

# THE INFLUENCE OF ANXIETY UPON NEGOTIATION SITUATIONS

*Claudia Mihaela NICOLAU, PhD Student  
“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Iași  
The Faculty of Economics and Business Administration  
clau\_n2004@yahoo.com*

*Abstract : The present paper proposes to distinguish some aspects related by the influence that the level of negotiator's anxiety<sup>1</sup> in the negotiation situation, respective, in the used strategies and obtained results. Practical, this research paper will try to prove if anxiety plays or not a role in the negotiation process, and will be a study at the border of psy-social science and the economic ones (because the communication and the negotiation domain itself can be approached under the psychological aspect, as well as under the economic one). Moreover, the negotiation is an important part of reality, it is a part of our life. We negotiate daily and over all, in different social context, and is situated on various positions. We negotiate the salary with the boss or with our subaltern, the product's and service's price, a pleasant place in a restaurant, a better room in an hotel, the children promised roller skate and the bicycle, better work conditions in an workshop and the new collective contract with the unions. We can't obtain anything without negotiating<sup>2</sup>.*

*Key words : strategies, cognitive process, emotional state .*

## 1. Theoretical aspects regarding the anxiety influence on negotiation situations

The initial researches realized in the negotiation domain define the negotiation as a rational process in the frame of that changes between the two negotiators are established by the attempts of this to obtain bigger benefits enduring lower costs (Deutsch, 1994 ; Thompson, 1990 )<sup>3</sup>. Experience proved the fact that a series of cognitive, motivational and emotional factors which influence the negotiation process and determine, sometimes, results less and less satisfactory for one of the negotiators.

Thus, the thought and the positive or negative associations of the negotiator practice an important role in choosing the negotiation strategies and upon the expectations related by the negotiation results (Neale & Bazerman, 1991)<sup>4</sup>.

Recent studies distinguish the diverse impact of emotions and the state of mind of the negotiator's upon the different cognitive process<sup>5</sup> (Bower, 1991 ; Fiedler, 1991 ; Forgas, 1995; Isen, 1987; Mayer, Gaschke, Braverman & Evans, 1992; Sedikides, 1994) but exists fewer studies that searched the measure in which the emotions influence the negotiation's cognitives and strategies used by this in the negotiation situations.

The present paper has on its basis the effectuated researches by Joseph Forgas in the domain of emotion influence upon the negotiation situations. These researches demonstrate the fact that the follow

---

<sup>1</sup> According the Wikipedia encyclopaedia: *Anxiety* is characterized by a permanent status of psychic tension, irritability, lack of trust in his own person, incapacity or reserves in assuming a risk, tremble and other neurovegetatives reactions, various psychosomatic signs.

<sup>2</sup> Boncu Stefan ( 2006 ), *Negocierea și medierea – perspective psihologice*, p. 9

<sup>3</sup> Joseph P Forgas (1998), *On feeling good and getting your way : Mood strategie on negotiator cognition and bargaining strategies*, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, vol. 74, nr. 3, pp. 565 – 577

<sup>4</sup> Joseph P Forgas (1998), *On feeling good and getting your way : Mood strategie on negotiator cognition and bargaining strategies*, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, vol. 74, nr. 3, pp. 565 – 577

<sup>5</sup> Joseph P Forgas (1998), *On feeling good and getting your way : Mood strategie on negotiator cognition and bargaining strategies*, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, vol. 74, nr. 3, pp. 565 – 577

state of mind, its livings and his experimental emotions that he has during the negotiations, influences the negotiator's cognitives and determine in a bigger part the strategies that are gone be used in the negotiations and its results.

Thus it was proved that the lived negative emotions by the fallow during the negotiation situations determine him to be less cooperating, to not accept the other proposals, to maintain firmly his position, not being opened to the compromises and, finally to have less satisfactory results.

Strating from the studies realized by J. Forgas, we tried to observe in wchich measure the anxiety presents an influence upon the strategies used by an negotiator and the results obtained by him.

It is known that the anxiety represents an emotional state of nervous tension., of fear, of high intensity, related by an object that is not well differentiated and, often, it is chronically. The psychiatrists define the anxiety as being an emotional reaction of preparation facing an uncertain situation, ambiguous and threatening.

