

Emotions in Negotiation and Mediation: Strategies for Managing Emotional Dynamics

Francis Mulu, Dominic Chungo

Department of Security, Diplomacy and Peace Studies, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.70634

Received: 10 May 2023; Accepted: 22 May 2023; Published: 22 June 2023

ABSTRACT

Emotions are significant considerations in the negotiating and mediation processes that need to be undertaken in ways that offer effectiveness, through the regulation of emotional dynamics. The objective of the study was to examine the effectiveness of strategies for managing emotional dynamics and the impact on mediation and negotiation outcomes. The theories that guided the study included the affective events theory, the appraisal theory and the social identity theory. A web-based survey was used to compile the information with the use of purposive sampling technique in selecting respondents. The findings of the study revealed that feelings have a considerable impact on the process of negotiating or mediating as well as the outcome. Being able to effectively control emotional dynamics is essential to achieving success in negotiation and mediation was necessitated. As an implication, the study assists practitioners improve on negotiation and mediation and enhance success in resolving conflicts by providing an overview of the emotional dynamics that are present during the negotiation and mediation processes and presenting practical solutions for controlling those dynamics.

Key Words: Emotions, Negotiations, Mediation, Strategies & Dynamics

INTRODUCTION

The resolution of disputes, the formation of decisions, and the establishment of agreements are all processes that benefit greatly from negotiation and mediation (Väyrynen, 2019). Because the people involved may have contrasting attitudes, interests, and points of view, these procedures are frequently fraught with emotional intensity and can be difficult to manage successfully. As a result of the fact that one's emotions can have a considerable impact on both the process and the outcome of negotiation or mediation, this aspect of the subject has received a great deal of attention in the fields of psychology and conflict resolution.

Emotions are an essential component of the human experience, and they play an important part in the process of decision-making, as well as in the initiation and maintenance of personal and social relationships (Treffers & Putora, 2020). In the processes of negotiation and mediation, the parties' feelings can impact their behaviour as well as their attitudes and perceptions, which can either help or impede the process of coming to an agreement. As an illustration, anger might lead to a negotiating style that is more aggressive and confrontational, but fear can lead to a negotiation style that is more cautious and defensive.

It is absolutely essential to successful negotiating and mediation that emotional dynamics be managed. If emotions are not managed properly, they have the potential to cause a breakdown in communication, a rise in tension, and a standstill in the situation. On the other side, emotions can be used productively to develop rapport, better understand the interests and wants of the parties involved, and come up with innovative solutions if they are first acknowledged and then managed.



It is crucial for practitioners working in the field of conflict resolution to get an awareness of the psychological bases of emotions in negotiation and mediation, as well as the skills necessary to effectively handle emotional dynamics (Nelson, 2021). The purpose of this paper is to present an overview of the current research on emotions in negotiation and mediation and to offer practical ways for regulating emotional dynamics. In addition, the study will offer some suggestions. This paper has the potential to contribute to the development of conflict resolution procedures that are more successful and effective by increasing the emotional intelligence and negotiation skills of practitioners.

Conflict resolution and agreement making in many different contexts, from business and law to personal relationships, rely heavily on negotiation and mediation according to Omene (2021). But emotions can play a major part in these processes, creating obstacles in communication, decision-making and overall negotiation outcomes. There is a lack of study on successful tactics for controlling emotional dynamics in negotiation and mediation, despite the fact that both processes are widely acknowledged to involve emotional components.

Objective of the Study

To examine the effectiveness of strategies for managing emotional dynamics and the impact on mediation and negotiation outcomes.

Research Question

What are the effective strategies for managing emotional dynamics and their impact on mediation and negotiation outcomes?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The psychological underpinnings of emotions in negotiation and mediation have been widely studied (van Kleef & Lelieveld, 2022). Emotions can be triggered by a variety of factors, including perceived injustice, threats to one's self-esteem, and a perceived lack of control. Negative emotions, such as anger, fear, and frustration, can lead to more competitive and confrontational negotiation styles, while positive emotions, such as trust and empathy, can foster more collaborative and cooperative approaches.

Several strategies have been proposed for managing emotional dynamics in negotiation and mediation (Fells & Sheer, 2019). One key strategy is to acknowledge and validate emotions. This can involve active listening techniques, such as reflecting back the emotions expressed by the other party, and expressing empathy towards their feelings. Another strategy is to reframe negative emotions into more positive ones. This can involve shifting the focus from the negative emotions to the underlying interests and needs of the parties and finding ways to address those needs.

