

## NEGOTIATIONS AS WEAPONS TO PROMOTE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

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### Abstract

This work aims to study the pedagogical advantages and the possibility of transferring the models of competitions in the field of humanities. An attempt is made to answer the question: "What advantages can the competition in international negotiations give to its participants?" Moreover, "What are the advantages for the students of the humanities in their future tasks?"

The work includes both quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches. The analysis of the existing literature was carried out along with a survey of the participants in the negotiations.

The authors mention some advantages of participating in competitions: they develop skills, adapt to a multicultural environment, model real emotions, referee reviews, network opportunities and future career advancement.

A conclusion is made that these competitions can be an excellent addition to classroom activities or possible online training, providing practitioners with additional confidence in their skills and more experience. Possible barriers to the implementation of this idea and possible steps to resolve them are revealed.

The findings can be useful for participants of these competitions, as well as their coaches.

**Keywords:** negotiation competitions, mediation, humanities, skills and competences of the negotiator.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Oliveira states that if we want to transform society, we have to change the situation in which violence can recur (Oliveira, 2017). In the world of business, conflicts are resolved differently: the parties discuss their problems and find appropriate solutions. During negotiations, substantial transactions may jeopardise the future of the company even without any physically aggressive actions against someone else.

Negotiators who deal for companies and corporations have tools and training that ordinary people do not have. So, if it is possible in corporations and large companies, can we try to transfer this knowledge to society as a whole?

## **1.1 Purpose, Objectives And Research Questions**

The purpose of this paper is the relationship between participation in an international competition on negotiations and specific issues of skills development and problem-solving.

If negotiating contests could increase awareness and interest in the issue of negotiations and encourage professionals around the world to become better, could this affect the overall ability of people to resolve conflicts peacefully? If we learn to ask the right questions and look at the world through the eyes of other people, then, in our opinion, many of the conflicts we are currently facing could be resolved.

To achieve this goal, the following research tasks were completed:

1. Analysis of the existing literature on the issue of competition on negotiations and pedagogy;
2. A preliminary survey of students of the humanities in order to assess their perception of their negotiating skills, their opinions on the need for negotiation skills for humanities practitioners, and their level of interest in becoming professionals training in this area;
3. Survey of students who participated in the competition on negotiations, in order to learn their opinions on the benefits of participation in such competitions, and whether it is possible to improve the skills of students;
4. Interviews with experts - researchers, teachers and professional negotiators - to determine their views on the importance of these competitions, their perception of the benefits of these competitions and the possibility of transferring these competitions to other areas of life;
5. Careful analysis of the collected data and cross-referencing before concluding.

## **1.2 Theoretical Grounds of The Research**

The world and the economic order are strongly correlated with each other, and therefore, can hardly exist without each other. Establishing and strengthening sustainable peace and economic order at the international level should be the highest interest for all nations. Political leaders around the world use negotiations as a means of reaching agreement on some of the most critical issues, such as human rights, peace, and economic prosperity. Training negotiation competence is crucial for the humanities, and one shall not admit the fact that only business and law get proper training.

The primary evaluation criteria, according to Smolinski and Kesting, in these competitions are preparation, process and results. (Smolinski, R., Kesting, P., 2013, p. 357).

Preparation refers to the ability of the team to analyse the case, find a problem. It also includes their interest and the interests of the partner, and competence to develop a negotiation or mediation strategy.

The process includes the effectiveness of their collaboration, active listening skills, empathy, the ability to work together without concession of their interests and demands, flexibility and of course, negotiation skills.

The result is related to the benefits received the claimed benefits, drawing up of a joint contract, ethical behaviour and self-analysis.

In some competitions, referees pay particular emphasis on specific skills, such as teamwork or claimed value. (Smolinski, Kesting, *ibid*).

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## **2. NEGOTIATION SKILLS**

Theoretically, negotiation is “a process where two or more parties with differences that they must resolve, try to reach an agreement by exploring options and exchanging proposals”. Negotiation skills are often a vital

component for both staff and organisational success (Chapman et al., 2017, p. 940). Highly professional negotiators are considered skilful people, and their effectiveness is measured by their results during the negotiation process (ElShenawy, 2010, p. 195). According to ElShenawi, qualified negotiators increase the value of companies effectively conducting good deals, and the firms increasingly invest in training their managers (2010, p. 192).

Judging is an entirely different world. It is not easy to judge, because to do this one needs to be able to recognise a good game and distinguish it from a bad one. This paper does not touch the issue of a good/bad game. At the same time, judging sometimes is entirely arbitrary. The reason for this statement is one of the author's personal experiences.

