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### Analysis of the Generic Skills as a Mechanism to Enhance Public Service Negotiations in the Public Sector

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**Abstract:** When the public sector officials engage in negotiations with the private sector negotiators, quiet often the public negotiators are faced with discreet private sector negotiators competing for lucrative tenders. The private sector negotiators usually out-negotiate the public sector negotiators with consequences that lead to public outcry and in some instances to lengthy and costly litigation processes. This can be attributed to many factors, such as the poor negotiation skills or impeding general and specific negotiation environment. Based on the attribution theory, this article explores the required skills that need to be understood and obtained by public sector negotiators in order to enhance their negotiation competency to draw deals in an astute circumstance.

The empirical results indicates that by knowing and understanding public service negotiation skills, public sector negotiators are more inclined to up-skill their negotiation abilities and align their negotiation style to a social responsibility of negotiating a win-win outcome for both the public sector and the private sector.

**Keywords:** public sector, negotiation, public service negotiation, public negotiator, private sector, skills.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

In most institutions, private or public, whenever parties meet to confer an advantageous outcome, the goal of the opposition party is to out-negotiate the competing party, by increasing its hedonic benefit from the opposition party minimal cost or effort. The intention here is to negotiate an acceptable outcome and close the negotiation deal as quick as possible.

Negotiations constitute mediation negotiation, deal-making negotiation, hostage negotiation and litigation negotiation for which most South African public officials and civil servant obscure it with bargaining. In essence, negotiation implies a formal discussion amongst parties who are trying to reach a mutually profiting agreement while bargaining would refer more to an advantageous outcome of one party on the expense of another party.

In the context of the above distinction, most bargaining norm is pursues a bargaining situation where only canny and surreptitious negotiators can be send to the negotiation table. This notion is detrimental to the public negotiators who have to negotiation in good faith as well as to the benefit of the public rather than to the benefit of the few profit makers. Government institutions such as the Department of Public Service Administration (DPSA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), International Relations and Cooperation, and Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs where possible, require skilful and competent public negotiators to assure publicly acceptable negotiated outcome.

In order for public negotiators to be skilful in negotiations, they first need to comprehend and gradually develop the elements of a skilful public negotiator. Thus the chief research objective of this article is to examine the generic skills necessary for public negotiators to negotiation in good faith of the public and a minimal analysis of the public resources upon which public service negotiation is initiated.

The article begins by providing a conceptual analysis of the terms public service negotiation and public resources followed by a theoretical perspective of public service negotiation and negotiation skills for public negotiators in the public sector. This, is then followed by a comparative analysis of a skilled and an average public negotiator, which in turn followed by a discussion on the generic skills and competencies necessary for achieving acceptable outcome in the public sector. Conclusion and recommendation are provided as a last narration in this article.

## **2. CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERMS PUBLIC SERVICE NEGOTIATION AND PUBLIC RESOURCES**

The meaning and practice of public service negotiation in the public sector particularly can differ in the manner and practice of negotiation as understood in the private sector. In other words, to define public service negotiation might be strange yet invoke inquisitiveness to understand negotiations from the public sector point of view since there is nothing much written about public service negotiation in scholarly literatures. The concept “negotiation” from the private sector point of view is a noun derived from the Latin term *negotiarum* meaning, to do in the course of business (Trumble 2003) while in the context of public administration and management the term can then be attributed to public engagements in the course of administrative functions. It is evident that the concept “negotiation” is predominant in the private sector and trivial in the public sector yet highly practice in both sectors. Therefore, the conceptualisation of public service negotiation is not easy if the debate and challenges about the concept are taken into consideration.

Negotiations and public service negotiations as indicated by figure one is practice within the same *general management environment*, which constitute political environment, social environment, economic environment, cultural environment and technological environment, and *specific management environment*, which constitute legal environment, suppliers, consumers and customers, and requires the same negotiation skills. In Procter’s (1997) view, negotiation can be defined as a formal discussion amongst individuals in order to reach an agreement while a negotiator is a very skilful person who manoeuvres a discussion to an agreement where all involved parties are at a satisfactory position of acquiring desired benefits.

