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## Emotional intelligence and its role in negotiations

Emotional intelligence is a crucial part of the negotiation process. This is because emotions play a very fundamental role in the search for a resolution of a dispute. Conflicts of interest, more often than not, have an emotional side to them. These emotions are often misunderstood and inadequately addressed. While it seems that putting emotions into account is a risk during a conflict of interest, the contrary is quite true. Involving the emotions of parties involved helps the negotiator come to a solution by understanding their perspectives, and most probably what they are really looking forward to gaining from the negotiation. Since it is virtually impossible to separate people from their emotions, it is of principal importance to incorporate these emotions into negotiations and utilize them to ameliorate results. An individual with a higher emotional intelligence is, therefore, in a much better position to find a suitable solution by controlling and managing involved emotions. Disregarding feelings in a conflict situation, therefore, seems like a very wrong approach to a successful negotiation[footnoteRef:4] (Kelly and Kaminskiene 2016). [4: Edward J. Kelly; Natalija Kaminskiene (2016). Importance of emotional intelligence in negotiation and mediation, *International Comparative Jurisprudence*, 2(1), pp. 55-60. ]

To begin with, according to studies conducted, a higher emotional intelligence has been attributed to better leadership skills and job performance; which translates to better negotiation skills. A higher emotional quotient (EQ) enables one to manipulate their emotions and those of others, which undoubtedly places them in a far better position when it comes to negotiating. One with a stronger foothold on their emotions is able to direct their subject's emotions in a direction that ultimately favors their side of the negotiations, or get the subjects/parties to come to an agreement, depending on what their terms were. Contrary to popular belief, taking into consideration the emotions complicates the conflict less and does not lead to uncontrollable behavior on the part of the disputants. Individuals who are unable to address their emotional issues can be unsuccessful in negotiation and mediation[footnoteRef:5] (Schreier 2002). However, this applies only when the emotions in play are correctly discerned. [5: L. Schreier. Emotional intelligence and mediation training. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 20 (1) (2002), pp. 99-119.]

On the other hand, emotions can have a negative play when maliciously manipulated. This can lead to one's attention being diverted from the important matters at hand, being unable to think unobstructed or place one in a position where they can be manipulated[footnoteRef:6] (D. Shapiro 2005). A negative emotion such as disgust, fear, and anger decrease the desire for parties to work together and often leads to win-lose bargaining scenarios and presents very few chances for joint gain situations[footnoteRef:7] (Shapiro 2009). Emotional intelligence and its development are therefore paramount. [6: D. Shapiro, R. Fisher. *Beyond reason: using*

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emotions as you negotiate, Penguin Books, New York (2005).] [7: D. Shapiro. Untapped power: emotions in negotiation. Negotiation: readings, exercises, and cases, McGraw-Hill, New York (2009), pp. 139-146.]

The role played by emotional intelligence in negotiation cannot be disregarded, alongside cognition and decision-making. However, few studies have been made on the relationship existing between negotiation outcomes and emotional intelligence. This may bring in a conflict of opinion since sufficient evidence is required to make such profound statements with surety. A study conducted by the Negotiation Journal with 202 participants found that the emotional intelligence of a negotiator had a direct correlation to their counterpart's trust level, and their desire to work with them again. However, there was no correlation with joint gain[footnoteRef:8] (Kim, Cundiff and Choi 2014). [8: Kihwan Kim, Nicole L. A. Cundiff, Suk Bong Choi (2014). The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Negotiation Outcomes and the Mediating Effect of Rapport: A Structural Equation Modelling Approach, Negotiation Journal, 30(1), pp. 49-68.]

Cases have been made against emotional intelligence. Some doubt its existence due to the inability to measure it. As a form of intelligence, there are right and wrong answers for it for tests made to quantitate it. Some critics also consider emotional intelligence as "personality", just with a fancier name. Others claim that because emotional intelligence is very closely related to personality and intelligence, which can be learned and honed. By itself, it, therefore, has nothing unique to offer.

According to Grant, emotional intelligence as a disadvantage and not to be counted on as a negotiation factor. This, he says, is because people who are good at controlling their own emotions are not to be trusted because they can disguise their true emotions. He further adds that leaders with selfish motives making use of a façade to manipulate the masses can bring devastating results. Books and speeches emphasizing the positive side of emotional intelligence tend to leave out this dark side[footnoteRef:9] (Tobak 2014). [9: Steve Tobak, (2014)Don't Believe the Hype Around 'Emotional Intelligence', ]

While this is a valid point and a perspective worth looking at, the main question was whether or not having a higher emotional intelligence made the odds better for the negotiator. Emotional intelligence, like any other kind of intelligence, can be relatively quantified if the subject is honest with themselves as they take the test. Self-awareness with emotions plays a huge role to enable someone to answer the test questions correctly and discernibly.

In conclusion, the studies presented above are flawed due to the scenarios presented. It focusses on one-on-one negotiations which are different from normal scenarios where teams handle negotiations. For instance, a potential employee will negotiate with a panel of human resources persons. The same applies in a car sale where a car salesman has to consider prices placed by the dealer. Despite these flaws, emotional intelligence plays a vital role in negotiation.

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Interestingly, the relationship is linear. That is, a higher EI, the better the negotiation outcome.

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