
Emotional Intelligence and Behavior Styles of Russian Middle Managers in Business Communication

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Abstract:

The study focuses on emotional intelligence and preferred negotiating styles of managers at work. There were 162 respondents (22 to 60 years old, MD=36.38) from a Russian food manufacturing company approached to study their negotiating experience with clients, customers, vendors, etc.

The following methods were used: the Emotional Intelligence ("EQ") Test, the Emotional Intelligence ("EmIn") Test, negotiating style determination procedure, "Your Business Communication Style" test, the Conflict Mode Instrument, and authors' questionnaire. Data was processed with Pearson's r correlation and regression coefficient and factor analysis (main component analysis). Results of the study revealed a significant correlation between emotional intelligence and the preferred negotiating styles.

As a result, it was concluded that people-oriented interaction style correlates with developed interpersonal emotional intelligence; their relationship is indirect with other variables in between. Regression analysis revealed a relationship between emotional intelligence and process orientation in negotiations.

This study was the first one to theoretically develop and empirically test the possibility of studying a relationship between the levels of emotional intellect and preferred negotiating styles.

Keywords: *Business communication styles, interpersonal emotional intelligence, intrapersonal emotional intelligence, focus on action, focus on process, focus on people, focus on idea.*

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1. Introduction

Until the last century most of the scientists thought that intelligence was a cognitive complex of memory, learning, and problem solving. E. Thorndike (1920) described social intelligence that related to managing and understanding others. H. Gardner (1983) is known for his famous theory of multiple intelligence, and even more for the fact that his theory focused on the ability to understand one's own feelings, motivations, values, attitudes and fears; the ability to understand others and their feelings, motivations, values, intentions.

Business communications as such can be considered an emotional situation (Ogilvie and Carsky, 2002), that takes place due to intensified needs and interests of two or more parties. The process of negotiating may become a conflict interaction. As a result, emotional regulation of one's own behavior and ability to positively influence the partner becomes important because these traits are interrelated with the development of trust, satisfaction with cooperation, desire for long-term collaboration (Kim *et al.*, 2015), perspectives of team development (Druskat and Wolff, 2001) and strengthening of business image (Goleman, 1995), focused on long or short communications (Gurieva and Udavikhina, 2014).

The main objective of this study was to test the relationship between components of emotional intelligence and preferred behavior style in business communication. The plan is to review such components of business communication style as behavioral strategy in situations of conflict and focus of business interaction.

2. Literature Review

Emotional intelligence has increasingly been perceived as one of the most important integral parts of personality. Since 1990-es this phenomenon became a prominent object of studies. The amount of data about it has been rapidly increasing. Theoretically, Mayer *et al.*, (2000) suggested distinguishing 'models of abilities' and 'mixed models' of emotional intelligence. The first type includes their own model that defines emotional intelligence as cognitive ability; the second type includes models that define emotional intelligence as combination of cognitive abilities and personal characteristics. The 'mixed models' refer to the models of emotional intelligence by Bar-On (2006) and Goleman (2006); they bring together cognitive, personal and motivation traits, and are therefore closely connected to adaptation for real life. These models presume measurement of emotional intelligence using self-reported questionnaires like traditional personality traits questionnaires. It is important that in Goleman's model, emotional intelligence is not a separate ability; it is related to personality's goal-setting. It means that demonstration of a certain trait depends on a vital need. In Russia, Lusin (2009) developed a model like the model by Mayer *et al.*, (2006). Lusin defines emotional intelligence as "*ability to understand one's own emotions and emotions of others, as well as to manage those emotions*".

Literature review revealed that management psychology increases its interest in emotional intelligence. A common theme of various publications is that emotional intelligence is a universal ability of personality, penetrating all aspects of its professional life. There appear to be three main streams of research. The first one develops the idea of emotional intelligence as a mediating or regulating mechanism in solving business problems. This study adheres to this idea. It considers such phenomena as status (Maamari, 2016), productivity (Mustafa, 2016), performance (Boštjančič, 2010), solving conflicts of interest (Troth, 2014), decision making (Di Fabio, 2010; 2011; 2013; Latalova, 2015; Avsec, 2012).

