

# Investigating the Role of Positive Emotions in Bilateral Negotiations: A Pilot Study

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## Abstract

This pilot study aimed to assess loving-kindness meditation as a mood induction procedure and investigate the role of positive emotions on different aspects of negotiation processes and outcomes. Thirty-eight undergraduate psychology students formed dyads and were assigned to one of three conditions: in the first condition, positive emotions were induced to both parties in each dyad; in the second condition, positive emotions were induced to one of the two counterparts, and in the third condition, individuals were not exposed to any emotional manipulation. The effectiveness of the meditation practice was assessed using SPANE-8 to measure participants' emotions and a negotiation simulation followed using a widely used cell phone negotiation exercise. The results showed that loving-kindness meditation led to increased levels of positive emotions and decreased levels of negative emotions. Also, it was found that positive emotions relate to increased cooperation potential and reduced possibilities for exit decisions, while it was also found that the higher the levels of positive emotions, the less negotiation time is needed for individuals to reach an agreement. The hypotheses about the relationship of positive emotions with negotiators' first offer, aspirations, expectations, individual gains, and joint gains were not confirmed.

## Keywords

Positive Emotions, Negotiation, Experiment, Mood Induction, Loving-Kindness Meditation

## 1. Introduction

Conflict is inherent and omnipresent in both personal and professional life (Van Kleef, 2008), and although there are various ways to manage it, negotiation is considered to be the primary and most constructive means for conflict resolu-

tion (Allred et al., 1997; Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). Negotiation is an interpersonal decision-making process in which individuals attempt to reach an agreement on an issue where incompatible or contradictory interests originally existed (Kimmel et al., 1980; Rubin & Brown, 1975). The broad interest in the study of negotiation has turned it into an area investigated by numerous disciplines, including psychology, economics, mathematics, management, communication studies, organizational behavior, sociology, law, and political science (Thompson et al., 2010).

Despite the fact that negotiation has been extensively studied from a cognitive perspective for many years (Davidson & Greenhalgh, 1999), emotions in negotiation have been underexplored (Bazerman et al., 2000), and only in the last few decades several researchers have challenged the cognitive tradition by studying the influence of emotions in negotiation (e.g., Friedman et al., 2004; Barsade, 2002; Kopelman et al., 2006; Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006; Brooks & Schweitzer, 2011). Carnevale and Isen (1986) were the first researchers who brought scholarly attention to the significance of moods and emotions in negotiation by showing that positive affect could lead to increased mutual gains for both parties, known as integrative negotiation (Pruitt, 1981).

Emotions have both intrapersonal and interpersonal effects in negotiation (Van Kleef et al., 2004a). Intrapersonal effects (or affect-cognitive perspective) concern the impact of a negotiator's felt emotions on this person's behavior and attitudes, while the interpersonal effects (or social-functional perspective) describe the way in which an individual's expressed feelings can affect the counterpart's behavior (Van Kleef, 2008; Gino & Shea, 2012). After many years of an almost exclusive emphasis on the affect-cognitive perspective (Van Kleef, 2008), it was realized that emotions could disclose critical information to others about an individual's feelings, motives, social intentions, and behavioral orientation (Ekman, 1993; Fridlund, 1992), and thus Van Kleef et al. (2004a) were the first to explore how feelings can influence others' behavior.

At the individual level of analysis, negotiation can bring about intense emotions (Barry et al., 2004) that can heavily affect negotiation processes and outcomes through their impact on negotiators' cognition and strategies (Lanzetta, 1989). According to affect priming models, moods and emotions influence social thinking and behavior by selectively priming related memories and ideas; thus positive emotions may increase the accessibility of positive cognitions, while negative emotions may activate negative cognitions that affect the appraisal of subsequent stimuli (Bower & Forgas, 2001).

Furthermore, the affect-as-information model (Schwarz & Clore, 1983) suggests that people may misattribute their preexisting, unrelated moods and emotions to their counterparts. This simply means that an angry negotiator who is not aware of the origin of the felt negative emotions may wrongfully attribute the anger to the opponent's offer, which, in turn, may affect the negotiation process and outcomes accordingly. On the other hand, a negotiator who is aware that the positive or negative emotions were generated by another reason that is

unrelated to the negotiation may be less likely to use these feelings as input in the negotiation. Expanding this approach, the appraisal-tendency framework (Lerner & Keltner, 2000, 2001) postulates that all emotions, including incidental emotions that are caused by unrelated events, can influence negotiators' decisions, evaluations, and behaviors during negotiation.