Two researchers – Endler and Parker (in 1990) propose the distinction between the anxiety as an emotional state of short duration determined by a new situation or an unexpected stimulus and anxiety as steady feature and refers to the fallow potential of manifesting anxiety in different situations<sup>6</sup>.

Inducing an anxiety level tends to lead to an dezorganization of the fallow behavior and to influence him in the way of taking imprudent decisions.

Thus, by analogy with the results obtained at the researches related to the positive and negative implications of emotions upon the negotiation situations we enounced the hypothesis according to the level of anxiety influence the type of strategy used by a fallow during a negotiation situation, respective, the negotiation's results.

## 2. The general objective and the research hypothesis

The purpose of these scientific paper is to observe the measure in which the emotions, the state of mind and the anxiety, that can manifest as a given momment upon a negotiator influence his „catering” into a negotiation process. To reach the proposed objective were emited the fallowing hypothesis :

### A. The general hypothesis :

The level of anxiety felt by a negotiator during the negotiation situation influence the negotiation strategies used and the finale results of negotiation.

### B. The research hypothesis :

- a) A level of anxiety determine the usage, rather, of competition then of cooperation as a strategy into a negotiation situation.
- b) A high level of anxiety determine less satisfactory results into a negotiation situation.
- c) A low level of anxiety determine the usage, rather, of competition then of cooperation as a strategy into a negotiation situation.
- d) A low level of anxiety determine results more satisfactory into a negotiation situation.

As it was mentioned before, these research paper proposes itself to confirm or to infirm the hypothesis formulated before. The real question, although, is : if the negotiation process can be influenced (most of the times negatively, but not only) or not by aspects that are rrelated by the human nature, as : emotions, neuralgic, emotivity, inssecurity, ergics tension and anxiety (in the present case it is studied just the anxiety). Of course that the negotiation process can be also influenced by the perssonal and native characteristics of negotiator, but these one aren't the object of the present study.

In the enouncement of the four research hypothesis it can be observed two general tendencies, that the anxiety level (low and high) can direct the negotiation between the competition and cooperation, and implicitly towards obtaining the achieved results or ones less satisfactory.

Being an experimental research paper, beside the *hypothesis wording*, in the unrolling of the research paper for infirming or confirming them it's also necessary the usage of variables (to observe if exists a connection between the cause and effect), as fallowing :

### 1) The independent variable :

- a) The level of anxiety : - low ;

---

<sup>6</sup> Izabela Soric (1999), *Anxiety and coping in the context of a school examination*, Social Behavior and Personality, pp. 319 – 330

- high ;
- 2) *The dependent variable* :
  - a) The negotiation strategies : - cooperation ;  
- competition ;
  - b) The negotiation results :
  - c) The satisfaction rate regarding the results.

### 3. The research design

As it was mentioned at the beginning of the paper, the negotiation was approached through various points of view: organization behavior, industrial relations, communication, management, marketing, sociology, psychology, social psychology, anthropology, law, administrative science, international relations, and politology<sup>7</sup>. And obviously, specialists in the mentioned areas published papers through their formation prism, but a paper that approach from a psychological perspective, interpersonal phenomena and human characteristics which animate the negotiation processes is *Negocierea și Medierea : perspective psihologice*”, by Ștefan Boncu.

In the mentioned book, the author state that the approaches of negotiation behavior was developed in two scientific fields: in the mathematics and behavior science domains. Leigh Thompson (1990) identifies the two types of approaches with the normative and descriptive tradition, although some economic models tried to describe the real negotiator’s behavior. It is true, that, in the most cases, the mathematics models, built by economists and the researchers from game theory domain, prescribe the manner in which the fallow should act in competitive situations. The descriptive approach belong to the psychologists and to the researchers from organizational theory domain.

In the frame of descriptive tradition, can be distinguished two orientations: the motivational orientation (classic) and the cognitive orientation, prefigured mosstly in the last decade. The cognitive orientation describes the negotiation behavior according to the negotiations pereceptions and according to their manner of approaching of information<sup>8</sup>.

The empirical steps of the researchers that keep by the descriptive approach tooked shape of laboratory experiments, and also of field studies. The laboratory experiments tried to simulate real life negotiation. Usually, such an experiment supposes a negotiation between subjects and between a naive subject and an accomplice of the experiment or a computer. To subjects is suggested a negotiation situation, and are asked to change offers<sup>9</sup>.