In conceptualizing and understanding public service negotiation from public administration and management point of view, the term “public” needs to be analysed first. The term “public” in Akweya’s (2014) view, cannot be delinked from the terms society and community. Society in Meki’s (2012) argument

is a particular community of people living in a country or region, and having shared customs, laws, and organization. Therefore, a society can be regarded as a collection of individual person forming a group of people staying together in a specified geographical area as a result of benefits bonded by mutual norms and values.

It is for this reasons defined by Meki (2012) and Akweya (2014) that these group of people who stay together and act within the ambit of proclaimed laws and customs that the government governs the governed (public) in accordance with the stated laws and customers of the community. Implying that the public officials engaged in administrative functions should be open to the people as a whole. Therefore, acts of public officials should be open to public scrutiny. Deductively, the term “public” in terms of public administration and management is attributed to the public sector, which is that part of an economy controlled by the community through the state. Public officials or servants refer to persons who work for the state.

Therefore, public service negotiation in this instance implies an open skilful act of public officials in manoeuvring a discussion to an agreement that is in good faith and to the benefit of the entire society as a whole. Public negotiators, according to Naidoo (2014), are persons who hold posts on the fixed establishment of state departments and related organizations or persons appointed permanently additional to the fixed establishment or persons employed temporarily or under specific contract in a full-time or part-time capacity.

Deduced from the above, the central role of public officials, as public negotiators, is to negotiate efficiently, effectively, productively and in good faith on behalf of the people in communities. Public negotiators are to conduct the public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realisation of government programmes and projects in communities with as much vigour, eagerness and passion as is done in the private sector. In so doing, Marlo and Manase (2016) caution public negotiators to conduct all public sector negotiations within the ambit of (national, provincial and local) government policies.

Based on the various explanations of negotiation and public service negotiation above, it suffice to describe public service negotiation as a process by which public officials conduct public affairs in consultation with their communities to efficiently and effectively negotiate lucrative deals to the benefit of the community members in a transparent and accountable fashion. Basically public service negotiation is concerned with the effective accumulation of national wealth or public resources and the redistribution and management of accumulated national wealth or public resources in a win-win situation to both public officials and the private sector negotiator thereby minimize or eliminate corrupt activities within government institutions.

The negotiation abilities of public negotiators necessary to be a competent public negotiator in the public sector is not only influenced by the skills accumulated over a period of time but also by the general and specific negotiation environment, negotiation process, public resources upon which negotiation is initiated and negotiation techniques (See figure 1). In Harrison’s (2007) argument, as cited by Kwinana (2010) the term “generic skills” refers to the overall ability of public officials to engage in a set of managerial behaviours that are functionally related to one another and lead to a desired performance level in a given area. This implies that the individual has the ability to interact coherently with colleagues and to act decisively in achieving the desired outcomes efficiently, effectively and economically in terms of public resources. Some of these generic skills include but are not limited to managerial skills, leadership skills, motivational skills, team-building skills, Conflict resolution skills, controlling skills, conceptual skills, interpersonal skills, analytical skills, technical skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills and implementation skills.