At the dyadic level of analysis, the key point is how the emotions expressed by a negotiator can influence the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses of the counterpart. According to Emotions as Social Information theory (EASI) of the interpersonal effects of emotions in social and organizational life (Van Kleef, 2009, 2016; Van Kleef & Côté, 2018), an individual may react to the counterpart's emotions in either symmetrical or asymmetrical ways. More specifically, as far as symmetrical effects are concerned, when a negotiator confronts an opponent expressing negative emotions such as anger, it is possible to infer that the counterpart is frustrated which may lead to a competitive reaction due to emotional contagion (Van Kleef, 2014). Emotional contagion refers to the transfer of emotions between people and suggests that individuals experience higher levels of negative emotions when they are exposed to a person who expresses negative feelings, while they experience higher levels of positive emotions when they are exposed to a person expressing positive feelings (Van Kleef, 2009).

Regarding asymmetrical effects of the counterpart's emotions, the same theory postulates that when a negotiator faces an opponent who conveys angry messages, it is possible to hypothesize that the opponent's limits have been exceeded, and therefore the negotiator will strategically concede more in order to reach an agreement. Similarly, when a negotiator expresses positive emotions, the counterpart may infer that this person has generous limits, and therefore the opponent will decide that smaller concessions are required (Van Dijk et al., 2008).

Since affective and inferential internal processes can lead to dissimilar behavioral responses, it is extremely significant to acknowledge when one or the other process takes precedence. EASI model proposes that the behavioral responses depend on two types of moderating variables: the observer's information-processing ability, and the perceived appropriateness of the emotional expression. More specifically, the observer's information-processing ability is determined by personality factors such as the need for cognitive closure, and situational influences such as power (De Dreu & Carnevale, 2003; Van Kleef & De Dreu, 2010), while the perceived appropriateness of the emotional expression (Van Kleef, 2016) depends on characteristics of the situation (Ekman, 1993), characteristics of the expression itself (Van Kleef et al., 2012), and characteristics of the expresser, the perceiver, and the relationship between them (Shields, 2005; Tiedens et al., 2000).

Given that the mechanisms behind negotiators' cognitions, emotions, and behaviors were briefly explained based on the most prevalent theories and models, the next step is to emphasize the specific effects of positive and negative emotions on negotiation processes and outcomes. Positive emotions have been asso-

ciated with more cooperative strategies (Forgas, 1998; Hollingshead & Carnevale, 1990; Kopelman et al., 2006; Baron et al., 1990), more concern for the other party (Rhoades et al., 2001), integrative outcomes and higher individual and joint gains (Carnevale & Isen, 1986; Kramer et al., 1993; Allred et al., 1997; Anderson & Thompson, 2004), increased concession making and creative problem solving (Isen, Daubman & Nowicki, 1987; Rhoades et al., 2001), less usage of contentious tactics (Carnevale & Isen, 1986), and a reduced likelihood of impasse (Kopelman et al., 2006). In addition, positive emotions have been related to higher expectations and better perceptions of performance (Kramer et al., 1993), as well as higher pre-negotiation aspirations (Baron, 1990). From a dyadic perspective, it has been revealed that negotiators whose counterparts express positive emotions demonstrate more cooperative behavior and abide by the agreement afterward (Forgas, 1998).

On the contrary, negative emotions have been shown to be related to the use of competitive tactics (Forgas, 1998; Butt et al., 2005; Rhoades et al., 2001), lower joint gains (Allred et al., 1997), less regard for opponent's interests (Allred et al., 1997), lower initial offers (Brooks & Schweitzer, 2011; Baron et al., 1990), rejection of ultimatum offers (Pillutla & Murnighan, 1996), early exit from the negotiation process (Brooks & Schweitzer, 2011), diminished trust (Campagna et al., 2016), and decreased desire for future interaction (Allred et al., 1997). Negotiators whose opponents express negative emotions tend to experience negative emotions themselves (Friedman et al., 2004; Kopelman et al., 2006), form negative impressions about their counterparts (Van Kleef et al., 2004a; Sharma et al., 2020), are more likely to exit the negotiation before settlement (Yip & Schweinsberg, 2017; Kopelman et al., 2006; Friedman et al., 2004), are less willing to engage in future interaction (Kopelman et al., 2006; Sharma et al., 2020), and tend to adopt deceptive tactics (such as bluffing and misrepresentations) and backfire (Van Dijk et al., 2008).

