



Trait Negotiation Resilience: A measurable construct of resilience in challenging mixed-interest interactions



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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Resilience is a meta-theory for traits and resources that enhance coping with life difficulties. Spector (2006) first introduced the concept of Negotiation Resilience, as a host of inner and outer resources that help in negotiation. We concentrated on negotiators' dispositional NR, developing, over four studies, a measurable multidimensional construct, Trait Negotiation Resilience (TNR).

Methodology and findings: In Study 1, we developed TNR's measurement, Negotiation Resilience Inventory (NRI) and validated its factorial construct. Study 2 demonstrated NRI's reliability. Study 3 demonstrated NRI's construct validity by testing its correlations with relevant measures. Finally, Study 4 demonstrated NRI's predictive validity; NRI scores predicted negotiators' objective outcomes in a mixed-motive business negotiation.

Implications and value: The research expands the study of Negotiation Resilience; a concept which we believe was not researched since its introduction. Specifically, our studies produced a measurable construct for quantitative research of negotiators' dispositional resilience. They also suggested its applicability to various challenging interpersonal situations, and that contributes to resilience literature altogether.

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Resilience is broadly defined as the ability to cope with difficult life situations, and even come stronger out of them (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Werner, 1982). This broad definition allows many different conceptualizations of resilience (Richardson, 2002). A recent thorough review (Dunkel Schetter & Dolbier, 2011) addressed dozens of resilience factors and stressed the multidimensional quality of resilience; its antecedents make up different categories, among them, personality attributes (e.g., optimism, coherence, self-control, self-efficacy and secure attachment), skills (e.g., correct challenge assessment, positive challenge reinterpretation, emotional regulation and social skills), and personal systems of meaning (e.g., spiritual beliefs, a sense of meaning to life and a sense of purpose).

Studies have demonstrated resilience effects in the face of various difficulties, ranging in intensity, like loss and trauma (Bonanno, 2004), disease (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2006), academic stress (Cappella & Weinstein, 2001), and work related challenges (Bartley, Head, & Stansfield, 2007; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). The concept of Negotiation Resilience (subsequently, NR) was first introduced by Spector (2006), who defined it as “the capacity of negotiating parties to recover from actual or anticipated setbacks, stalemates and deadlocks

... by finding ways to restart the process” (p. 276). Spector discussed NR in the context of international negotiations and suggested particularly its efficacy in preventing impasse. He proposed that NR, like resilience more generally, was multidimensional, and suggested considering negotiators' external resources as part of their resilience. He also put forth the idea that resilience could be attributed to teams or even countries, not just to individuals. His pioneering essay called for much further research, to develop the concept of NR.

We follow that call, concentrating on a somewhat different, more specific definition and operationalization of NR. We focused on individual negotiators' dispositional NR, and used quantitative and experimental methods to develop and test its multidimensional construct, and to demonstrate its contribution to a business negotiation outcome.

Our work also follows resilience scholars who suggested, in view of the variety of resilience factors, that resilience is a meta-theory for individual differences that enhance performance and coping in a particular field (Richardson, 2002). Negotiators' individual differences affect their outcomes (Elfenbein, Curhan, Eisenkraft, Shirako, & Baccaro, 2008), and negotiation studies have separately uncovered a wide array of such differences, without developing a conceptual framework for them (Thompson, 1990). The multidimensional concept of NR can serve as such a framework. Based on an up-to-date review of negotiation studies and resilience literature, we propose specific dimensions that together

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make up individuals' dispositional NR — subsequently called Trait Negotiation Resilience (TNR).

1. Trait Negotiation Resilience (TNR)

Resilience scholars (e.g., Martin & Marsh, 2006; Worthington & Scherera, 2004) stressed that different challenging situations call for specific types of resilience, and that therefore, researchers should carefully define the dimensions that are relevant to their field of interest. Negotiation is an interaction, so negotiators' dispositional resilience, in our view, must emphasize interpersonal and emotional skills that help in difficult interactions.

TNR's proposed components include emotional (1–2), social (3), motivational (4) and cognitive (5) factors. As we subsequently review, nearly all of them (except the fourth) are interpersonal in their nature or their effects.

1.1. Empathy toward self

This is the individual's ability to identify and understand his own emotions as they occur, and to assess their effects on him. Emotional awareness induces better emotional regulation (Lane & Pollermann, 2002; Medford & Critchley, 2010; Szczygieł, Buczny, & Bazińska, 2012), which reduces negative affect (Mauss, Cook, Cheng, & Gross, 2007; Sheppes & Meiran, 2008). Negotiators who regulate their negative affect and induce their positive affect, are likely to “infect” their opponents similarly (Forgas, 1998). They are also higher in self-control (Baumeister & Vohs, 2003), rational solution seeking (Mischel, DeSmet, & Kross, 2006), attention to the opponent and collaboration (Riskin, 2002; Sheldon & Fishbach, 2011). Unsurprisingly, then, they achieve better outcomes (Bazerman, Curhan, & Moore, 2000; Elfenbein et al., 2008; Shapiro, 2002, 2003). More generally, emotional awareness is part of Emotional Intelligence (EI; Mayer & Salovey, 1997), a resilience factor that was shown to enhance both personal and joint outcomes in negotiation (Mueller & Curhan, 2006; Yurtsever, 2004).