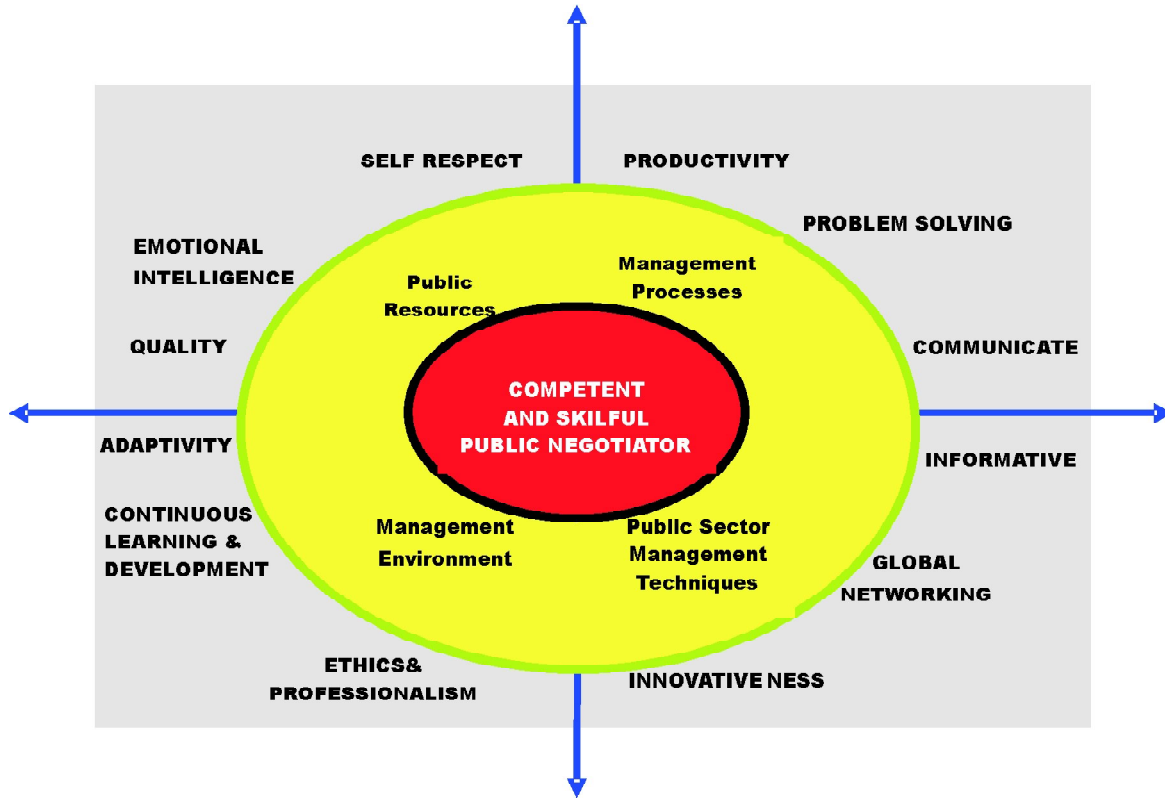


Figure 1: A diagrammatic representation of a competent and skilful public negotiator in public sector

In the context of figure 1, competent and skilful public negotiators are knowledgeable on issues relating to management process. Management processes, according to Fox and Meyer (1995), and Smit and Cronjé (1999), differ from public sector management techniques in the sense that the former, which is management processes, is the basic function of planning negotiation, organizing negotiation, providing negotiating staff, leading and directing the negotiation process, adherence to negotiation policies and controlling the negotiation process.

The latter, which is public sector management techniques, according to Marx and Van Aswegen (1983) is a systematic and structured procedure or method according to which a manager must proceed to execute a particular task or to solve a particular problem. Public sector management techniques, sometimes referred to as administrative tools, in this regard would need to be integrated into the negotiation process in order to assist with the reduction of public resources wastage, continuous improvement of negotiated outcome, quantification of public resources to be negotiated, rationalizing of administrative processes to drive the negotiation process and strategizing negotiation activities.

To name just a few public sector management techniques, O'Brien and Patterson (2000) identify these public sector management techniques as Information Management Systems (IMS), System Analysis (SA), Service Quality Management (SQM), Management by Results (MBR) and Time Management (TM). Von Horn *et al.* (1997) also identified some of the public sector management techniques as Social Benefit Analysis (SBA), Cost Performance Improvement (CPI), and Programme Budgeting Systems (PBS). Whereas Linesberry (1999) identified Performance Management Systems (PMS), Workload Analysis (WA), Project

Management (PM), and Strategic Public Management (SPM) as components of public sector management techniques. Therefore, it becomes pertinent that public administration and management practitioners and academics should make a clear distinction between public management processes and public sector management techniques.

This implies that public negotiators in the public sector need to be knowledgeable and apply these public sector management techniques when negotiating for public resource benefit on behalf of the public. Public resources, according to Luvuno (1999) are miscellaneous by character and structured them into six categories as follows:

- **Legal or authoritative resources:** This refers to resources such as *powers*, which referring to the ability to make people do what they would not have done willingly (Earl 2011); *authorities* where Dilnot (2000) simply explains it as delegated power; *policies*, in its simplest explanation refer to whatever public service organizations choose to do or not to do, or a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with the problem or matter of concern (Anderson 1997); *by-laws*, referring to legislation passed by public councils and *regulations* that refer to rules made by executive institutions to expand the provisions of Acts of parliaments or provincial *ordinances*; while ordinances refer to legislation passed by a provincial legislative body.
- **Institutional or organizational resources:** such as *land*; referring to the solid part of the surface of the earth as opposed to water, constituting a part of such surface, especially to oceans; rivers, lakes, dams and seas; *office buildings*, referring to human habitation structures in which the administrative personnel, executive, clerical or staff are working or a public structure where professional activities are conducted in order to delivery public services; *equipment*, denotes the materials and machinery needed for a purpose such as a tasks of delivering services; and *vehicles*, referring to a self-propelled medium by which means public resources and process of public service delivery can be transported or transmitted (<http://www.dictionary.com> 2017).
- **Information resources:** Information resources may include *computers*, which refers to a programmable electronic machines that perform high-speed mathematical or logical operations or that assembles, store, correlates and process information; *data bank*, an information storage medium were qualitative and quantitative information is stores or mostly, can be found; *news media*, which refers to a group of journalists and television networks that constitute the communication industries and profession; *grapevines*, which may be viewed by many as unpleasant yet sometimes can be worthwhile. Grapevine refers to an informal transmission of information, gossip or rumour from person to person; *researchers*, which refers to a collection of scientists who devote themselves to doing and capturing data; and *programmers*, Refers to a numbers of information technology specialists who prepare or writes Instructional programmes for computers (<http://www.dictionary.com>).
- **Financial resources:** According to Mondy *et al.* (1994), *capital* refers to money. For the sole purpose of clarity, financial resources will include *monetary funds* that refer to financial supply, legal tenders, currency, property or wealth and interest rates. *Economic efficiency*, refers to utilizing factors of production in the least cost combination and in public resources consumption,



allocating expenditures to maximize public service delivery (Todaro 1997), and **financial investments**, actually denotes that part of public funds or national income or national expenditure devoted to the production of capital goods over a given period of time. **Market economy** denotes a free private-enterprise economy governed by consumer sovereignty, or a price system, and the forces of supply and demand.

- **Natural resources:** This may include resources such as **oil, minerals, gas, chemicals, wood, land and energy** and even **time**. Whereas Meki (2012) state that natural resources consist of all those resources made available to human beings through nature and thus cannot be increased once depleted.
- **Public human resources:** In this regard, human resources may include **professionals**, public personnel mostly refer to individual employees with more than two years educational qualifications coupled with in-depth or in-service training and skills. **Skilled personnel**, which refer to public personnel who do not meet professional requirements, yet possess advanced technical; conceptual; behavioural; economic-business; managerial- and implementing skills. **Semi-skilled personnel**, which refers to public personnel with no professional requirements and minimal skills identified from skilled personnel. **Unskilled personnel**, described more diligently in the South African Public Service Review Report of 1999/2000 as those public personnel whose occupation is classified under cleaners, labourers, shelf packers, messengers, tea-makers, night watchman, guard, waiter/waitress and cooks (not chefs). Public human resources, according to Mondy *et al.* (1994), refer to all the abilities of educated people that can be used to provide products and services in exchange for payments. This resource is also known as human capital, which is a productive public investment, embodied in human persons. These include skills, abilities, ideals and health resulting from experience and education, and on-the-job training programmes.

An absence of any of the aforementioned skills at public sector, in public institutions may raise concern with regard to what constitutes skilful public service negotiation vis-à-vis the private negotiators. Lack of or slow response to the demands of the communities in respect of public service delivery can pose a challenge to the ideal of negotiating effectively, efficiently, productively and in good faith of the community as a whole.

Again, the aforementioned skills, public management processes, public sector public sector management techniques, management environment and public resources suggest that public sector officials and their respective community members should be aware of their respective roles and responsibilities so that the ideal public negotiator could keep improving their negotiation skills in order to negotiation in good faith of the public.

In addition, as the public negotiators upskill their negotiation abilities, they gradually develop their intrinsic values such as self-respect, emotional intelligence, interpersonal values, global networking abilities, innovativeness, learning and self-development habit, adaptability, quality consciousness, productivity, problem solver, informative, ethical behaviour and professionalism. The next section discusses the theoretical perspective of public service negotiation and negotiation skills for South African public sectorities.