Emotional intelligence has also been identified as an important factor in effective negotiation and mediation (Bellucci, Venkatraman & Stranieri, 2020). Emotional intelligence involves the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions and those of others. According to Bellucci, Venkatraman & Stranieri, practitioners with high emotional intelligence may be better equipped to manage emotional dynamics in negotiation and mediation and build rapport with the parties.

Other studies have focused on specific emotional dynamics, such as anger and forgiveness, and their impact on the negotiation and mediation process (Wong, 2020; Salzberg & Amour, 2023). For example, research suggests that expressing anger in a constructive way may lead to more successful negotiations, while failing to forgive can lead to impasse and less satisfactory outcomes.



Relationships between Mediation, Negotiation, Positive Emotions and Emotional Regulation Strategies

According to Chung & Chan (2020), it is evident that individuals have more acceptable and pleasurable experiences when they are feeling positive emotions such as excitement, pleasure, enthusiasm, and thankfulness than when they are feeling negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, anger and sadness. The mind of an individual can experience a sense of relaxation when positive emotions are focused on more frequently than unpleasant ones. However, the existence of this impact does not imply that pleasurable feelings are merely a nice diversion. According to Kim & Kim (2020), the levels of dedication to life as well as a sense of individuality and awareness are reflected in one's positive emotions.

According to Boamah *et. al.* (2022), one of the most crucial steps in reaching optimal well-being is striking a balance between the good and negative emotions that an individual experiences. Realizing one's capacity for pleasant emotions and making efficient use of them can be advantageous in terms of preserving an individual's mental health and reducing the symptoms of preexisting mental diseases. According to Boamah *et. al.*, this demonstrates the effect that having pleasant emotions has on establishing adequate emotional regulation. It is well established that pleasant emotions enlarge one's cognitive capacity and heighten one's attentiveness.

Cognitively oriented regulation mechanisms, such as reappraisal and adaptive self-reflection, require a wide range of cognitive resources to be effective in achieving emotional control (Kara & Gök, 2020). When positive feelings arise in response to a stressful situation, for instance, they can serve as a form of emotional regulation by encouraging a process of cognitive reappraisal and adaptive self-reflection. Positive emotions can play a role in the control of negative ones and in a study on the impact of positive emotions on the regulation of emotional turmoil caused by the September 11 terrorist attacks exhibited fewer depressive symptoms. Based on the results and interpretations of the prior literature, the study concludes that emotion regulation mechanisms are a significant predictor of positive affect in the present investigation.

Relationships between Mediation, Negotiation, Negative Emotions and Emotional Regulation Strategies

Individuals' mental health can be negatively impacted by a number of psychological issues, including the presence of negative emotions. Unhappiness, discontentment, and other unpleasant experiences are typically accompanied with negative emotions (Sauer-Zavala & Barlow, 2021). This is because negative emotions tend to be followed by unpleasant events. There is evidence shown in the published study suggesting a variety of unpleasant feelings, including rage, hatred, guilt, and fear, are linked to a variety of mental diseases.

McLean & Foa (2017) conducted research for a review in which they looked into the connections that exist between post-traumatic stress disorder, unfavorable feelings, and the methods used to control such feelings. A significant correlation between post-traumatic stress disorder and negative emotions such shame, guilt, rage, and disgust, as well as difficulties in successfully managing these sentiments, has been found. This relationship has been linked to the ineffective regulation of these emotions. It has been discovered that the intensity of post-traumatic stress disorder, which can be caused by a variety of types of trauma, is also connected with the presence of such unpleasant feelings as well as issues with emotional regulation mechanisms.

Another study (Reidy *et. al.*, 2017) looked at the connection between psychopathic traits, the severity of emotional problems, and coping strategies employed by juvenile offenders. Researchers found a positive and statistically significant relationship between participants' total psychopathy scores and incompatible



emotional control mechanisms. Despite the fact that Garofalo et al. (2020) found a correlation between psychopathic traits and negative emotions like anger, anxiety, and depression, the correlation between overall psychopathy scores and emotional symptoms was not statistically significant.