1.2. Empathy toward the other

This is the individual's ability to identify and understand the emotions of others as they occur. It complements empathy toward self and similarly to it, is also part of EI (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Understanding the other's emotional states helps to regulate them (Fulmer & Barry, 2004), to guide decisions and actions (Damasio, 1994; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001) and to predict the other's actions (Elfenbein, Marsh, & Ambady, 2002). Empathy toward the opponent predicts the latter's satisfaction (Mueller & Curhan, 2006), which in turn contributes to negotiator's objective outcome (Curhan, Elfenbein, & Eisenkraft, 2010; Curhan, Elfenbein, & Xu, 2006). However, the word “empathy” does not mean that this component of TNR is tantamount to care for the other. Rather, it's the ability to understand the other's emotions and regulate them for one's own purposes.

1.3. Social sensitivity

This component captures negotiator's care for opponent's interests. Care for others is a demonstrated resilience factor (e.g., Werner, 1982) and was also extensively studied in negotiation, as a dimension of the dual-concern model (Rahim, 1983; Thomas, 1992). A meta-analysis showed that socially sensitive negotiators (caring for the other party), who also cared for their own achievement, performed better than negotiators lower on either dimension (De Dreu, Weingart, & Kwon, 2000). Social sensitivity is also expressed in negotiators' interpersonal communication, which predicts the quality of negotiation outcomes (McGinn & Nöth, 2012; Putnam, 2010; Thompson, Wang, & Gunia, 2010). For example, rich and positive communication enhances negotiators' rapport (Bronstein, Nelson, Livnat, & Ben-Ari, 2012; Drolet & Morris, 2000)

and trust (Valley, Moag, & Bazerman, 1998), which are likely to enhance agreement.

1.4. Intrinsic motivation for self-improvement

This component captures the motivation to endure challenge and learn from it, which is at the heart of resilience's definition. The concept of motivation for self-improvement is discussed in negotiation literature, under different names, as enhancing negotiation performance. For example, Dweck (1996) shows that individuals who believe that negotiation skills can be learned and perfected (“Incrementalists”), set higher goals and perform better than those who believe negotiation ability is innate (“Entity theorists”). The former see difficulty and failure as a learning opportunity and persist in their efforts (Dweck, 1996; Elfenbein et al., 2008; Kray & Haselhuhn, 2007). Interestingly, “Incrementalists” are low on face-saving motivation (they don't worry about seeming able, but about becoming able; e.g., Covington, 2000), and face-saving concerns interfere with negotiation outcomes (White, Tynan, Galinsky, & Thompson, 2004). Moreover, motivation for self-improvement relates to other resilience factors, such as optimism and self-efficacy (SE; Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 2001), and they are associated with setting higher goals and performing better in negotiation (Elfenbein et al., 2008; Sullivan, O'Connor, & Burris, 2006).

1.5. Perceptions of meaning

Perceptions of meaning or a sense of purpose were recognized as important resilience factors (e.g., Masten & Wright, 2010), but were not addressed in negotiation literature. We propose that they could affect negotiation outcomes. Specifically, individuals who experience a sense of meaning and purpose in life occurrences (“things happen for a reason”), tend to perceive and construe them more globally, or abstractedly (rather than as concrete, sporadic incidents). Such perspective on negotiation induces the helpful focus on interests rather than positions (Giacomantonio, Dreu, & Mannetti, 2010), and enhances creativity, active problem-solving (Ben-Dov, Heller, & Kopelman, 2009; De Dreu, Giacomantonio, Shalvi, & Sligte, 2009), and perspective taking (viewing reality from the standpoint of others; Johnson, Hill, & Cohen, 2011; Landau, Kosloff, & Schmeichel, 2011). The latter, in turn, enhances both integrative and distributive¹ outcomes in negotiation (Galinsky, Maddux, Gilin, & White, 2008; Gilin, Maddux, Carpenter, & Galinsky, 2012).

These are TNR's proposed dimensions. In the next section, we review existing resilience measurements and establish the need for a scale suited to measure TNR.

2. The measurement of TNR

A literature review yielded various measurements of resilience, some developed for specific purposes and others more general (see Ahern, Kiehl, Sole, & Byers, 2006). For example, certain scales were developed specifically to measure resilience among adolescents (Hjemdal, Friborg, Stiles, Martinussen, & Rosenvinge, 2006; Oshio, Kaneko, Nagamine, & Nakaya, 2003). Others were developed to measure specific types of resilience, such as recovering from violent incidents (Madsen & Abell, 2010), or coping with academic stress (Martin & Marsh, 2006). These would naturally fail to measure Negotiation Resilience among adults. There are also a few General Resilience scales. The CD-RISC (Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale; Connor & Davidson, 2003) is the most commonly used of those (e.g., Anderson, 2013; García & Calvo, 2012; Gayton & Lovell, 2012). This scale was originally reported to include five factors (see subsequently), but was mostly

¹ Distributive outcomes refer to claiming your share of a limited value; integrative outcomes refer to creating more value and achieving higher joint gain, by creative problem-solving.

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