### **3. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF PUBLIC SERVICE NEGOTIATION AND NEGOTIATION SKILLS OF PUBLIC NEGOTIATORS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

This section addresses literature analysis on negotiations and skills necessary for public negotiators as well as prior research on public service negotiations. In most constitutions public administration needs to be development-oriented while some constitution states that one of the objectives of public administration is to promote social and economic development. In promoting social and economic development, majority of the public sector affairs cannot be done without going through the public service negotiations process since one or another time a partnership between the public sector and the private sector is inevitable.

Intergovernmental relations, globalization, information management and rigorous competition, in Hames (2012) and Kriesberg (2007) argument, necessitate public negotiators to be pro-active in the ability of negotiating effectively, efficiently and economically. In Nieuwmeijer's (1992) perception, the seminal work of Sawyer and Guetzgow (1965) which focused on business bargaining and negotiation in international market can surely not exclude public negotiators who also form joint ventures with alliance countries for economically benefiting outcome at international arenas with counterpart government departments or private sector businesses.

Since Herbst and Schwarz (2011) assert that in the modern workplace, negotiation is a daily continuing action, Druckman (1973) emphasises that the richness of the negotiation process is not likely to be captured in a single experiment but rather through organized and integrated aspects of negotiation. In the context of this article, such organized and integrated aspects of negotiation therefore could allude to factors that influence effective, efficient and economical public service negotiation process as well as the necessary skills and competencies to negotiate a publicly accepted deal, mediation, litigation or hostage situation.

Although negotiation practice and theories in the private sector are prevalent, public service negotiation is not a new phenomenon in the public sector. The introduction of new government regimes usually emanates from negotiated processes and thus provide more opportunities for public service negotiations. Besides knowledge and experience on public service negotiations, negotiation skills, therefore are needed in multi-party, international relations and economic trade negotiation process in the public sector. Public service negotiation, as administrative tools do culminate in formal acceptance of the constitutions, policies, public programmes and projects and sometimes stabilization of hostage situations. (Mthethwa 2017).

In the context of the public sector, under the stringent directives of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the promulgation of Labour Relations Acts in various countries do provide the necessity for comprehending and for the application of public service negotiation to advance economic development, social justice, labour peace and the democratisation of the workplace in the public sector. It is therefore evident from the theories and rationale of Battaglio (2016), Raadschelders (2015), Luvuno (2011), Dunsire (1999), Riccucci (2010), Fuller and Fritzen (2007), and Steven *et al.* (2012) that negotiation as an administrative tool is also practice in the public sector within the context of public policy. Due to the insufficient knowledge and skills of public service negotiation in the public sector, more and more lucrative deals and tenders are lost to private sector negotiators.

Van Boven and Thompson (2003) as cited in Choi (2010) note that not all organizations see negotiation as a key to organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Public enterprises, inclusive of the public sector, tend to focus more on revenue growth, cost management, innovation, customer engagement and leadership

development yet the central tenant to these efforts is public service negotiation and negotiation skills. In the context of negotiation skills in this article, the terms “skills” can be attributed to the dexterity in the learning and executing of negotiation task or the (gradual) development of negotiation attitude or ability in entry-level public negotiators. As a result, Naidoo (2014) and Kwinana (2010) concluded in their research by stating that “deduction can be made that public service negotiation skills are fundamental to public negotiators in understanding the public service negotiation process”.

Although in most public institutions, public officials are deemed skilful negotiators, incompetent public negotiators are present in the public sector hence public officials who wield authoritative resources tend to import or rather exercise external consultations to assure a publicly accepted deal, mediation or hostage outcome. It is imperative to analyse a perceived ideal public negotiator needed for public service negotiations in the public sector to assure identification and development of public negotiators specifically for negotiating within the context of the public sector management environment. The next section focuses on comparative analysis of a skilled and average public negotiator in the public sector.

#### **4. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF A COMPETEDLY SKILLED AND AN AVERAGELY SKILLED PUBLIC NEGOTIATOR**

Like any business-minded institution, the public sector compete for sufficient skilled public human resource from a small pool of skilled human resources. Carrel and Heavrin (2008) distinguish skilled public negotiators from average public negotiators as follows:

When a skilled public negotiator intents to enter into a negotiation process, they usually consider a wide range of outcomes or possible options to dissect away from a cornered negotiation that would make them succumb to a loose-win situation. The public negotiator would possibly focus on many common ground areas and attempt to leave nothing at chance whereas an average would rather anticipate twice as many long-term areas as possible (Rubin 2013).