The second tendency approaches emotional intelligence as internal to personality. Related concepts are job satisfaction (Boštjančič, 2010; Rezvani, 2016; Jung, 2016), mental health (Carter, 2017; Dadich, 2017), defense mechanisms or copings (Jung, 2016), burnout (Mustafa, 2016), spirituality (Jena, 2015), perception of others (Ramachandran, 2011) exploring the association between work-life balance and job satisfaction (Pradhan *et al.*, 2016).

The third school of thought includes research aiming to understand the role of emotional intelligence in leadership and in managing others in general (Antonakis, 2009; Lindenbaum, 2010; Boyatzis, 2009; 2013; Zineldin, 2014), and interrelation between emotional intelligence and leaders' performance (Nair *et al.*, 2016).

At the same time, there were no publications discovered that would specifically analyze the role of emotional intelligence in such an integrated concept and personality trait as its communication style, and preferred negotiating style. It is important to mention that negotiations as a method was undoubtedly used since ancient times, while full scientific analysis of this phenomenon began only in the second half of the 20th century. Following Steele (1999), Fisher and Ury (2010), the authors consider negotiations as a dialogue between the parties who discuss ideas, information, and alternatives, to reach mutually acceptable solution (agreement).

Each person studies his or her own interests, but the parties are interdependent and therefore they use negotiations to find solution of the problem. Mastenbroek (1993) paid special attention to the problem of interdependence. He perceived negotiations as "*ability to follow one's own interests in combination with awareness that interdependence is inevitable*". The researcher repeatedly stressed that the process of negotiations emerges specifically from this interdependence: parties pursue interests that they cannot meet on their own, at the same time their interests intersect. According to Mastenbroek, negotiations strive to find a solution to this opposition.

One of the significant factors during negotiations is revealing parties' personalities, out of the setting. According to evaluation Rubin and Brown (citation from Lebedeva, 1997), they may be of two types depending on the focus in the situation or in the interpersonal relationship. Gurieva (2015) proposed four negotiating styles (focus on the action, on the process, on people and on the idea). She defined

negotiating styles by several factors: from personal idiosyncrasies to interests and needs of participants. Selection of the specific style depends on the goals of negotiations, as well as on their circumstances and whether there will be further collaboration with the opposite party.

Scientific novelty of the presented study is established by considering the connection between emotional intelligence and the concept of the business interaction style, for the first time. Existing publications do not emphasize the impact of emotional intelligence on manager's preferred communication styles. Bridging this gap is a relevant and current objective because communication is the main form of interaction among people, and specifically at work. The work is bound by rules and depends on the kind of tasks and objectives; it requires employees to have the ability to navigate emotional state of his or her partner, understand and manage his or her own emotions. Therefore, it was important to study middle managers who need to coordinate perspectives both of their senior managers and direct reports. The obtained results are expected to contribute to better understanding of the role of emotional challenges in the observed communicational behavior of negotiators.

Hypothesis 1: Interpersonal aspect of emotional intelligence is interconnected with the negotiating style focused on the partner's interests.

Hypothesis 2: Intrapersonal aspect of emotional intelligence has the strongest connection to focus on the process of negotiating.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data

The goal of the research is to study the connection between preferred negotiating styles and the level of emotional intelligence. Object of the research is employees of a food manufacturing Russian company. Experience of negotiating at different levels (from establishing contact with a client to negotiating at the highest corporate levels) was the main criterion of respondent selection. The research was conducted in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 2016.

3.2 Methods

There were 162 respondents (22 to 60 years old, MD=36.38, standard deviation 8.03) taking part in the research, 93 women and 69 men. The employees of the Russian company were the subject of the research, the basic kind of activity of which is foodstuff production. The main criterion of choosing respondents for the study was their experience in negotiations conducting at different levels (from getting into contact with a client until negotiations at the highest level). The study was made in Russia, in St.-Petersburg in 2016.