Given the nature of these research paper, the approach adopted is the descriptive one, more exactly the cognitive orientation through the so called "laboratory experiment". Before of building the research design itself, we have to choose the necessary subjects.

*The subjects* of the research will be 180 students chosen alleatory from the students of second year of the Faculty of Economic Science and Business Administration, from the University "Al. I. Cuza", Iasi (regardless of sex and age) who attend during the experiment to a Communication and negotiation in business lecture (without being announced).

*The manner of procedure*: with a week ago before the participation of the study the students are asked to express in written their choice for the optional course that it’s gone be attended in the fallowing year giving them two alternatives: Electronic business or International politics relations.

Thus, in the day of unfolding the experiments, the subjects are informed regarding the fact that the rapport of election of the two disciplines is approximately equal and that will have to negotiate in groups of two the election of one of it. The teams will be formed in such a manner that the two negotiators o will have different options regarding the facultative discipline.

Before the beginning of the negotiations the subjects will be asked to fill an Anxiety Scale to observe the level of anxiety and a questionnaire related to the fallow expectations regarding the negotiation’s strategies used and the negotiation’s results : "What kind of strategies do you think that will be usefully to you for negotiating with your partner ?", "In what measure do you consider that you will

<sup>7</sup> Ștefan Boncu ( 2006 ) , *Negocierea și medierea – perspective psihologice*, Editura Institutul European, Iași, pp. 12

<sup>8</sup> Ștefan Boncu ( 2006 ) , *Negocierea și medierea – perspective psihologice*, Editura Institutul European, Iași, p. 9

<sup>9</sup> Ștefan Boncu ( 2006 ) , *Negocierea și medierea – perspective psihologice*, Editura Institutul European, Iași, pp 44 – 45u

cooperate with your partner for the election of the facultative discipline ?", "In what measure do you think that your election will be the finale one ?"

After the completion of the questionnaire, half of the subjects will receive a disposition through which they will be announced that they will have only 10 minutes to negotiate the election of the discipline and that at the end they will receive marks according to the obtained results and that these marks will represent 50% form the score for the finale exam at Communication and business negotiation (the pressure of time and the possibility of accumulation of a score at Communication and business negotiation suppose to determine an anxiety state among subjects). The studies realized by Register, Beckham, May & Gustafson, 1991 *apud*. Izabela Soric, 1999 acknowledge the fact that the evaluative situations determine a high state of anxiety among students<sup>10</sup>.

The other half of the subjects will receive a disposition through which they will be informed that they have at their disposal any time that they will consider necessary to take a resolution.

At the end, subjects will be asked to fill in a questionnaire related to the used strategies during the negotiations, to the measure in which they were cooperating or competitive and to the measure that they were or not pleased by the obtained results. Additional, they will have to fill in an adjust anxiety scale necessary to observe in what measure the experimental manipulation achieved or not its purpose.

#### 4. Research strategy

In this study, according to the already presented procedure, it will be used three research instruments, that will be used :

- *an opinion questionnaire* regarding the fallows expectations regarding the used strategies and the negotiation's results (it will be applicable before the negotiation process);

This kind of questionnaire it is useful to measure the subjective data, impossible to be directly observed – the way that are the fallows expectations regarding the used negotiation's strategies, as well as its results. This questionnaire is not only an opinion one, but it studies : attitudes, motivation, interests, disposals, inclinations, the subjective livings of a person.

- *an omnibus questionnaire* regarding the methods and the strategies used by subjects during the negotiation strategy (it will be applicable at the end of the negotiation process).

This kind of questionnaire it is useful for the finale part of the experiment because it offers the possibility to distinguish the action and the investigated phenomenon interconditioning (in which manner the choosen method achieve to outline into an efficient strategy, that will lead finally to satisfactory results in the negotiation process) and offers the possibility of secondary analysis. The pattern, once established (panel technique), create the possibility to follow the changes of social dynamics.

- an adjust form of *Spielberg's Anxiety Inventory* : for determining the level of anxiety (it is be used during the unrolling as well as at the end of the experiment);

Spielberg's Anxiety Inventory is a research instrument that was chosen because it can be applicable in different three moments of the unrolling of the research: in the present case at the beginning of the experiment, as well as during the negotiation, but also at the end of it. This delimitation in three moments is favourable to observe the evolution of the anxiety level upon the fallows, that can increasing or decreasing.