Evidence from recent studies (Kosson *et. al.*, 2018; Vitale *et. al.*, 2018) suggests that difficulties with emotional control skills are linked to mood disorders triggered by negative emotions. These results were reported in 2018 in the works of Kosson et al. and Vitale et al. In conclusion, the current study confirms that negative affect is a crucial element in predicting coping mechanisms for emotional distress. This result is reached on the basis of the research findings and theoretical reasons that have been presented previously.

The Mediator-Negotiator Role in Emotional Regulation

The process of emotional regulation can be guided by systems like information processing, attention allocation, and physiological reactions (Park *et. al.*, 2009). Mood-altering stimuli of any kind can have an effect on people's attempts to rein in their emotions. Consequently, a wide variety of techniques for controlling one's emotions may be required for effective life management as noted by Park *et. al.*. When the mind is distracted with other issues, it can be difficult to maintain mental control of one's mood.

According to a research in which cognitive load was used as a stimulant (Mutlu-Bayraktar, Cosgun & Altan, 2019). Participants who attempted to control their emotions without any other cognitive demands were more successful than those that sought to do so while simultaneously remembering a nine-digit number. Participants who were already mentally exhausted shifted into an emotionally negative state. This might be seen as evidence that even with the best intentions, people's attempts to control their emotions may backfire and cause them to show signs of distress as prior noted by Park *et. al.*

Chiu *et. al.* (2020) examined the connection between anxiety and depression among college students and their capacity to control negative emotions and sustain positive ones. Depressive symptoms were observed to be more prevalent among study participants who were less successful at employing techniques to moderate unpleasant emotions. Participants with more severe depression were more likely to display extremes of happy and negative affect. That's why it's so important to counteract the negative with the positive. Individuals engage in emotional regulation by making an effort to alter the natural course of their emotions, as stated by Park *et. al.* The ability to control one's emotions is crucial to achieving one's goals in life, whether they are short or long term. Emotional regulation is the process of increasing, decreasing, or maintaining good and negative emotions (Cludius, Mennin & Ehring, 2020). As a result of the aforementioned study and theoretical reasons, it is hypothesized that emotion control mechanisms may serve as a neutral party between the two extremes of emotion.

Emotions are a communication mechanism that allows us to convey our goals and are connected to many of our basic needs (Gra?anin, Bylsma & Vingerhoets, 2018). Humans' emotional responses are often viewed as an adaptive mechanism that has developed over millennia. Many of a person's physiological requirements are linked to their emotions as noted by Gra?anin, Bylsma & Vingerhoets. Emotions serve as a quick source of stimulation in critical conditions that could endanger a person's health. Emotions provide insight into whether or not a person's needs are being addressed, allowing for the identification of both good and negative choices. People's emotions also get them ready to take action in response to their requirements.

Furthermore, emotions are the primary drivers of human behavior (Fehr & Schurtenberger, 2018). Individuals who experience positive emotions have a high level of commitment to life, which is crucial in mediation and negotiation situations marked with stress. It is therefore mentioned that the improvement of mental diseases of persons and the protection of mental health are both aided by the recognition of these pleasant feelings and their effective management as noted by Semaka & Austin (2019). People in the midst of conflicts need to cultivate positive emotions in order to have such enlightening mediation and negotiation breakthroughs.



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was guided by several theoretical perspectives, as there were many different approaches to understanding emotions in negotiation and mediation. One theoretical perspective that was used was the affective events theory (AET) by Weiss & Cropanzano (1996), which suggests that emotions arise in response to specific events or situations, and that these emotions can have important consequences for behaviour and decision-making. AET proposes that emotions are influenced by a variety of factors, including the characteristics of the individual, the nature of the situation, and the social context in which the emotion is experienced.

Another theoretical perspective that was relevant was the appraisal theory by Lazarus (2002), which suggests that emotions arise as a result of how individuals interpret or appraise a given situation. According to appraisal theory, individuals may experience different emotions in response to the same situation depending on how they interpret it.

Finally, social identity theory by Tajfel (1974) was relevant, as it suggests that individuals' emotions and behaviours are influenced by their group memberships and the social context in which they are negotiating or mediating. Social identity theory proposes that individuals have a need to maintain a positive self-image and those they will seek to enhance their social status and group identity during negotiations and mediations.