Each respondent was given a printed package of questionnaires and tests (as described below), and one day to fill them out at any convenient time to respect the schedule of professional duties. Researchers explained every respondent what their task was, in detail. Filled out questionnaires were verified for accuracy of fulfilling written instructions. If there was a mistake (e.g., questions missed), respondents corrected that mistake at the researcher's request.

The research used the following methods: "EQ" by D. Goleman (2006) as translated and adapted in Russian (Fetiskin, 2002), and "EmIn" by Lusin (2009) to study emotional intelligence; "Your Business Communication Style" test (Gurieva, 2015), questionnaire determining negotiating styles adapted by Myasoyedov (2008), and Thomas–Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument adapted by Grishina (2008) to study negotiating styles. The authors developed a questionnaire for demographical data.

The purpose of "EQ" questionnaire is to identify abilities to understand personality's relationships as expressed in emotions, and manage emotional sphere based on decision making. The questionnaire consists of 30 statements distributed in 5 scales (6 questions per scale): "emotional awareness", "management of one's own emotions", "self-motivation", "empathy", "assessing emotions of others".

"EmIn" questionnaire is based on the definition of emotional intelligence as ability to understand one's own emotions as well as emotions of others, and managing them. EmIn questionnaire consists of 46 statements that are distributed in 5 sub-scales, which in their turn compose 4 major scales (higher order scales). Within the structure of emotional intelligence, the author of the method highlights two aspects: interpersonal emotional intelligence that stands for understanding of emotions of others and managing those emotions, and intrapersonal emotional intelligence that stands for understanding of one's own emotions and managing thereof. Other aspects of emotional intelligence include understanding of one's own emotions and emotions of others, ability to manage one's own emotions and emotions of others. The integral score of general emotional intelligence is the sum of its major scales. Initial sub-scales are the following 5: understanding emotions of others, managing emotions of others, understanding one's own emotions, managing one's own emotions, and control of expression of one's own emotions.

"Your Business Communication Style" test allows identifying four ways of behavior in professional sphere:

- style 1: 'focus on the actions' is characterized by discussing results, specific issues, behavior, efficiency, progress, responsibility, confirmations, experience, disturbances, achievements, changes, solutions;
- style 2: 'focus on the process' is characterized by discussing facts, procedure issues, planning, organization, control, check, tests, analysis, supervisions, validations, details;

- style 3: 'focus on the people' is characterized by discussing people in general, their needs and motives, team work, problems of communication, feelings, "team spirit", understanding, self-development, susceptibility, awareness, collaboration, beliefs, values, expectations, relations;
- style 4: 'focus on the ideas' is characterized by discussing concepts, novelties, creative approach, opportunities, possibilities, big plans, different issues regarding what is new in a certain sphere, interdependence, new ways, new methods, improvements, problems, potential, alternatives.

The questionnaire determining negotiating styles adapted by S. Myasoyedov (2008), considers 5 styles of negotiating: compromise, bargaining, threat, emotions, logic. In addition, there is one more style, acceptance, which is not a style of negotiating, but a way to negotiate using abdication of one's own interests.

Conflict Mode Instrument designed by Thomas and Kilmann (2008) to study personal predisposition to behavior in conflict, identification of styles of resolving conflict situations. Foundational for the typology of conflict behavior are two behavioral styles: cooperation that is about attention to interests of other people involved in the conflicts, and assertion that is about protecting one's own interests.

Accordingly, to this two-dimensional model, Thomas and Kilmann (2008) identify the following styles of regulating conflict: competing, avoiding, accommodating, collaborating, and compromising. Authors' questionnaire helped determine demographical characteristics of respondents (gender, age, education, job title) as well as the degree to which they had participated in negotiations.

Data was processed using Pearson's rho correlation coefficient, primary descriptive statistics, Chi² correlation and regression analysis, single factor dispersion analysis, factor analysis (main component analysis). Analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistic software, version 22.

