts. Both are considered evil almost in all cultures. An individual may prefer to introduce herself differently from her actual thoughts or sensations due to social, political, economic, or moral concerns. Therefore, public and private preferences may differentiate, and *preference falsification* may emerge.⁷ In the case of preference falsification, an individual intentionally expresses her thoughts differently from the real ones. However, cognitive negligence is not intentionally expressing unreal thoughts and emotions for particular purposes. It is the underemployment of cognitive abilities due to an implicitly made cost-benefit analysis of whether to use them at full strength. Such an attitude guides an individual to use cognitive skills deficiently. The difference between lying and cognitive negligence is that, while lying is the voluntary and deliberate distortion of reality, cognitive negligence is the reduction in attention and effort devoted to the activity due to the littleness of expected benefit. When the cognitive cost is low; or the expected gain is high enough to cover the losses, the actor would try to use all available cognitive means and abilities in all cognitive processes, including negligible ones.

For example, when it is believed that the factualness of comments made in the interview is the essential input for the acceptance for the job, an applicant checks all the relevant sources, gets as possible as correct information, and studies using the gathered information in comments. However, when making comments in a conversation among friends rather than a job interview, it would be preferred to use only the things heard before.

5. Negligence in Public Cognitive Goods

Cognitive negligence is more prevalent in cognitive products that are also public goods. Some cognitive products are partly, and some others are fully public goods. A public cognitive good is a cognitive product which's demanders cannot be excluded. Free satellite broadcasting and free-access websites are public goods. Since the cognitive products produced for a limited group (private cognitive goods) are supervised by the payers either directly or by reducing the demand in time, the inclination to negligence is less while producing such goods. However, regarding collective possessions, the supervision of cognitive products is often left to others, but in the end, the responsibility is shouldered by the public authorities. Therefore, the reduced cost of cognitive production due to the prevalence of the Internet and the development of social media interestingly established an environment convenient for more cognitive negligence. In the past, dissemination of opinions required convincing editors and referees, obeying the rules of publication, and bearing the cost of publication. Some of those costs do not exist today, and others dropped off drastically. When the cost of activities declines by a considerable amount, as a consequence, the cognitive resources are allocated in a new way that leads to negligence.

The public authorities have new responsibilities, such as removing or reducing the negative consequences of the emerged cognitive negligence following the above mentioned developments. The new way of discharging responsibility does not involve old tools such as

⁷ For various aspects of the issue, see Kuran (1997).

ensorship, which prevents the dissemination of ideas by pre-controlling. The current approach aims at minimizing the negative consequences of negligence by making it possible to identify the owners of cognitive products and keeping them accountable to enable the sufferers of cognitive products to claim their rights.

Meanwhile, it must be stated that intentional misinforming and misguiding cannot be considered cognitive negligence. While negligence is preferred due to a cost-benefit analysis, deliberate actions may purpose to cheat people, manage perceptions, or guide groups to specific ideologies, beliefs, or movements.

6. Critical Thinking and Cognitive Negligence

Being able to approach an issue from an aspect different or opposite to the mainstream view contributes to the development of thought. Therefore, the realm of freedom in which people can safely express divergent opinions and comments is undisputedly esteemed. We call it freedom of thought and expression. Cognitive negligence may be beneficial and stimulating in criticizing the present acquisition by departing from the settled turn of mind, expressing the issues that were or could not be mentioned before, and presenting distinctive lifestyles. In many fields, alternative ways of thinking or expressing critical comments are possible only in this way. From that perspective, it can be argued that an intellectually free environment must not impose any cost on individuals for the opinions they express; on the contrary, it must promote divergent views. An advisor, for example, may be influential on the decisions taken by making extraordinary comments when there is no risk of accounting for the consequences of the decisions taken.

When negligence begins to be tolerated, and the number of cognitive neglecters increases by definition in an environment where expressing different and divergent views is allowed, the stimulating new perspectives expected from critical thinking emerge. However, besides, current intellectual accumulation begins to be considered worthless as well. Therefore, an optimum level for cognitive negligence must be defined to keep the critical approach alive. An optimum level is not required only to prevent the trivialization of intellectual accumulation. Criticism has to be made at an acceptable level of cognitive attention to be considered.

Although cognitive negligence has a role in the emergence of critical thinking, the difference between *critical thinking* and *cognitive negligence* should not be ignored. While critical thinking proceeds in various ways in the settled turn of mind, semantic world, and world of values, cognitive negligence gives the impression that a human being's cognitive products are worthless due to not paying enough attention. This fact weakens the common ground more.

7. The Consequences of the Prevalence of Cognitive Negligence

Cognitive negligence, in the most general sense, reduces the quality of cognitive products due to the individuals' not doing their best in existing circumstances and consequently produces results similar to the social implications of lying. Approaching cognitive products with suspicion increases the cost of supervision of information. The speaker and the place of speech start to become more important than what she said. Refereeing in scientific journals is crucial for its role in reducing cognitive negligence. The authors that send articles to journals with peer review process incline less to cognitive negligence, and the audience of such journals has more confidence in the quality of the articles published.

As the world globalizes and the means of production and dissemination of information increase, the environment becomes more suitable for the diffusion of cognitive negligence. The ethical violations in academia, particularly plagiarism, are partly consequences of the proliferation of cognitive negligence. As accessibility to literature increases, it becomes easier to present others' products as if produced by oneself and the inclination to negligence in new knowledge production increases further.

8. Conclusion

The cost-benefit balance is the essence of the decision-making mechanism of the rational individual in economics. The inclination to a situation with a benefit higher than the cost and avoidance of the contrary case is considered the essential human attitude. It is valid for cognitive activities as it is for economic activities in daily life. A cognitive activity requires preparations, mental efforts, expenses, and time usage at predetermined standards. The sense of balance in decisions implies the proportionality of the amount of effort and the expected benefit. Then, one of the ways of increasing the reward of cognitive activities is lying and related processes. The difference between lying and cognitive negligence is that, while lying is done voluntarily and deliberately, cognitive negligence is acting insufficiently attentive due to the low expected benefit compared to the cost.

It is observed that individuals act without attention when they do not account for the adverse consequences of cognitive negligence. The emergence of cognitive negligence has some determinants, such as the *position of the actor*, *perception of importance*, *context* or *type of activity*, *time of action*, *social distance*, and *diversity of the audience*.

The technological developments that facilitate cognitive activities also cause the emergence of cognitive negligence. Therefore, in parallel with the development of the Internet and social media, cognitive negligence diffuses more, and a problem called cognitive pollution appears. Some of the cybercrime is relevant to this pollution. Cognitive negligence increases by the reduction in the cost of production and dissemination of information, and the possibility of hiding identities while circulating cognitive products. Consequently, cognitive pollution causes the inefficient use of common cultural property. To entirely prevent or minimize cognitive pollution, the holders of the regulatory power (states) have the responsibility of making new arrangements in these fields. As negligence increases, cognitive pollution also increases. Any polluted thing is not as valuable as an unpolluted thing.

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ETHICS

The authors declare that this article complies with the ethical standards and rules.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Ömer Demir  | Concept/idea; Literature review; Design; Drafting; Interpretation of data/findings; Supervising; Critical review; Final approval and accountability. Contribution rate 70%

Cem Eyerici  | Literature review; Design; Drafting; Interpretation of data/findings; Final approval and accountability. Contribution rate 30%

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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