The Effects of Evolution of Communication on Dispute Resolution and Negotiation

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Introduction

Human interaction regarding dispute resolution and negotiation has had a major shift with the rise of virtualization. Once people are not confined to physical spaces, encounters are increasingly mediated through our digital platforms. This results in massive declines on the effectiveness of people disputing and negotiating with one another. With the instantaneous pathways we have at our fingertips that allow us to reach someone anywhere in the world in a single second, the methods we use to discuss and resolve issues are bound to change. Previously in history, people would be forced to sit on their thoughts and wait to speak about the matter on their mind to the other party in person. Nowadays in the heat of the moment people can negotiate and dispute with one another without much forethought about the effects. The virtualization of this realm presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities, particularly in areas of dispute resolution and negotiation. Along with these changes, the motives and tactics that are seen during a negotiation have become increasingly complex.

Virtual environments play a role in altering the dynamics of negotiation, considering factors such as the disembodied nature of interaction and the potential for anonymity. There is congruence between a participant's behavior in the dispute and the outcome of a dispute has a higher motivation to the negotiators than their actual feelings about the situation. This is an interesting point to examine along with the changes of tactics since the virtualization of communication. How do virtual environments and the rise of nonphysical interactions change the power dynamics, communication strategies, and potential outcomes within conflict resolution and negotiation?

The Virtualization of Communication and the Effects on Power Dynamics

The methods of communication within our society have changed with accessibility that we have to technology that enables us to reach people anywhere in the matter of seconds. The quickness of these virtual methods of communication has enabled society to act upon disputes faster than ever before. This is a social scientific analysis with slight bias towards the negative effects of virtualization within dispute resolution. Reading someone's body language, facial expressions, and voice tone can truly let a person know deeper meaning and context to the literal words that were delivered. "The characteristics of behaviors can be interrelated to the change of behavior in the near environment of online context in terms of communication" (Joo 2017). There are so many factors that are removed from virtual conversation that cause people to be able to make statements and decisions that they never would have made face to face. This article draws attention to the instantaneous nature of our communication nowadays through things like text and email. The quickness of these virtual methods of communication has enabled society to act upon disputes faster than ever before (Mommers 2006). Virtual environments have caused interruptions that disrupt these cues. Text-based communication has the ability of identity and emotion, potentially equalizing power between characters. Analyzing how characters navigate these shifts in power dynamics within a virtual setting can reveal the author's perspective on the potential benefits or drawbacks of disembodied interaction.

The Effects Virtualization has on Communication Strategies

The tactics that people use during negotiation are unique in the sense that people give in the scenario, with the hopes to gain. Through the experiment, they found that most of the participants were validating and giving rational accounts for why they would need to learn the

information that they were negotiating for. I find this article to be compelling and competent because the data supports the claims within the study (Cancela 2022).

The limitations and affordances of virtual communication can significantly alter negotiation strategies in literature. The absence of nonverbal cues might necessitate more explicit communication of needs and desires. There is competition between parties in order to obtain their specific goals even though both parties are working together to come up with a mutual agreement. The mixed motives across the different parties with related yet polar opposite goals creates a dilemma for the negotiators when deciding whether to share or keep information. They must err on the side of caution when becoming too trusting and resist worsening the conflict. (Putnam 2010). Conversely, the ease of information sharing in virtual environments could lead to a more data-driven approach to conflict resolution. Furthermore, virtual environments might introduce new communication tools, forcing characters to adapt their strategies. By examining how characters employ virtual communication to achieve their goals, literary analysis can illuminate the potential impact of new technologies on the way we approach conflict and negotiation.

Virtualization has fundamentally altered the landscape of communication strategies. Physical presence, once a cornerstone of negotiation and dispute resolution, can now be bypassed through virtual environments. This disembodied interaction can be a double-edged sword. On one hand, it allows for greater accessibility and flexibility, enabling communication across geographical barriers and time zones. However, the absence of non-verbal cues and the potential for anonymity can lead to misunderstandings and a more informal tone. “Moreover, the use of interpersonal relationships for coordination, which many think of as an alternative to elec-tronic network use, was positively associated with greater net-work use” (Kraut). To

navigate this new landscape, communication strategies must adapt, emphasizing clear and concise language and employing alternative methods to build rapport and trust in the virtual space.

The Potential Resolution Outcomes of Negotiation

The manner with how people behave during negotiation is typically congruent with the end result of the resolution. In Liu's article regarding the process of negotiation, a survey was conducted to determine emotions and feelings regarding how people negotiate. This social scientific survey analyzes the differences of emotions people have during the process of negotiation and dispute resolution from an individual sense, as well as when facing another person (Liu 2009). The unrealistic idea that is purely virtual interaction can lead to unforeseen outcomes in examples of dispute resolution. Misunderstandings because there is not enough provided context or that there is a need for a more emotionally vulnerable communication. On the other hand, completely removing the physical tactics of intimidation that may make an environment for more productive negotiations since there are not as many fear factors between the multiple parties in a discussion. Looking at the good aspects as well as the bad aspects of conflict resolution relating to virtual environments opens up insight to the potential consequences of a world that is becoming more and more virtual. With so much of life being "Compromises may even be the intended outcome if the participants do not have conflicting private or partisan interests, but only a difference of opinion" (Van Laar 2018).

Conclusion

The literary realm offers a unique lens to explore the impact of virtualization on conflict resolution and negotiation. By deconstructing how virtual environments and disembodied interaction are portrayed in works of fiction, we gain valuable insights into potential shifts in

power dynamics, communication strategies, and the ultimate outcomes of these processes. Virtual environments can create a sense of anonymity or distance, potentially emboldening characters or altering traditional hierarchies. Communication styles may also evolve, with a reliance on text-based interaction or the absence of nonverbal cues potentially leading to misunderstandings or missed opportunities. Ultimately, literary analysis can illuminate the potential benefits and drawbacks of virtual dispute resolution, prompting reflection on how we can leverage technology to foster productive and equitable negotiation practices in the real world.

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