Spielberg's Anxiety Inventory<sup>11</sup> will be composed by 40 questions with multiple answers and will have to be fill in 10 minutes. This inventory through its items with multiple answers will make the difference between the temporary condition of "anxiety state" and the general and long lasting term "anxiety feature." The results will be presented on the manner of standardized scores and percentage that show the fellow's anxiety level.

---

<sup>10</sup> Izabela Soric (1999), *Anxiety and coping in the context of a school examination*, Social Behavior and Personality, pp. 319 – 330

<sup>11</sup> Spielberg's Anxiety Inventory is an instrument/tool used in research to measure the adult's anxiety.

## 5. The validation of results procedure – the statistic analysis

In the pretesting phase we will refer to:

a) *The frequency analysis* to keep the most relevant aspects offered by the subjects from the two conditions – students that feel *a high level of anxiety* and that are using the *competition* as a negotiation strategy and students that feel *a low anxiety level*, and are using as a strategy of negotiation the *cooperation*, as well as eliminating the semmificative ones.

b) *The content analysis* to process the offered information's by the subjects of the two conditions – the students that feel *a high level of anxiety* and that are using the *competition* as a negotiation strategy and students that feel *a low anxiety level*, and are using as a strategy of negotiation the *cooperation*, according to the results obtained in negotiation.

c) *The estimation of  $\alpha$  - Cronbach internal consistency coefficient* – for the two questionnaires (the opinion and omnibus) and the elimination of inadequate items so that the consistency coefficient will be bigger then 0,7.

d) After the implementation of the *Spielberg's Anxiety Inventory* and structuring the data base we will use the Independent T – Test to compare the results obtained by the subjects of the two conditions mentioned before, as well as to verify the hypothesis regarding the populations average normally assigned.

## 6. Conclusions

The hypothesis will be confirmed in the measure of existence of different results among the subjects of the two conditions. Comparing the subject's results of the two conditions we can observe in what measure the inducing of a high anxiety level has or not consequences upon the negotiations strategies and upon the negotiation process results.

As well, the subject's sex can constitute a post-experimental variable and can offer additional informations, as well as age, and socio – professional characteristics of student's families (subjects).

## References

- Abric, Jean – Claude (2002), translated edition „Psihologia comunicării : Teorii și metode”, Editura Polirom, Iași ;
- Boncu, Ștef (2006), „Negocierea și medierea – perspective psihologice”, Editura Institutul European, Iași;
- Carnavale, P. J. și Pruitt, D. G. (1992), *Negotiation and mediation. Annual Review of Psychology*, nr. 43, pp. 531 – 582 ;
- Conlon, Donald. E., Hunt, Shelton, Courtney (2002), *International Journal of Conflict Management*, vol. 13, issue 1, pp. 35 – 58 ;
- Forgas, Joseph P. (1998), „*On feeling good and getting your way : Mood strategie on negociator cognition and bargaining strategies*”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 74, nr. 3, Washington, pp. 565 – 577 ;
- Hăvârneanu, Cornel (2000), „*Metodologia cercetării în științele sociale*”, Editura Erola, Iași;
- Moscovici, Serge, Buschini, Fabrice (coord.) 2007, „*Metodologia științelor socio – umane*”, Editura Polirom, Seria Collegium. Psihologie , Iași ;
- Prutianu, Ștefan (2007), „*Antrenamentul abilităților de negociere*”, Editura Polirom, Iași ;
- Prutianu, Ștefan (2005), „*Antrenamentul abilităților de negociere : Limbaje ascunse*”, Editura Polirom, Iași ;
- Soric, Izabela (1999), „*Anxiety and coping in the context of a school examination*”, *Social Behavior and Personality*, pp. 319 – 330 ;
- Thompson, L. (1990), *Negotiation behavior and outcomes : Empirical evidence and theoretical issues*, *Psychological Review*, vol. 108, issue 3, pp. 515 – 532 ;

Thompson, L. (1990), *An examination of naive and experienced negotiators*, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology Review, vol. 108, issue 1, pp. 82 – 90 ;