Collective Memory Support in Negotiation: 
A Theoretical Framework

Souren Paul
College of Business Administration, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
Carbondale, IL 62901
E-mail: paul@cba.siu.edu

Abstract

Negotiation analysis is complex. It may involve multiple issues of dispute, rules of negotiation, negotiators’ strategies, interventions by third party, negotiators’ cognitions, beliefs, preferences and attitude towards risks. Negotiators may have limited attention, limited capacity to store and retrieve memory information and limited capacity to process information. As a result they rely on heuristics or schemas and fail to generate optimal outcomes in negotiation. An approach to overcome cognitive limitation in negotiation is to provide additional support to store and retrieve memory information. This paper reiterates the conceptual framework of a computer supported negotiation memory support system (NMSS) and proposes a theoretical model of the influence of NMSS on negotiation outcome.

Key words: Collective memory, group decision support systems, negotiation support, organizational memory

1. Introduction

Negotiation is a process in which two or more parties (individuals, groups or organizations) with conflicting interests attempt to resolve differences and arrive at outcome(s). The parties engaged in a negotiation process may try to resolve their disagreement along multiple dimensions. Bargaining can be viewed as a limiting case of negotiation in which the parties dispute over a single dimension [19]. Examples of negotiation abound both inside and outside the organization. Collective bargaining, budget allocations, finalization of contracts, working out purchase price with suppliers are some common examples of organizational negotiations. Information systems that support negotiation activities are categorized as negotiation support systems (NSS). Various implementations of NSS have been discussed in the literature [33].