Compared to ordinary classes, negotiation competitions expand and develop the skills of negotiators (Smolinski, Kesting, 2013, p. 361). The goal of the competition is to compare the relative negotiation skills of individuals and teams, and this plays an essential role in motivating the participants. This motivation is manifested both in the time which the participants spend while preparing for the negotiations, usually from two to six months. Smolinski and Kesting concluded that the level of motivation and the quality of the negotiations in these competitions are much higher than in the classroom. These competitions also allow students to test their skills in a highly competitive international context that emulates real-world business negotiations that they may encounter in the future and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. (ibid.)Negotiation skills in the humanities

According to Core et al. (Core, Traum et al., 2006, p. 686), "the main lesson that emerged from "peacemaking" attempts is that negotiation skills are needed at all levels of civil and governmental organisations involved". Despite the increased attention to the vital role played by the negotiations in the humanities, very little research and analysis were devoted to this issue (Grace et al., 2015, p. 2).

Negotiations are crucial to the success of any humanitarian operations, but they are challenging. In this field, it was necessary to carry out a whole range of research analysing common problems, develop policy guidelines. Practical difficulties during the negotiations in humanitarian fields lead to the creation of professional networks so that negotiators can share best practices (Grace, ibid.).

## 2.1. Methodology

Primary research is the method of research for this work. Through surveys and interviews, we tried to identify some perspectives and used a holistic approach to the negotiation competitions. The use of qualitative and quantitative methods ensures the breadth of the research and allows to carry out detailed discussions. Besides, a blended approach helps to provide a broader range of information compared to mono-methods (Robson and McCartan, 2016, p. 185).

We carried out a quantitative survey of the participants' opinions on various aspects of participation in the competition. The purpose of the survey was to involve as many students as possible who participated in the negotiation competitions.

A preliminary study was conducted on students in the humanities, to explore their perceived general level of knowledge and interests in the negotiations, and how seriously they take this skill for their future.

Besides, the participation of one of the authors in international negotiation competitions (INC) as a coach of the Russian team in Lucerne (Switzerland, 2016) and Cardiff (Wales, Great Britain, 2018) allowed me to supplement the findings with our observations. Taking everything into account, we can say that the tools of the negotiation process can be realised in the field of the humanities, not only in business and law.

Table 1. The value of negotiation skills and the importance of their development

	How valuable do you think are your negotiation / mediation skills valuable for the humanities?	How important is it for you to develop your negotiation and / or mediation skills?
Extremely valuable	13	11
Very valuable	1	2
Quite valuable	1	1
Not very valuable	-	1
Not at all valuable	-	-

The preliminary research conducted according to the information of current and previous students in the humanities showed that, despite the fact that these students are undergoing a type of negotiation, of all the students surveyed, only 20% (three people) felt very confident in their negotiation skills, the majority, 53% (8 people), feels only more or less confident, and the rest are not at all confident. Inevitably, this raises fundamental concerns about their willingness to be confident in negotiations that they will face in their future work.

Although significant research has been devoted to classroom simulations and their pedagogical benefits, less attention is paid to negotiation competitions. Only one research which is directly related to the topic of pedagogical advantages of these competitions has been published. This work belongs to Smolinski and Kesting and underlines the advantages of competitions for negotiation pedagogy. In their research, they concluded that there are many advantages in these competitions and that the main advantages fall into three categories: skills development, networking opportunities and promotion (2013).

The research by Bond focused specifically on mediation and culture. He has elaborated mediation competitions and their culture and studied the interrelationship of cultural diversity and standardised rules within the framework of the competition. Bond asks essential questions on how culture is defined, and argues that using the concept of culture to identify differences between “some” in the West and “others” not in the West is risky, arguing that a person is not subject to some deterministic cultural programming but rather a subject that can adapt culturally to a greater or lesser extent. (Bond, 2013, p. 324)

Analysis of the surveys revealed several positive effects of participation in the negotiation competition, and experts share the view that participation in competitions should be encouraged for as many students as possible.

In order to fully explore the perception of the experience of the participants in the negotiation competitions, we asked the respondents to choose the three main advantages of participation in the competitions, shown in Figure 1.

