



Rethymno, 8th June 2021

Report of a member of the dissertation council on the thesis “Psychological features of the strategies of the influencing behaviour in commercial negotiations” by Rysev Nikolay Yuryevich

*Submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of a Candidate in Sciences in Psychology
(19.00.03 work psychology, engineering psychology, ergonomics)*

I have read Mr. Rysev’s dissertation (translated into English) and I am ready to offer a series of observations regarding the quality of his work as well as offer my final recommendation.

The thesis consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a summary and fifteen appendices.

The introduction lays out the research objective and the hypotheses and explains the relevance, importance and novelty of the research. Mr. Rysev concentrates on the preferences for negotiating strategies in different contexts and on the relationship between strategies and tactics, on the one hand, and personal characteristics and negotiating effectiveness, on the other hand.

The first chapter offers a novel classification of ten interpersonal influence strategies, with special emphasis on the strategy of manipulation. The dimensions of classification are four: whose interests are considered, attitude toward the other person as a means, attitude toward the other person as a subject, merging of personal borders. The chapter also discusses the context of influence.

The second chapter, along with appendix 1, describes the business game that was used in Mr. Rysev’s research. There are four different scenarios: Scenario 1 includes two business co-owners who have to decide on the allocation of shares for a new business venture (symmetrical business negotiations with long-term effect); Scenario 2 includes two friends who have to decide which movie they are going to watch (symmetrical personal negotiations with short-term effect); Scenario 3 describes the sale of office furniture to a big new office and Scenario 4 the sale of screwdrivers (both asymmetric business negotiations with medium-term effect). With reference to these scenarios, participants were asked to choose the influence strategies and tactics that they would use in the negotiation (this happened before the negotiation for participants in Team A) and the strategies and tactics that the other party used in the negotiation (this happened after the negotiation for participants in Team B). For procedural and operationalization purposes Mr. Rysev chose to focus on five out of ten interpersonal influence strategies that were mentioned in the introduction and on 27 influence tactics.

The third chapter presents the findings of the study. Some of the basic findings are as follows: ignoring is the least chosen strategy for participants (except in the 4th scenario); there is high correlation between strategies that were intended to be used (Team A) and strategies that were perceived to be used (Team B); the tactical methods are classified in three categories that relate to the strategies of domination, manipulation and emotional involvement; the choice of strategy is related to the choice of tactics; successful negotiators score higher on the Mach and interpersonal understanding scales and are more likely to employ the tactics of “masking the very fact of influence”, “praise of another”, “pressure”.

The conclusion and the summary offer an overview of the research findings as well as some practical implications.

The thesis offers several innovative theoretical and research findings. I commend Mr. Rysev for performing an exhaustive, exploratory analysis of the business games that he himself designed. It is clear that he independently executed scientific research that is relevant in understanding negotiating strategies and tactics.

There are certain limitations to the thesis in its current form:

- The thesis lays out a theoretical framework of ten influence strategies in the introduction, but focuses its empirical research only on five. The difficulty of studying the remaining five should not emerge as insurmountable obstacle for a doctoral thesis. Maybe it would be better to focus the introduction on the mostly researched strategies, explaining why it is important to add the strategy of manipulation, rather than offer a new framework that is not adequately researched.
- The negotiation scenarios do not really offer win-win potential. If the negotiating parties end up agreeing, they will split a pie of 10 points in all scenarios. There is no possibility of increasing the size of the pie. Therefore, the scenarios essentially leave integrative negotiation (in other words, win-win negotiation), outside the scope of the thesis.
- The negotiation scenarios strongly discourage walking away from the negotiating table. Therefore the scenarios themselves discourage the strategy of ignoring. The finding that participants do not tend to choose ignoring could be an artifact of the scenarios themselves. Maybe in the 4th scenario where the strategy of ignoring is higher, participants thought they had more options outside of negotiation. Also, the first two scenarios discourage 50-50 splits, adding to the competitive aspect of the negotiation (which is already high due to the distributive nature of the scenarios).
- The research focuses on influence strategies and tactics as they were measured in terms of intention of use (Team A) and as they were measured in terms of perception by the other party (Team B). There was no measure that drew from the negotiation itself (e.g., by an observer, or a qualitative study of the transcript). It would have been useful to have a measure drawing from the communication between the negotiating parties. It would also resolve the question of why there is high correlation between strategies that were intended to be used (Team A) and strategies that were perceived to be used (Team B).

- The proposed relationship between negotiation performance and individual differences variables (i.e. Mach and interpersonal understanding) raises a couple of questions. Firstly, negotiation performance is transformed into a categorical variable, thereby sacrificing variability and relevant important information. It might have been better to use it as a continuous variable and perform, for example, regression analysis. Secondly, there should be more discussion of why interpersonal understanding is different from other aspects of emotional intelligence. Otherwise, it seems as an accidental finding.
- There is no “Limitations” section in the thesis, in which some of the above limitations could be addressed.

In conclusion, considering the requirements established by the Order dated 01.09.2016 No. 6821/1, candidate Rysev Nikolay Yuryevich deserves the award of the scientific degree of a candidate of science in psychology in the scientific specialty 19.00.03 -work psychology, engineering psychology, ergonomics- for his thesis “Psychological features of the strategies of the influencing behaviour in commercial negotiations”, **pending revisions** that would address the limitations outlined above. Clause 11 of the said Order has not been violated by the candidate of the Degree.



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