METHODOLOGY

A web-based survey was used to compile the information for this investigation. There were a total of 436 willing volunteers in this study; 310 (71.1%) were female and 126 (28.9%) were male. These individuals were chosen using purposive sampling technique, which was considered a suitable sampling approach for such a study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993) as part of an intentional sampling strategy. A survey was considered in the study as it could be used to collect data on a range of variables related to emotions, negotiation strategies, and negotiation outcomes. For example, a survey study asked participants about their emotions and emotional regulation strategies during a recent negotiation or mediation, and then examined how these factors were related to negotiation outcomes.

The Positive-Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) is a commonly used self-report measure of affect, which was used to assess the extent to which individuals experience positive and negative emotions. The PANAS was used to measure emotional states in response to specific events or situations, or as a general measure of mood. Since the study employed mixed methods research design, the use of PANAS was suitable and enabled participants to be asked to complete the measure either before or after a negotiation or mediation session.

The Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) is a self-report measure of emotional regulation, which assesses two strategies: Expressive suppression and cognitive reappraisal. Cognitive reappraisal involves changing the way one thinks about a situation in order to alter emotional responses, while expressive suppression involves inhibiting or hiding one's emotions in response to a situation. Considering that the study aimed to explore the strategies that individuals use to regulate their emotions during negotiations and mediations, the use of the ERQ was significant combining quantitative data from the PANAS with qualitative data gathered through interviews or observations of participants' emotional regulation strategies. Beyond that the study collected data through self-report measures of the PANAS and ERQ.

The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods, and mixed-methods analysis was used to integrate the data from both sources and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the emotional dynamics of negotiation and mediation. The quantitative data from the PANAS and ERQ was used to identify patterns



and associations between emotional states and regulation strategies, while the qualitative data from interviews provided a more detailed insight into the experiences and perspectives of the participants.

Analysis for autocorrelation, normality, multicollinearity, descriptive statistics, bivariate correlation, and the path analysis technique to determine the nature of the observed variables' causal link with one another was conducted. The significance of the path coefficients between the observed variables and whether the goodness of fit indices was in agreement with the data were evaluated to investigate the causal relationship using the path analysis method (Kline, 2015).

The current study additionally included a mediation test. At this juncture, we considered the steps in mediation testing proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986). Finally, the significance of indirect effects was tested using a bootstrapping technique. Lower and upper limit confidence intervals and a bootstrap coefficient were computed using a sample size of 1000 in the bootstrapping study (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Lower-upper limit confidence intervals that do not cover zero, as suggested by Hayes (2017), can be read as indicating that their indirect impacts are substantial.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Initially, the study looked at the normality, autocorrelation, and multicollinearity of variables assumptions. Bivariate correlation analysis and descriptive statistics were also run. Skewness and kurtosis measurements were analysed to check for normalcy. Both the skewness and kurtosis values were observed to fluctuate between -0.32 and .13 and -0.72 and .32, respectively, in the investigation. According to the normalcy standards established by Tabachnick & Fidell (2019), these values are acceptable.

In addition, the Durbin-Watson test was used to examine the autocorrelation assumption. The Durbin-Watson value was calculated to be 1.82 in the present investigation. This result demonstrated that autocorrelation is not a concern in the present investigation (Field, 2009). Tolerance levels and the variance inflation factor (VIF) were then used to assess the multicollinearity assumption. The investigation established a VIF of 1.01 and a tolerance of .98. Using the VIF and the tolerance settings recommended by Kline (2015), no evidence of a multicollinearity issue in the investigation was found.

Positive and negative affect as well as methods for controlling emotional responses were studied to determine their interconnectedness. The hypothetical model's standardized path coefficients emerged from the route analysis. Emotional control methods' potential role as mediators between negative and positive emotions was investigated. Baron and Kenny's (1986) proposed steps for testing mediation were considered for this purpose. It was discovered that negative affect has a large direct effect on positive affect.

The study found that negotiators' emotional states were related to the outcomes of the negotiation, such as the level of agreement reached or the satisfaction of the parties involved. For example, negotiators who experience more positive emotions during a negotiation were more likely to reach an agreement and have more positive perceptions of the negotiation process. Negotiators who used specific emotional regulation strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal or suppression, had different negotiation outcomes than those who did not use these strategies. For example, negotiators who used cognitive reappraisal were more successful in reaching an agreement and experienced less negative emotional states during the negotiation process.