According to the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001), which provides an extremely valuable framework to comprehend the functional importance of positive emotions, positive emotions such as joy, contentment, interest, and love, broaden individuals' cognition and mindset, which in turn, builds their enduring physical, intellectual, social, and psychological resources. In other words, Barbara Fredrickson's theory asserts that while negative emotions shrink momentary thought-action repertoires, urging people to act in specific ways (e.g., escape or attack), positive emotions give people the opportunity to widen the array of their thoughts and actions, leading to the creation and augmentation of durable consequential personal resources. In addition, the "undo hypothesis" (Fredrickson & Levenson 1998; Fredrickson et al., 2000) supports that the experience of positive emotions gives people the opportunity to "correct" or "undo" the negative effects of negative emotions and thus function as antidotes.

Although many researchers have extolled the advantages of positive emotions

in negotiation, there is a number of scholars who argue that negative emotions can be extremely beneficial. Negative emotions such as anger, have been associated with larger concessions from the opponent's side (Van Kleef et al., 2004a, 2004b; Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006; Sharma et al., 2020), although other researchers have shown that this can lead negotiators to sabotage their opponents after the negotiation is over (Wang et al., 2012). Negotiators' concession to an angry opponent is moderated by several parameters such as the counterpart's power (Van Kleef et al., 2004b; Van Kleef et al., 2006; Friedman et al., 2004) and the existence of alternative options (Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006). Additionally, expressed disappointment can elicit guilt in negotiators' opponents, leading to more generous offers (Lelieveld et al., 2012; Ketelaar & Au, 2003), while expressed sadness can evoke feelings of empathy and compassion, which can make counterparts adopt a more cooperative stance (Sinaceur et al., 2015).

As Van Kleef & Côté (2018) concluded, there is no simple answer to the question of which emotions are helpful in negotiation nor in which cases they have a positive or negative effect on negotiation outcomes. In the existing literature, there are studies showing that positive emotions can benefit negotiators, but at the same time, there are studies revealing that positive emotions can be harmful under certain circumstances. The current study is an effort to shed light on the role of positive emotions in negotiation. In particular, the aim of this study is: 1) to assess the effectiveness of loving-kindness meditation (LKM) as a mood induction procedure (MIP), and 2) to investigate the influence of positive emotions on different aspects of negotiation processes and outcomes. More specifically, the research questions of this study are:

- 1) What is the relationship between positive emotions before and after LKM, and the relationship between negative emotions before and after LKM?
- 2) What is the relationship between positive emotions and negotiators' decision to reach an agreement?
- 3) What is the relationship between positive emotions and first offer, aspirations, expectations, individual gains, joint gains, and negotiation duration?
- 4) What is the relationship between the role and the aspirations, expectations, individual gains, and first offer?

## 2. Method

Although several studies have been conducted over the last few decades regarding the impact of positive emotions in negotiation, many inconsistencies still exist. In order to look into this complicated but, at the same time, crucial issue, we conducted a pilot study with a Greek adult population.

Research exploring the role of emotions in negotiation has been grounded methodologically in experimental approaches using mood induction procedures. In this kind of studies, participants in a laboratory or classroom setting are usually exposed to experimental manipulation of mood, and then they are requested to role-play participation in a simulated (typically mixed-motive) nego-

tiation exercise (Barry & Fulmer, 2004).

## 2.1. Participants

Undergraduate psychology students ( $N = 38$ ) from a Greek University (Panteion University of Social & Political Studies) were recruited in order to participate in the experiment in exchange for the opportunity given to them to attend a negotiation seminar free of charge and get a participation certificate. Thirty-six were women (94.7%) and two were men (5.3%), with age ranging from 18 to 49 ( $M = 20.84$ ,  $SD = 5.69$ ). Most of them (60.5%) had no working experience. All participants spoke fluently Greek and were representative of the University population.

## 2.2. Design

We randomly assigned participants to one of three conditions: in the first condition ( $N = 12$ ), we induced positive emotions in both parties in each dyad, in the second condition ( $N = 12$ ), we induced positive emotions in one of the two counterparts, and in the third condition ( $N = 14$ ), we did not induce positive emotions in any of the participants (Table 1).