4. Results

Because of initial data calculation, it was revealed that among probationers 47.5% of respondents participate in negotiations routinely, 9.5% - every day, 9.5% - monthly and 15.87% participate in negotiations rarely.

Many respondents (87.3%) have high education (one or several). 11% of probationers have secondary special or incomplete high education. Analysis of family status showed that 73% of probationers are married, in registered or civil marriage. 25.4% are not married. The respondents participated in the research show more often the middle level of emotional intelligence, both in general index of interpersonal emotional intelligence and in its separate components (interpersonal management, understanding and managing own emotions). For the respondents middle and high evaluations of empathy, recognition of another person emotions,

and high values of expression control are typical (the data comparison is carried out with the help of Chi-square). The most frequent are such styles in negotiations as acceptance, bargaining, compromise and logical basement (Table 1).

Table 1. Preferred styles of negotiations conducting

Styles of negotiations conducting	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
Acceptance	70.76	14	0.01
Compromise	104.04	10	0.00
Bargaining	65.78	14	0.08
Menace	116.33	26	0.10
Logical basement	94.30	19	0.01
Emotions	66.22	17	0.22

The business communication styles (focus on actions, on the process, on relationship and on the ideas) are presented evenly. It's necessary to note, that many respondents use several styles at the same time. Using the mixed style, one shows more often combination of direction on the process and on human relations. When the conflict situations emerge, the respondents adhere on average the compromise strategy, preferring the 'loss-loss' model. Further follow preferring avoidance and co-operation, at that most rarely the research participants appeal to active assertion of their interests and rivalry (the data comparison is carried out with the help of Chi-square). Because of correlation analysis interconnections between the business communication style and emotional intelligence indices were revealed (the correlation matrix is shown in Table 2).

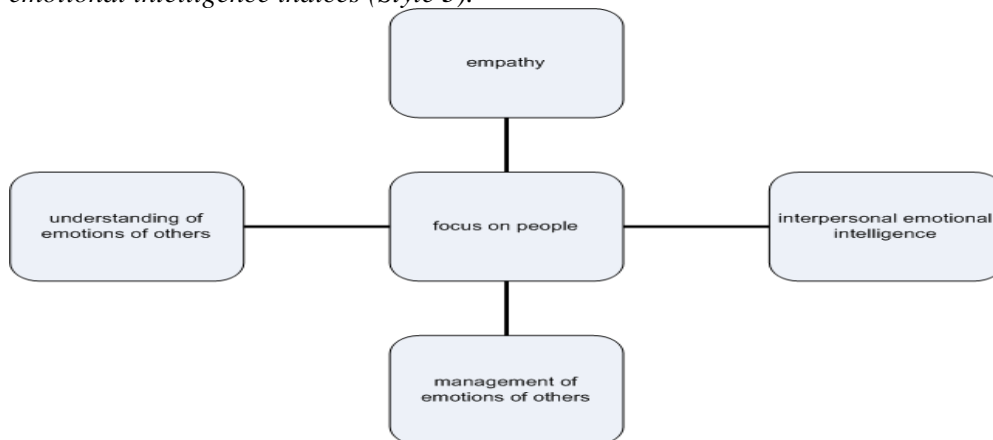
Table 2. Results of correlation analysis, N=162

	Style 1 on actions		Style 2 on the process		Style 3 on relationship		Style 4 on the ideas	
	Pearson Correlat ion	Sig. (2- taile d)	Pearson Correlat ion	Sig. (2- taile d)	Pearson Correlat ion	Sig. (2- taile d)	Pearson Correlat ion	Sig. (2- taile d)
Empathy	0.17	0.18	-0.24	0.06	0.31*	0.01	-0.23	0.07
Management of emotions of others	0.09	0.50	-0.22	0.09	0.27*	0.03	-0.17	0.19
Interpersonal understanding	-0.01	0.94	-0.07	0.60	0.30*	0.02	-0.27*	0.04
Control of one's own emotions	-0.26*	0.04	0.30*	0.02	-0.06	0.62	-0.07	0.60
Interpersonal emotional intelligence	0.03	0.81	-0.11	0.38	0.30*	0.02	-0.25*	0.05