A skilled public negotiator would rather develop upper and lower limits for possible agreement points in order to avoid being out-negotiated during a period of reaching the Zone Of Possible Agreement (ZOPA). Naidoo (2014) identify this limit as a ZOPA point of somewhere between 5 per cent public service reservation point and 10 per cent opposition reservation point, while an average public negotiator would rather plan goals around fixed agreement points that might be detrimental to the opposite party forcing the opposite party to unintentionally walk away from the negotiation table. Such average public negotiators are inflexible and predetermined about issues to discuss while a skilled negotiator rather prefers to be flexible about issues to necessary for discussion.

Skilful public negotiators use neutral phrases when proposing offers and simultaneously take time to consider a counter offer proposals before countering while in most cases average public negotiators use judgemental phrases when proposing offers and offer counterproposals immediately without a legitimate rational by giving numerous reasons why their positions were better as compare to skilful public negotiator who provides one or two key reasons why their position was better, quality over quantity.

In Arcon’s (2009) view, when taking a negotiation recession, skilful public negotiator use this opportunity to review the public service negotiations process afterwards for improvement in the next negotiation round while the average public negotiators, according to Earl (2011), would rather not review the public



service negotiations afterwards, thereby lose a deal-making negotiations that could have been converted into a win-win outcome if a win-lose situation was not attained. In this regard, an ideal public sector negotiator would thus denote a skilful public negotiator knowledgeable in the generic skills necessary for public sector negotiator to achieve acceptable negotiated outcome in the public sector. Therefore, the generic skills necessary for public sector negotiator to achieve acceptable negotiated outcome in the public sector, is discussed next.

## **5. GENERIC SKILLS NECESSARY FOR PUBLIC NEGOTIATORS TO ACHIEVE PUBLICLY ACCEPTED NEGOTIATION OUTCOMES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

Starling (2011) proposes various negotiation skills that can assist in public service negotiation process. The skills, however, are derived from the process of public service negotiations and linked to the preparation, opening session, bargaining, agreement, and implementation and after care phases of public service negotiations identified in Naidoo (2014).when implementing the phases of public service negotiation.

Carrell and Heavrin (2008) and Starling (2011) note that the basic public service negotiation skills are negotiation preparation, setting and understanding ground rules, initiating offer, posturing and single-issue or multiple-issue public service negotiation while Perestrello (2016) add to these identified basic public service negotiation skills as follows:

- **Preparation:** Before engaging in public service negotiations the public negotiator prepares by identifying all tangible and intangible issues that are of interest to either party, prioritises issues and decides on a Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA).
- **Ground rules:** Ground rules are determined in advance, and questions, such as, who, what, where, when and how, are addressed (Hancorn 1990). At this juncture, the setting is considered since the place, geographical and environmental factors can influence the outcome of the public service negotiation.
- **Initial offer:** According to Starling (2011), the initial offer is an important factor in determining the rest of the public service negotiation process and interaction. In most cases, Perestrello (2016) suggests that when offering sales, price must be increase in order to give a leeway for the opposition party negotiator to counteroffer higher as long as the ZOPA limit is not crossed while buying, the public negotiator should decreasing the price.
- **Posturing:** Moore and Woodrow (2010) argue that posturing plays an important role in setting up the process of the public service negotiation. Posturing, in Perestrello's (2016) views is the process of reflecting through the negotiated deal as well as the process of information exchange, solving problems and generating options.
- **Single-issue or multiple-issue public service negotiation:** In public service negotiation, a decision has to be made on whether the negotiable issue is a single-issue or multiple-issue public service negotiation in order to select an appropriate strategy to warrant a win-win situation. This also involves the point at which the public service negotiation would terminate, the impasse and how the impasse might be resolved are also considered.

Another important skill for the public negotiator, according to Carrell and Heavrin (2008), is decision-making skills. The application of public service negotiation by the public officials in raising issues in decision-

making processes have been frequently highlighted by Pressman and Wildawsky (1984), and Matland (1995), as cited in Brunsson (1989). Carrell and Heavrin (2008) state that decision making in public service negotiations involves cognitive, personal biases and motivation.