We induced positive emotions by subjecting participants to a meditation exercise before the negotiation. Prior research has used meditation to manipulate mood and emotions (Freshman et al., 2002). More specifically, we used loving-kindness meditation, which is one of the most widely used meditative practices and from previous research, it has been found to be effective in increasing levels of positive emotions in a short time (Hutcherson et al., 2008). LKM involves various thoughts and visualizations and intends to cultivate positive emotions and broaden attention by asking participants to put emphasis on their breath and contemplate one and afterward, more people for whom they feel warm and caring emotions (Fredrickson et al., 2008). As a cover story, we informed participants that their counterparts' arrival would delay, and therefore we proposed them to have a meditation exercise in the meanwhile in order to remain interested. The meditation exercise lasted approximately seven minutes.

**Table 1.** Demographics per condition.

|                                 | Group 1                 | Group 2                      |                                  | Group 3         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
|                                 | ( $N = 12$ )            | ( $N = 12$ )                 | ( $N = 12$ )                     | ( $N = 14$ )    |
|                                 | Both parties intervened | Intervened party ( $N = 6$ ) | Not intervened party ( $N = 6$ ) | No intervention |
| Women                           | 12 (100%)               | 6 (100%)                     | 6 (100%)                         | 12 (85.7%)      |
| Men                             | 0 (0%)                  | 0 (0%)                       | 0 (0%)                           | 2 (14.3%)       |
| Age $M$ ( $SD$ )                | 24.08 (9.55)            | 19.17 (0.41)                 | 19.17 (0.41)                     | 19.50 (0.76)    |
| Working experience $M$ ( $SD$ ) | 3.25 (5.55)             | 0.00 (0.00)                  | 0.00 (0.00)                      | 0.64 (0.74)     |

## 2.3. Measures

### 2.3.1. Demographics

Socio-demographic information collected included gender, age, and working experience.

### 2.3.2. Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE-8)

Participants completed SPANE-8 (Kyriazos et al., 2018), which is a subjective well-being measure with two distinct factors: positive experiences (4 one-word items) and negative experiences (4 one-word items). Each dimension contains three specific feelings and one general feeling. The four positive experiences are Pleasant, Happy, Joyful, Contented, and the four negative experiences are Bad, Sad, Afraid, Angry. Items are scored on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very rarely or never*) to 5 (*very often or always*). Experiences are evaluated over a 4-week time frame. The positive score (SPANE-P) and the negative score (SPANE-N) can range from 4 to 20. Internal consistency reliability measured by Cronbach's alpha (Kyriazos et al., 2017) is 0.85 and 0.75 for SPANE-P and SPANE-N respectively.

### 2.3.3. Procedure

We recruited an even number of participants since we needed to form dyads for the negotiation exercise. Participants of the experimental condition arrived first, and the facilitators seated them and read loudly the background information and the general instructions. After participants confirmed that instructions were clear, they completed SPANE-8. Next, participants read the negotiation instructions, were given the payoff chart and got prepared for the negotiation task.

As a cover story, we informed participants that the other group, consisting of their counterparts, had delayed and until their arrival, we could have a pleasant time by having a meditation exercise. Following the meditation, they completed SPANE-8 again together with two additional questions about their aspiration levels (What do you hope to earn in the negotiation?) and their expectations (What do you expect to earn in the negotiation?). After responding to these questions, their counterparts (who were in a different classroom and had followed the same procedure, except for the meditation) entered the classroom, and participants negotiated with their opponents. Participants negotiated face-to-face, and we recorded each negotiation.

### 2.3.4. Negotiation Task

Consistent with prior emotion and negotiation research, we used the three-issue cell-phone negotiation (De Dreu et al., 2003; Brooks & Schweitzer, 2011), which is a mixed-motive negotiation. Negotiation situations can differ depending on the degree to which they provide motivation for cooperation or competition (De Dreu, 2010; Weber et al., 2004; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). As mixed-motive is considered the type of negotiation where parties have the need to both compete in order to maximize their earnings and cooperate so as to reach an agreement (Deutsch, 1973) and thus, a mixed motive negotiation is the most suitable for

comprehending the social dynamics in general and the role of emotions in particular (Adam & Brett, 2015).

We informed participants that they would be randomly assigned to the role of either buyer or seller. Participants were invited to negotiate with their counterparts the price of a cell phone, which was a distributive issue (i.e., win-lose), as well as its warranty and service period that had integrative potential. Participants had the opportunity to increase the total dyadic outcome by trading across these three issues, and they were provided with a payoff chart that represented payoffs related to nine different levels of outcomes for each of these issues.