Intrapersonal emotional intelligence	-0.13	0.32	0.25*	0.05	-0.06	0.66	-0.11	0.38
Style 1	1.00		-0.66**	0.00	-0.24	0.06	0.22	0.08
Style 2	-0.66	0.00	1.00		-0.24	0.06	-0.33**	0.01
Style 3	-0.24	0.06	-0.24	0.06	1.00		-0.69**	0.00
Style 4	0.22	0.08	-0.33	0.01	-0.69	0.00	1.00	
Compromise	0.12	0.35	-0.29*	0.02	0.19	0.14	0.03	0.81
Bargaining	0.07	0.61	-0.20	0.12	0.41**	0.00	-0.29**	0.02
Menace	-0.17	0.18	0.28*	0.03	-0.06	0.66	-0.12	0.34
Co-operation	0.01	0.95	-0.06	0.62	0.29*	0.02	-0.26*	0.04

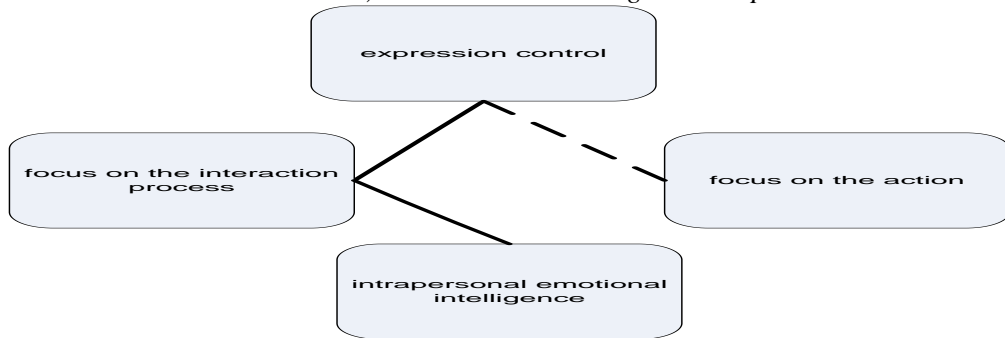
Thus, the interconnections are revealed (at the level $p < 0.05$) between the style in communication focused on people (Style 3), and the emotional intelligence indices: ‘empathy’ ($r=0.31$), ‘management of emotions of others’ ($r=0.27$), ‘understanding of emotions of others’ ($r=0.30$) and ‘interpersonal emotional intelligence’ (InterEI) ($r=0.30$) (Fig.3). Also, for this style bargaining use is typical ($r=0.41$, $p < 0.01$), as a style of negotiations conduction and the strategy of co-operation ($r=0.29$, $p < 0.05$) in the conflict situation (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Interconnections between the style of behavior (focus on people) and emotional intelligence indices (Style 3).



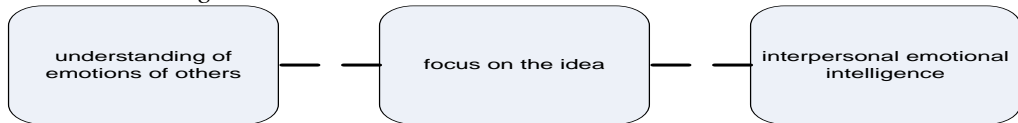
Positive correlations were revealed (at the level $p < 0.05$) between the style focused on the process in business communication (Style 2) and such emotional intelligence indices as: “intrapersonal intelligence” (IntraEI) ($r=0.25$) and «expression control» ($r=0.30$). Also, for the style focused on the process negative interconnection is revealed with compromise use ($r=-0.29$, $p < 0.05$), as a style of negotiation conduction and the strategy ‘menace’» ($r=0.29$, $p < 0.05$) in the conflict situation. Moreover, connection is revealed between the Style 1, differing by focusing on actions in business communication with low values of expression control ($r=0.28$, $p < 0.05$) (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Interconnection of business communication styles (focus on communication and on actions) and emotional intelligence components.