**Cognition**, in Hames' (2012) argument refers to the process of assimilating information to make rational choices while **personal biases** in public service negotiations can create knowledge-based or cognitive biases, which lead to irrational decisions. **Motivation**, relates to the experienced public negotiator knowing that the key to reaching agreement is to determine the opposing party's motivations, or what is influencing the opposing party's decisions. Motivation, thus, also affects both information processing and the strategies public negotiators use in public service negotiation.

Kwinana (2010) points out that an important skill for the public negotiator is the ability to effectively communicate. Communication is clear to ensure that the messages exchanged are interpreted as intended enhancing the effectiveness of the public service negotiations. In communication, the meanings of terms attributed to public resources upon which deals are being negotiated is influenced by the context of public policies and thus unclear messages can result in inaccurate interpretations which in turn influence the outcome of a public service negotiation.

In this case, Hames (2012) argues that a public negotiator ought to adapt a communication-style that fits into the opposing party's preferences, for example, cultural differences, language differences and even accents may engender stereotypes and need to be taken into consideration by the public negotiator when negotiating.

Shuayto (2013) asserts that with the advent of the technology and information age, public negotiators use professional social media as a new tool in the public service negotiation skill set. The term "social media" is a term used for electronic tools that people use to publish, communicate and share content over the World Wide Web or what is commonly known as the Internet (*www.britannica.com* 2017). In Shuayto's term, it is imperative at some point for public negotiators to be very conversant with computer literacy and Information Management Systems. Hence, Oliver (2011) confirms this argument by stating that social media tools such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Google Alert add value to a public service negotiation from a research perspective. Consequently, social media should be a standard part of the planning and preparation stage to collate as much material and information as possible to aid in the process of public service negotiation.

In addition to the above-mentioned skills, Kwinana (2010) and Vasii and Vasii (2008) point out generic skills in achieving acceptable outcomes in public service negotiation process for improving and sustaining public service delivery. Some of these generic skills include but are not limited to the following:

- **Managerial skills:** Lehmann and Bough (2008) and Kwinana (2010) describe managerial skills as practical skills that are taught and learnt through practice. Thus, public negotiators in the public sector are to possess certain skills to ensure that authority is exercised in a responsible and effective manner in the public service negotiation process. Leadership, motivation, team building and resolution of conflict make up the managerial skills set.
- **Leadership skills:** According to Kerzner (1992) as cited in Obiajunwa (2013), leadership skills support managers while assisting public negotiators with little or no formal authority implying that

all subordinates or situations require the same response. Harrison (2007) and Kwinana (2010) define leadership as the ability of a public negotiator to influence the behaviour of the opposition negotiators to support the achievement of goals and objectives in the public service negotiation process. In public service negotiation, with the criticism from national and international communities, leadership skills are critical to acceptable performance for improvement of public service delivery.

- **Motivational skills.** Wilkerson (2013) notes that motivated public negotiators are efficient, effective, accountable and productive, and thus obtain satisfaction from achieving or striving towards achieving publicly accepted negotiation outcome. Public service negotiations in the public sector takes place in all sphere of governments within a country requiring the mobilization of public negotiators and public resources which ultimately affects the cost and duration of the public service negotiation (Obiajunwa 2013). Therefore, the task of public officials, particularly public managers, is to ascertain what motivates negotiators and assure that these motivations are reasonably satisfactory in the public service negotiation setting.
- **Team-building skills:** Harrison (2007) and MacClelan (2014) define a team as any group of individuals, in this case public negotiators, involved in a joint undertaking such as a public service negotiation where interaction and interdependency between the individuals is required for improvement public service delivery. Individuals or public negotiators and negotiating teams form an essential part of public service negotiation. Hence, senior public negotiators, sometimes known as chief negotiators, require team-building skills when supervising entry-level public negotiators and team members. Vasiu and Vasiu (2008) state that senior public negotiator must be cautious of unconscious bias in management practice since they have to recruit or retain entry level public negotiator skills and improve performance.
- **Conflict resolution skills:** The study by Kalargyrou, Pescosolido and Kalargiros (2012) on leadership skills in management education reveals that conflict resolution is an important skill in public service negotiation process to ensure public organization, prioritization, competent administration of tasks and time management. Senior public negotiators responsible for overseeing implementation of public service negotiations require a high tolerance level and specific skills to resolve conflict. In public service negotiation and in conflict resolution, the problem or situation is identified through analysing the situation and establishing reasons for the conflict. Thereafter, based on the analysis of the problem, various options for resolving the conflict are decided and applied.
- **Controlling skills:** According to MacClelan (2014), controlling refers to senior public negotiator assessing actual work performance against variables such as time, cost and quality standards in order to determine whether anticipated goals are being met. An essential element of controlling is monitoring progress and taking corrective action together with the public negotiators team.
- **Conceptual skills:** Conceptual skills are the ability of the senior public negotiator to see in detail the public service and its parts in a holistic manner. Conceptual skills enable public negotiators to process a large amount of information concerning the internal and external environment of the public sector (See fig one) in order to determine the concept and the nature of the public sector and public resources (Thompson, 2006; Kwinana, 2010).