Sellers preferred the cell phone to be purchased at a high price, and with a short warranty and service period, while buyers preferred a low price, long warranty period, and long service period. The maximum possible individual profit for both buyers and sellers was \$15.20 and the minimum was \$0. The maximum possible joint outcome was \$17.60, while the minimum possible dyadic outcome was \$12.80. Participants were not provided with their counterpart's payoff chart, but they understood that it differed from their own. Also, they were told that the negotiation could terminate in one of three ways: 1) they reached an agreement, 2) one of the negotiators chose to exit, or 3) time ran out before settlement. Participants had limited time to negotiate (10 min) and they were instructed that if they managed to reach an agreement they would earn the promised incentive, otherwise, none of the negotiators in each dyad would get it.

### 3. Results

Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS software (Version 28). First of all, a series of one-tailed paired samples t-tests were employed to compare pre- and post-measures in study outcomes for the experimental and control group.

For the experimental group, a statistically significant increase was observed for positive emotions ( $t(17) = -9.244$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), when comparing the scores before and after the meditation. The prices of positive emotions increased significantly in the post-measure. Also, a statistically significant decrease was observed for negative emotions ( $t(17) = 8.20$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) when comparing the scores before and after the meditation. The levels of negative emotions dropped significantly in the post-measure (Table 2).

The same statistical analyses were carried out for the control group. According to one-tailed t-tests, as expected, no statistically significant difference was found when comparing the pre- and post-measure scores in terms of positive

**Table 2.** Pre- and post-induction results for the experimental group.

|                   | Pre-induction M (SD) | Post-induction M (SD) | t       |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Positive emotions | 14.33 (2.114)        | 18.11 (1.906)         | -9.244* |
| Negative emotions | 9.55 (2.895)         | 7.28 (2.052)          | 8.200*  |

\* $p < 0.001$ .

emotions ( $t(19) = 1.831, p = 0.083$ ) and negative emotions ( $t(19) = -0.326, p = 0.748$ ) (Table 3). Therefore, we can conclude that loving-kindness meditation has been effective in increasing positive emotions and decreasing negative emotions, and having this in mind, we can proceed with checking whether positive emotions can influence negotiation processes and outcomes.

Regarding exit decisions, only six out of the 38 participants chose to exit before reaching an agreement. More specifically, 32 participants (84.2%) reached an agreement, 2 (5.3%) preferred to exit, and 4 (10.5%) did not manage to reach an agreement before the end of time. Consistent with our predictions, all of the participants in the experimental condition reached an agreement, while all those who chose to exit or did not manage to reach an agreement before the end of the time were in the control group (Table 4). However, the total number who exited is too small for us to draw inferences about exit decisions.

As far as the first offer is concerned, it is a critical element of negotiations because it anchors the negotiation (Brooks & Schweitzer, 2011). In fact, the first offer represents the first chance for negotiators to make concessions. Previous research has associated first offers with subsequent patterns of concessions and, ultimately, negotiated outcomes (Galinsky et al., 2002). In our study, 10 participants from the experimental group and 9 participants from the control group made the first offer, so we found no link between the condition and the first offer.

For each of the participants who made a deal, we computed the total individual profit they earned. In addition, we computed the joint gains for each dyad. For the three dyads who failed to reach an agreement, the individual gains, as well as the dyadic gains, were equal to zero. Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to test the correlations between the variables of positive emotions, aspirations, expectations, individual gains, joint gains, and negotiation duration.

For the first condition, consisting of the dyads we induced positive emotions to both parties, no statistically significant differences were found in terms of aspirations ( $r = 0.281, p = 0.377$ ), expectations ( $r = 0.317, p = 0.315$ ), individual gains ( $r = -0.120, p = 0.710$ ), and joint gains ( $r = 0.272, p = 0.392$ ). However, we

**Table 3.** Pre- and post-measure results for the control group.

|                   | Pre-measure M (SD) | Post-measure M (SD) | t      |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------|
| Positive emotions | 13.25 (2.971)      | 12.95 (2.837)       | 1.831  |
| Negative emotions | 11.35 (2.834)      | 11.40 (2.780)       | -0.326 |

\* $p < 0.001$ .