The style focused on the idea (Style 4) showed interconnection (negative, at the level $p < 0.05$) with such emotional intelligence indices as: ‘interpersonal emotional intelligence’ (InterEI) ($r = -0.25$), ‘understanding of emotions of others’ ($r = -0.27$), (Figure 3). For this style negative interconnections were revealed with bargaining use ($r = -0.29$, $p < 0.01$) as a style of negotiations conduction and the strategy of ‘co-operation’ ($r = -0.26$, $p < 0.05$) in the conflict situation.

Figure 3. Interconnection between the style of behavior focusing on the idea and emotional intelligence indices.



At that the regression analysis showed influence of several emotional intelligence factors on only two styles from four.

Thus, the style of business communication in negotiations, in which the main attention is paid to the actions (Style 1) is influenced by insufficient ability of one’s own expression controlling (EmIn, intrapersonal expression control) with general good ability to manage own emotionse (Hall, 2007) (Table 3).

Table 3. Results of regression analysis for the Style 1 – focus on action

	Beta	Sig.
Expression control	-0.376	0.004
Management of one’s own emotions	0.341	0.009

The style of business communication at which the main attention is paid to the process, is influenced by such factors as weak management and understanding of one’s own emotions with general high intrapersonal emotional intelligence, as well as non-disposition to make a compromise in negotiations and in conflicts (Table 4).

Table 4. *Results of regression analysis for the Style 2 – focus on the process*

	Beta	Sig.
Understanding one's own emotions	-2.62	0.032
Management of one's own emotions	-1.737	0.044
Total index of intrapersonal emotional intelligence	5.318	0.024
Compromise (negotiation style)	-0.443	0.016
Compromise (behavior in the conflict situation)	-0.586	0.036

During the factor analysis 9 factors were revealed, with joint dispersion 80.59%. The obtained factors were designated according to the sense of the included components: management of emotions, understanding of emotional condition, non-constructive styles of negotiations conduction, management of emotions, total emotional intelligence, constructive issue from the conflict situation. Moreover, styles of communication in negotiations are united in two additional factors, so, the style 3 directed on relationship (with positive sign) is grouped with the style of direction on the idea (with negative sign), and the style of avoidance of direction on the process (the style 2 with negative sign) is united with the style of direction on actions (with positive sign).

5. Discussion

Hypothesis 1: Interpersonal aspect of emotional intelligence is interconnected with the style of negotiations conduction focused on considering the partner's interests.

It is possible to talk about partial confirmation of this hypothesis based on the data of correlation and regression analysis. Considering them in the whole, one may say that the interaction style focused on people combines with advanced interpersonal emotional intelligence, but their interconnection is mediated by a few intermediate variables. At this stage it can be only supposed that such intermediate links may be value orientations of the person (Jena, 2015), corporative standards of emotions expression, that is talked about in the works on similar themes (Troth, 2014).

Moreover, a peculiar antipode for the style focused on people becomes the style focused on the idea. The more a person is disposed to comprehend, discuss and develop first any idea, the less expressed is the whole number of aspects of interpersonal emotional intelligence recognition, empathy and understanding emotions of others. Probably, it relates to compensatory function of this style: having problems in analysis of the partner condition, a person prefers to escape in detailed elaboration of the business question.

Hypothesis 2: Intrapersonal aspect of emotional intelligence is stronger connected with focus on the processual aspect in negotiations.

The data of the regression analysis confirmed this hypothesis, but the results were shown not quite expected. The style focused on the process is influenced by weak

level of development of several intrapersonal emotional intelligence components, which shows on possible compensatory character of this communication strategy. Probably, to fill up difficulties in one's own feelings reflection, a person prefers to escape in the process details, its constituents, transferring a problem from emotional-personal plan to formalized one. This interpretation needs additional examination, regarding studying psychological defenses. A peculiar contrast, reasoning from the obtained data, become the style focused on actions, where with good self-control development an openness in feelings expressions is observed.