- **Interpersonal skills:** Interpersonal skills are the ability of public negotiators to work with private sector negotiators in the public service negotiation setting by being aware of other people's reactions and understanding the reasons people react in a particular way. Similarly, Kalargyrou *et al.* (2012) state that interpersonal skills is central when interacting with and influencing people through social awareness and interpersonal understanding. Regarding this, Kwinana (2010) suggests that the public negotiator within the work group manages the group dynamics, encourages cooperation, resolves conflicts and creates a work environment where group members can express themselves freely, offer ideas and participate in the planning activities of the public service negotiation team.
- **Analytical skills:** Analytical skills are the ability of public negotiator to examine situations and to respond to these situations in an acceptable manner. Shuayto (2013) argues that analytical skills are among the top seven skills that all public negotiators should have to be able to identify, examine and respond to problems or situations timely and adequately.
- **Technical skills:** Technical skills refer to the ability of public negotiators in terms of knowledge, skills, behavioural attributes or techniques of public service negotiation to achieve the goals and objectives of the public sector. Elhezer (2009) points out those technical skills include managing individual negotiations, motivating and disciplining entry fellow public negotiators, providing feedback and improving communication.
- **Problem-solving skills:** Problem-solving skills refer to formulating a rational and well thought-out approach for diffusing problem situations. Elhezer (2009) proposes creative techniques to solve problems such as brainstorming and group discussions. Problem solving skills are important especially in senior public negotiator positions, because leaders are asked to solve problems due to the constantly changing generic and specific negotiation environment. To solve complex or difficult problems leaders must be able to quickly use information on public service negotiation task at hand, the public sector and the public negotiators (Mumford, Zaccaro & Harding, 2000, as cited in Kalargyrou *et al.*, 2012).
- **Implementation skills:** Implementation skills are viewed as a process of taking into account the setting of public service negotiation goals and the actions required in achieving those goals. Implementation skills are selected according to a policy to direct the thinking, decisions and actions of public negotiators and officials. When a skill is implemented, the skill must be controlled and evaluated constantly to determine the extent to which objectives are being achieved.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Negotiations in public sector will always play an important role when public negotiators engage in public sector developments. The constant demand and supply for quality public service will always lead public negotiators to the negotiation table. As the theory and practice of public service negotiation advances within the public and private sector management environment, the public negotiator skills and competencies will require continuous up-skilling and engagement amongst similar negotiation profession.

Although the public service negotiation skills discussed in this article are not limited within this article, more skills need to be identified and the respective public negotiator eagerly engage themselves in

understanding and improving their public service negotiation skills. The public sector need to entertain the idea of “growing its own timber” of public negotiators through coaching and mentorship programmes within all spheres of governments.

This article also recommends further theoretical analysis of negotiations within the public sector negotiation environment as denoted in figure one and further research and training of public negotiators to negotiate within the ambit of public policies, intrinsic and extrinsic negotiation values since in the conventional public administration and management context, public institutions are managed in a business-like approach.

Furthermore, in order to invest in human capital development, public officials, especially public negotiators need to understand and capitalized on the management environment under which they negotiate, the public resources they are negotiating for, identify and implement the management strategies to plan an effective, efficient and economic win-win negotiated outcome and finally understand when, where and how for exercise management processes within the context of public service negotiations.

The article also proposed an introduction of Public Service Negotiation (PSN) modules or training with a public sector niche in institutions of higher education and training inclusive of promoting and persuading postgraduate researchers to research administrative tools such as the Public Sector Negotiation suitable for the public sector.

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