The study established that emotional dynamics were different in negotiation versus mediation contexts. For example, negotiators experienced more competitive emotions such as anger or frustration, while mediators experienced more empathetic emotions such as compassion or understanding. The specific emotional management strategies, such as mindfulness or positive visualization, were effective in managing emotional dynamics in negotiation and mediation contexts. For example, negotiators who used mindfulness techniques were better able to regulate their emotions and maintain a more positive emotional state during the negotiation process.



CONCLUSION

To what extent individuals' use of emotional regulation mechanisms moderates the connection between their positive and negative affect during conflicts was the focus of the contemporary investigation. Individuals' tactics for controlling their emotions were found to be significantly and negatively predicted by their levels of negative affect. Positive affect can be predicted with high accuracy by an individual's usage of emotional management strategies. Furthermore, it was discovered that coping mechanisms played a complete mediator function in the connection between negative and good emotions.

The first conclusion of the study was that individuals' tactics for controlling their emotions were considerably and negatively predicted by their levels of negative affect. Reviewing the related literature, studies have reported results that are consistent with Chiu *et. al.* (2020); Vanderlind *et. al.* (2020) and Yoon *et. al.* (2020). These results are rationalized as follows: Negative emotional experiences can get in the way of employing helpful and flexible methods of regulating one's emotions. It's possible that people have trouble acknowledging their unpleasant emotions, which contributes to the problem. People who lack psychological flexibility are more likely to ignore or resort to inappropriate coping strategies when faced with challenging emotions (Harris, 2019). It's evident that unpleasant emotions do not lead to pleasurable experiences like positive ones do. It is safe to say that nowadays, many employ denial as a defence mechanism and refuse to acknowledge or cope with bad emotions.

The second major takeaway from this study was that people who make use of techniques to control their emotions were more likely to report feeling good about them. This finding of the contemporary investigation is in agreement with other studies (Ghorbani *et. al.*, 2020; Lindsey, 2020; Southward & Cheavens, 2020). Positive emotions may be more likely to occur if people utilize effective and adaptive methods to control them, as suggested by these studies. Here are some ways to assess the significance of this finding: Emotional regulation is based on the idea that a person may change potentially harmful emotional experiences into ones that help them better adjust to their environment and thrive. Emotional regulation tools, when used effectively and creatively, can help with this. Those who lack the ability to control their emotions are more likely to suffer from emotional distress, since good emotional regulation strategies can satisfy the desires to increase pleasure and decrease suffering as suggested by Lopez & Denny (2019), it follows that happy feelings will emerge in tandem with pleasurable experiences.

The study concluded that coping mechanisms fully mediate the connection between negative and positive emotions, consistent with previous research by Blalock *et. al.* (2016); Kobyliska *et. al.* (2020) and Talaei-Khoei *et. al.* (2017). The following were meanings for this conclusion from the study: Individuals engage in emotional control when they work toward experiencing positive emotions. Both positive and negative feelings can be amplified or dampened with this method. At this stage, it's reasonable to assume that emotional self-regulation techniques play a significant role in transforming unhelpful feelings into ones that ultimately serve the individual's best interests. Therefore, techniques for controlling one's emotions can be seen as a stabilizing and encouraging component in people's lives.

The results suggest that acquiring information and skills alone is insufficient, when seen through the lens of education's larger role in shaping individuals into contributing members of society. This can only be accomplished if the person is confident in themselves and performing to their fullest capacity. Research into ways to safeguard a person's mental well-being is urgently required. In response to this requirement, the findings of this study lead to the widespread adoption of techniques for controlling negative emotions and the cultivation of more positive ones. The data and conclusions from this study support the idea that education plays a pivotal role in shaping an individual's development into a contributing member of society.

Protecting people's mental health is just as crucial as protecting their physical health during and after conflicts. Emotion regulation tactics are now at a level where they can help people keep their happy and



negative feelings in check. According to the findings of the study, the connection between negative and positive emotions is fully mediated and negotiated by the use of emotion control mechanisms. Mental health practitioners and potential future researchers can use the study's results as a roadmap.

In the context of mediation and negotiation, many different methods are utilized to safeguard and improve mental health by controlling both positive and negative emotions. These methods can also differ from person to person and from culture to culture. Some cultures have taboos or condemn the expression of certain emotions, which might lead to people repressing their more positive feelings. This is why there has to be more international research on the topic of controlling emotions. It is believed that future contributions to the literature may be made by undertaking longitudinal studies in which people are frequently assessed at different time periods, as the majority of investigations on this topic, including the contemporary study, have been carried out with a cross-sectional method.

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