A total image of the obtained data allows talking about important role of one's own emotions management for two styles from four discussed ones. So, good emotion management with insufficient ability of one's own expression control allows a person to concentrate on specific questions, results and moving forward, to the goal. Insufficiently developed ability for management and understanding one's own emotions, disposition to avoid compromises, with high total level of intrapersonal intelligence may reveal in concentration 'on the process', characterizing by emphasis on procedural questions, on planning and control (that confirms our second hypothesis). At that two other styles relate to variously expressed interpersonal intelligence, so at its evidence one may talk about demonstration of the style of direction on people, and at weak evidence of interpersonal intelligence direction to goal achievement is observed.

In this study the authors cannot speak about influence of interpersonal intelligence in full measure, probably, in these relations many other variables interfere (that is why there are not direct regression connections). This data is confirmed by indirection in the work of Thoth, where it talks about moderate connection of emotional intelligence with strategies of behavior in the conflict and important role of organizational culture (culture of behavior) in emotional intelligence revealing.

The obtained data regarding interrelation between preferred business communicating styles and emotional intelligence conforms to other authors' data. For example, in the study of Marzuki, Mustaffa, and Mat Saad (2015) it was revealed that emotional intelligence has positive correlations with communicative competence, which includes such skills as ability to endear oneself to an interlocutor and create trust-based environment.

It is also necessary to mark some restrictions of our research, connected with the complex of methods more acceptable for organization context and the persons in activity of which negotiations are included. For study of the results comparison on other cultures adaptation of the methods for communication styles is necessary. It is also necessary to consider specificity of probationer's activity in a concrete company (of production type). Probably, in other companies (consulting ones, rendering services etc., and sales) the connections character may change.

6. Conclusion

In summary, it should be mentioned that emotional intelligence plays an important role in the process of business interaction and negotiation. And it becomes especially important in conflict situation. Those people who are mainly focused on the process in business interaction have more developed intrapersonal emotional intelligence. Focus on the process presumes higher control over the process of work task execution, and excessive expressions of the internal state may become an obstacle. Focus on the task, attention to details, control of own actions quality requires attention and management of own emotional state. Those for whom it is important to keep friendly relations with people have more developed interpersonal emotional intelligence. Ability to precisely determine and emphasize with other people's feelings enhance people's affection and development of trust relations.

There are also such styles of business interaction for which some parts of emotional intelligence have no importance. For example, people who are focused on actions are less prone to control expression of emotions. Their expression is an integral part of their *modus operandi*.

The nature of interrelations of those persons who prefer to focus on the idea appear completely opposite to those who are focused on people and relations. It is not natural for them to have deep understanding of other person's feelings, they are not skilled in recognition and interpretation of others' emotions, and it is probably because they are wrapped up in general concept of activity and its planning.

In the present research possibility of studying connection between the emotional intelligence level and the preferred style of negotiations conduction was for the first time elaborated in theory and approved in practice. The authors of the article intend in future to study different conditions, variables, factors influencing on the negotiation process efficiency and its further result. Studying in future of social-psychological factors influencing on preference of choosing one style of negotiation conduction or another, promote both in searching the most effective behavior model in negotiation practice and in finding social-psychological conditions influencing on achievement of mutually beneficial result, work quality and terms of the posed task solution.

In the present work one of situations was considered in which interconnections between the preferred styles of behavior in business communication and the emotional intelligence constituents reveal. The results of this research, though having preliminary character, may be of interest for the HR service employees and for the guidance in personnel selection and creation of the project teams.

7. Acknowledgments

The authors would appreciate to receive feedback and comments on the paper from its readers. We are grateful to our unknown reviewers for their review and comments

that greatly improved our manuscript. They will help us complete and enhance the research.

This research was supported and funded by the Social Psychology Department of Saint Petersburg State University.

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