

# **TALK ABOUT ACTIONS OR THINGS, NOT THE PERSON: THE INFLUENCE OF THE TARGET OF EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION ON THE NEGOTIATION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In recent years, the role of emotions in social decision-making has received increasing attention, especially its social function to interpersonal interaction including negotiation, one of the social decisions. Nowadays, with the appearance of new emotion view, an advanced decision theory has suggested that the emotion of 'Interpersonal Effect' has impact on social decision-making. For example, the model of EASI, Emotion As Social Information proposed by Van Kleef (2009), focused on the strategic information from emotional expression and the value of emotional contagion. According to the theory of Van Kleef, emotional contagion has positive meaning for individuals to adopt the effective behaviors in social decision process. Besides, the model of EASI emphasized that during the emotional information processing, Affective Reactions and Inferential Processes were not only existing at the same time, but also experiencing interactions. Based on that, the present research aims to examine whether the emotional expression had the social function or strategic value in social decision processing, and which target of emotional expression could prompt more effective social decisions. In present research, study 1 focused on the face-to-face task of negotiation and study 2 adopted the Dictator Game. The difference of those two tasks paradigm is that there is absolute right to be hold by participants as allocators in the Dictator Game. Meanwhile, this difference could be a great dividing line to distinguish the Affective Reactions from the Inferential Processes, which was mentioned in the model of EASI above. Therefore, it could be inferred that emotional contagion had direct and significant effect on the social decisions through the way of comparing different performances participants showed in two tasks. Besides, emotions in those two experiments are divided into two different oriented target in emotional expressions, behavior-oriented or person-directed.

In the study 1, it focuses on the emotional expression's effect depends on the target of the emotion which is one of the strategic emotions in negotiation. There are two purposes, one is to investigate different influences of emotional expressions on negotiators in negotiation. Specifically, if those emotions can affect the negotiators to make greater degree of compromise or demand more. The other is to examine whether emotional expressions will provide cognitive inference information which helps the negotiator evaluate the other's bottom line based on the different target of emotion. In this study, participants ( $N=35$ ) were randomly divided into four different emotion groups, all of them would take part in a face-to-face negotiation task and dictator game. Firstly, in the experiment one which is a negotiation happened between two persons, the participant would play as a seller and finish a cellphone transaction. Two different experimenters would play the roles of buyers in two times of transactions respectively. One was

for behavior-oriented emotional expression and the other was for person-directed emotional expression. In addition, every time of transaction would process two turns. During the transaction, the participants would make every possibility to maximize their benefits and reach an agreement with the buyers. As the results, study 1 showed that behavior-oriented anger could elicit more concessions (lower demand) than that by behavior-oriented happiness could. The same trend was also displayed in the group of person-directed emotional statement. Moreover, researchers found that behavior-oriented anger would lead participants' appraisals of the opponent's limits to the high point which could also be found in the person-directed groups. Therefore, results in study 1 let the assumption mentioned above make sense, meaning that the strategic information function indeed has the effects on the social decision processing.

Study 2, in the Dictator Game, participants played as allocators who have the totally absolute right to decide the allocation proportion of money, 100RMB, and experimenters who played as respondents without the right to reject were asked to write down the different target of emotional statement after accepting the offers from allocators or not. Then after reading the emotional reflections from respondents, participants would be asked distribute the money again. In the task of dictator game, the present study pays attention on the differences between two turns of allocations in order to examine whether the different targets of the emotion would have diverse emotional expression effects. In the ends, the results clearly suggested that when participants perceived the emotional statement towards to their allocation behaviors, the difference of two allocations would be implicit, that is, allocators would make little degree of compromise or aggression when faced with what ever angry or happy statement from the respondents. Conversely, when faced with person-directed emotion, allocators showed intensive different performances which means allocators distributed more to respondents when they perceived the person-directed happy emotion from the opponents and show more aggressive when perceived the person-directed angry emotion. According to the rules of Dictator Game, participants had the absolute right to allocate money without thinking of refusals from recipients, experimenters. So the emotional effect was mainly through the way of emotional contagion which referring to the two strategic emotional expressions, behavior-oriented and person-directed.

Above all, it can be concluded in the "Interpersonal Effect" of emotion: (1) the strategic information function has effects on the social decision-making, such as in negotiation. (2) Emotional contagion is the important way to achieve the valuable strategic information function of social information; (3) Emotional expression has its valuable meaning in application. The strategic information function could improve the effective and practicability in social decision processing, especially in the situation of behavior-oriented emotional expression. Moreover, the different target of emotional expression could be a guidance to help people to choose the appropriate emotional ways and thus improve human beings' quality of communication.

**Keywords:** Negotiation, Target of Emotion, Interpersonal Effects, Strategic Emotion