**Table 4.** Negotiation outcomes per condition in terms of agreement/impasse/end of time.

|                 | Agreement | Impasse | End of time |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|-------------|
| Intervention    | 18 (100%) | 0 (0%)  | 0 (0%)      |
| No intervention | 14 (70%)  | 2 (10%) | 4 (20%)     |

found statistically significant differences in terms of the negotiation duration ( $r = -0.682$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ), showing that the higher the level of positive emotions, the shorter the time duration needed for negotiators to reach an agreement (Table 5). Interestingly, some positive emotions seemed to correlate more with negotiation duration, although there is no statistically significant difference. For example, positive emotions “contented”, “pleasant”, and “joyful” correlated stronger with negotiation duration than “happy”.

Regarding the participants who were induced with positive emotions, but their counterparts were not, we found no significant differences in terms of aspirations ( $r = -0.652$ ,  $p = 0.161$ ), expectations ( $r = -0.164$ ,  $p = 0.756$ ), individual gains ( $r = -0.714$ ,  $p = 0.111$ ), joint gains ( $r = -0.923$ ,  $p = 0.109$ ) or negotiation duration ( $r = 0.421$ ,  $p = 0.406$ ).

Similarly, for participants who were not induced with positive emotions, but their opponents were, we found no significant differences in terms of aspirations ( $r = -0.104$ ,  $p = 0.844$ ), expectations ( $r = 0.245$ ,  $p = 0.639$ ), individual gains ( $r = -0.473$ ,  $p = 0.344$ ), joint gains ( $r = 0.430$ ,  $p = 0.395$ ), or negotiation duration ( $r = -0.103$ ,  $p = 0.845$ ).

Finally, as far as the control group is concerned, consisting of participants none of whom were induced with positive emotions, no significant differences were found in terms of aspirations ( $r = 0.442$ ,  $p = 0.113$ ), expectations ( $r = -0.276$ ,  $p = 0.339$ ), individual gains ( $r = 0.483$ ,  $p = 0.081$ ), joint gains ( $r = 0.597$ ,  $p = 0.024$ ), or negotiation duration ( $r = 0.652$ ,  $p = 0.021$ ).

The role (seller/buyer) was not found to be related with aspirations ( $t = 0.771$ ,  $p = 0.126$ ), expectations ( $t = 0.084$ ,  $p = 0.084$ ), or individual gains ( $t = 0.589$ ,  $p = 0.381$ ). Also, exactly half (19 of 38) of the first offers were made by sellers, so we can conclude that the role does not have any effect on the first offer.

In summary, the present study revealed that the practice of loving-kindness meditation as a mood induction procedure led to increased levels of positive emotions and decreased levels of negative emotions, which, in turn, affected the cooperation potential and the negotiation duration but did not have any impact on participants’ first offer, aspirations, expectations, individual gains, and dyadic gains. Also, the role was not found to influence negotiators’ first offer, aspirations, expectations, and individual gains.

**Table 5.** Correlations (Pearson) for condition 1.

|                      | Positive emotions |
|----------------------|-------------------|
|                      | R                 |
| Aspirations          | 0.281             |
| Expectations         | 0.317             |
| Individual gains     | -0.120            |
| Joint gains          | 0.272             |
| Negotiation duration | -0.682*           |

\* $p < 0.05$ . \*\* $p < 0.01$ .

## 4. Discussion

The primary goals of this study were to test the effectiveness of loving-kindness meditation as a mood induction procedure in a Greek adult population and also to investigate whether positive emotions affect negotiation processes and outcomes. The findings of this study confirmed the effectiveness of LKM, which has been tested by other researchers in the past (Carson et al., 2005; Fredrickson et al., 2008), since participants in the experimental group reported increased levels of positive emotions, while their levels of negative emotions dropped significantly. At the same time, for the participants in the control group, no changes were observed in their levels of positive and negative emotions. SPANE-8 seemed to be an appropriate scale for such experiments using mood induction, as it was found to be quite sensitive in detecting emotional differences in a short time.

In line with previous studies, which support that positive emotions are linked to more cooperative strategies (e.g., Forgas, 1998; Hollingshead & Carnevale, 1990; Kopelman et al. 2006; Baron et al., 1990) and reduced likelihood of impasse (e.g., Kopelman et al., 2006), the results of this study provide preliminary evidence that negotiators experiencing positive emotions have increased cooperation potential and reduced possibilities for exit decisions. Nevertheless, due to the small sample size, we refrain from drawing inferences about this.