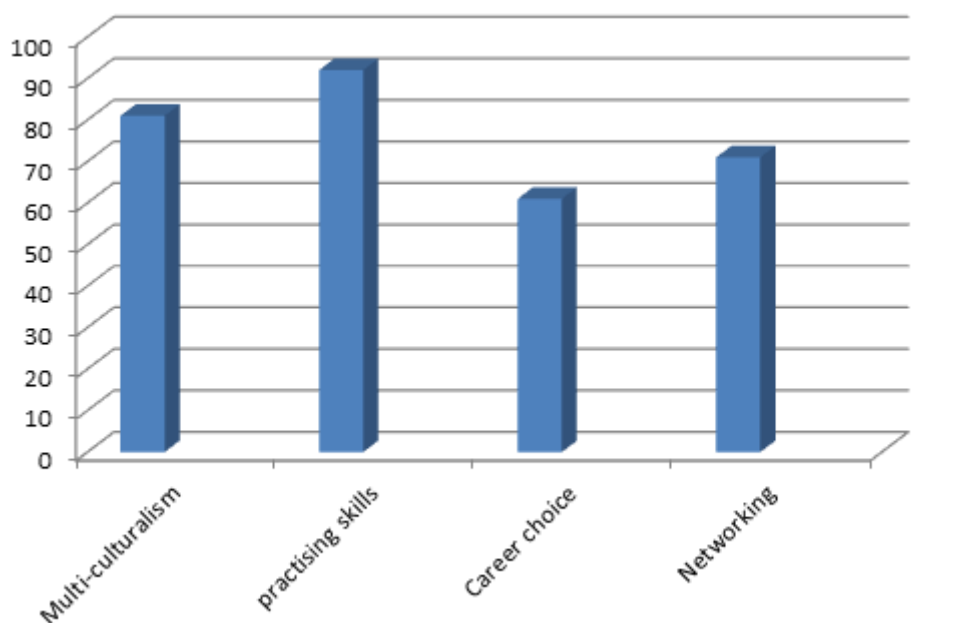


Figure 1. Top priorities of participation in negotiation competitions

These competitions give students the opportunity to develop their skills that are not otherwise developed at the university. It allows them to practice, and with practice, there comes more confidence and experience.

The results, as can be seen in Figure 1, show that about almost all students (92%) consider using their skills and practising as one of the three best advantages of participating in a negotiation competition; in addition, 81% agreed that their participation in the negotiation competition improved their problem-solving skills and ability to resolve conflicts in a multicultural environment.

The ability to negotiate with people with different education, culture and different styles of negotiation is a distinct advantage for students compared to those modelled in the classroom. The networking opportunities

created by these competitions should not be underestimated. Participants get in touch with experts and take this opportunity to seek advice from experts in career and mentoring. 71% of respondents consider networking to be one of the three best advantages of participating in international negotiation competitions. It is also confirmed by the fact that the respondents were from 28 countries. A survey of students showed that networking is one of the best from the points of view for participants.

For students, it is useful to get feedback from the judges. Judges are people with extensive experience, either as researchers, teachers, or practitioners in this field, and they provide students with comprehensive, constructive feedback and indicate areas in which work needs to be improved. Feedback is an integral part of student support when it is constructive (Bruford, 2015). This approach allows students to understand themselves and their style of negotiation better, as well as learn what needs to be changed or improved.

Since teams want to win the competition, then eventually there are some real emotions associated with the process, which are not so often present in the class but are extremely valuable for educational purposes. In the class, students know each other, and there is little likelihood of a high level of emotion associated with the preparation and modelling.

The survey led to mixed results in this category. In the comments section, some students expressed the view that competition was an opportunity to prepare for real business issues with a high level of pressure, but others believe that the modelling of negotiations is too far from reality.

During the survey, some students stated that their participation in the competition(s) led them to desire to work in this area, and in general, 61% believe that they will continue their career in the field of negotiations. Of these, 37% consider this very likely. Besides, 13.5% of respondents, in some way have already worked in this area.

## **2.2 Why Do We Need A Specific Competition for the Humanities?**

In general, negotiation competitions are a unique tool for negotiation pedagogy and have many advantages. It can be argued that eventually the student of humanities will get some benefit from participating in contests, receiving feedbacks from arbitrators, multicultural environment and communication in networks, but they will not receive the benefits that they would have received if they participated in contests developed purposefully for them.

These adverse effects need to be considered. If students of the humanities perform poorly, then, according to one expert, this can eventually negatively affect the entire experience, depriving students of inherent advantages. It can adversely affect their negotiating skills.

## **3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

International negotiation competitions can be a valuable tool for humanities students and practitioners. As a rule, there are no trained negotiators on humanitarian issues who can be hired when there is a need for negotiations, but this is a key competence that every practising person should have and may need (Grace 2017, p. 1). As for the question: "What are the benefits of international negotiation competitions for participants?", the results show that negotiation competitions can provide a platform with several advantages, including better skills, experience in a multicultural environment, networking with like-minded people and professionals in this field and training based on expert feedback. Moreover, these competitions will not only better prepare these students and / or specialists for negotiating roles but also provide them with a platform for meeting new people and sharing ideas. These competitions could include seminars to discuss interesting topics related to the humanities, which would add even more value to experience.

In response to the second question: "Can students of humanities benefit from negotiations adapted to the challenges they may encounter?", the results of this research were very positive regarding the applicability of such an event to humanities.

Even though the competitions on negotiations are unlikely to solve all the problems of the world, the advantages of these competitions deserve consideration. However, these competitions can be a great addition to classroom studies or possible online training, giving practitioners in the humanities additional confidence in their skills and more experience.

Analysing the results of the survey, one can see that many of the participants in previous years decided to work in the field of negotiations and the overwhelming majority show interest in this in the future. It would be interesting to explore the influence of these competitions as giving impact to the negotiation competitions and explore their "multiplier effect". This effect tends to increase the activity that starts a chain reaction,

which in turn generates even more activity. In negotiation competitions, this often manifests itself in the fact that participants become trainers or consultants, and it would be interesting to learn what role the competition plays in this chain of events if any.

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