A very interesting finding derived from this study is the fact that positive emotions were found to have a significant impact on negotiation duration. More specifically, results showed that the higher the levels of positive emotions, the less negotiation time is needed for individuals to reach an agreement. Furthermore, different positive emotions have a different impact on negotiation duration (for example, individuals feeling joyful or contented need less time to reach an agreement than those who feel happy). To the best of our knowledge, such evidence about positive emotions and negotiation duration cannot be found in the existing literature.

These findings can probably be explained based on the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001), according to which positive emotions broaden individuals' thought-action repertoire by triggering attention, thinking, creativity, and novelty, enabling them to form durable personal resources. Furthermore, according to Fredrickson (2013), distinct positive emotions serve different functions. For instance, joy creates the urge for a person to get involved, while contentment, also known as serenity, arises when an individual feels comfortable under certain circumstances, and creates the urge to savor and integrate these situations into new priorities or values.

Despite several researchers' findings according to which positive emotions are associated with higher individual gains and increased joint gains (e.g., Carnevale & Isen, 1986; Kramer et al., 1993; Allred et al., 1997; Anderson & Thompson, 2004), inconsistent results derived from the present study, as it was found that positive emotions do not correlate with these two desirable negotiation out-

comes. The same inconsistency exists regarding aspirations and expectations levels for which our study did not generate any correlations with positive emotions, as other scholars' studies (e.g., [Kramer et al., 1993](#); [Baron, 1990](#)) did in the past.

Finally, as far as the first offer is concerned, there is penury in studies investigating its relationship to emotions and role. However, [Brooks & Schweitzer \(2001\)](#), who studied the role of anxiety in negotiation, revealed that anxiety relates to lower first offers, but the role does not have any significant effect on first offer, aspirations, expectations, and individual gains, findings that are supported by the present study.

## 5. Implications, Limitations, and Avenues for Future Research

In a field that has exploded with the interest in the impact of emotions on negotiation processes and outcomes, we conducted the first study in Greece using an experimental design with mood induction in order to examine the role of positive emotions in negotiation. In addition, although several mood induction procedures such as the use of hypnosis (e.g., [Friswell & McConkey, 1989](#)), texts (e.g., [Westermann et al., 1996](#)), music (e.g., [Clark, 1983](#)), gifts (e.g., [Isen, Daubman & Gorgoglione, 1987](#)), and odors (e.g., [Ehrlichman & Halpern, 1988](#)) have been used to manipulate emotions before a negotiation simulation, this is the first time that loving-kindness meditation is used. Finally, it is the first time SPANE-8 has been used as a scale to measure positive emotions before and after a mood induction procedure.

In this study, we suggest that loving-kindness meditation can be used in several cases as an intervention for increasing levels of positive emotions and decreasing levels of negative emotions. Prescriptively, our findings illustrate that negotiators may reach an agreement and avoid an impasse if they experience positive emotions. This finding, together with the fact that positive emotions seem to reduce the time needed for negotiators to reach an agreement, can be useful for negotiation courses as well as negotiation simulations and training for professionals who need to make agreements quickly and under time pressure (for example for salesmen who need to have quick deals before they serve the next customer). This could save time and energy for individuals and of course resources for businesses. These programs could focus on specific positive emotions that were found in this study to correlate stronger with negotiation duration.

A limitation of this study is the fact that the results are correlational in nature and this does not allow us for cause-effect relationships regarding the variables under study. In addition, we mainly focused on the intrapersonal (internally felt emotions) effect of emotions, while further research is needed to examine the role of emotions in negotiation at the interpersonal level. Also, the emotions induced to the participants were incidental, meaning that they derived from preexisting, unrelated to the negotiation facts. Further research should be con-

ducted on directed emotions, which are those emotions caused by the negotiation itself. Additionally, the role of other variables such as individuals' emotional regulation, emotional intelligence, cognitive skills, character strengths, and personality characteristics should be examined in future studies.

Other avenues for future research could include the assessment of post-negotiation behaviors and socio-psychological outcomes of negotiations, such as the established trust, negotiators' impressions and perceptions of the process and outcomes, as well as their desire to negotiate again with the same counterpart in the future. Finally, although most studies on the role of emotions in negotiation take place in university settings with undergraduate students (Bendersky & McGinn, 2010), this may tell us little about the negotiation behaviors of professionals within organizations; thus, studies with real-life negotiations that involve substantial financial and relationship risks would be valuable.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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