

Subjective Influencing Factors of Negotiation in Life Insurance Domain

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The theory of negotiation belongs to several fields, but it has like starting point sociology and social psychology, more precise the segment which studies human behaviour in various social situations and the manner in which people want to be displayed comparing with the others. This paper proposes to develop the subject of negotiation psychology in life insurance domain. To show the close link between psychology and negotiation, in this field, the study reflects the influence of subjective factors in the result of negotiation in a life insurance case study. To cover this broader issue the research contains a practical part which demonstrates the beautiful mixture between two zones of different origins. The analysis is based on the interview of a negotiation and a questionnaire addressed to the implied parts. The field of life insurance is the best example to support the point of view with regard to the influence of subjective factors in the result of a negotiation. The requirement of a

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life insurance nowadays emerges from the need of humans to be protected from unpleasant events during their life. If a negotiation starts in the middle of a human need, it is clear and obvious that it is related to a strong load of subjectivity.

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JEL Classifications: A12, M1, C78, C83

1. Introduction

The complicity of socio-economic and political life, the diversity of business which are unwounded by economic agents, make negotiation establish itself as one of the most precious attributes of contemporary life. In social life, each person presents himself and his work, seeking to guide and even to control the impressions of its fellows, plays a part, has a statute, uses a certain number of techniques to reach the success reported in its motivations. However, contrary to the intentions which an individual has, during his social contacts, the individual will be considered by the community which will draw some the conclusions based on the attitude, the mentality and the emotional behaviour of this one.

From the point of view of the person who appears in front of a community, there are different situations, bound either to his desire to do the others to think on this subject of his best, or the desire to convince them that he appreciates them particularly or other circumstances related to the way he is treated by society. The human behaviour and perception are subjacent with the negotiation, whose final result is given. Because people are themselves who carry out all the negotiations and they appreciate with the subjectivity of their thought, it is believed that by negotiation must be understood a process in which everyone can succeed. Uncertainty in negotiation might affect the relationship auditor-client. For example managers

prefer a contending negotiation strategy even under uncertainty (Brocard & Feicha, 2013). Any request concerning satisfaction and for any condition of being convinced as long as it does not depend entirely on the individual - who is transformed in a negotiation process, consists in the fact that the success of negotiation is different according to the behaviour of the individual and individual reactions of control.

A definition of the negotiation or fixed receipts cannot exist as long as they are tools for people and people have features, behaviours and different abilities. In absence of universal receipts the knowledge of the human behaviour is essential with already acquired information. All participants in negotiation make certain assumptions. A part of success will be ensured of exactitude of their assumptions and the capacity to anticipate the assumptions of their partners. Negotiation assumes that every party has needs and direct or indirect interests that they want to satisfy. When partners always took into account reciprocal wishes tacitly, negotiation ended successfully and contacts were supported; but when the needs of a party being ignored and negotiation was a simple game with winners and losers - the results - particularly those of negotiation and contentment of requires - take the form of the operations which must in general be mutually advantageous. Human behaviour can draw away an impairment of the development of collaboration in negotiation or conflict produced during the process of negotiation. These states are going to evolve according to the behaviour of negotiators, which in its turn is the function of human nature and position of subjects participating in negotiation. Negotiation concerns a group of relations within numerous mutual concessions to attain an equilibrium which each assesses on the basis of available information and on his needs. The classification of negotiation in terms of human behaviour and the type of interest which is in game, leads us to conclude that there are two main types of negotiations: personal and collective. Differences of

behaviour we meet not only by relation between the negotiator and the object of negotiation, but in report between the negotiator as member of the society and the society itself. Negotiation aims principally at reaching an agreement by will, a general agreement and not a win. Negotiation consists of partners and not opponents. Both partners have to conclude negotiations with the feeling that they attained the maximum of the fact that they offered. As a result, negotiation must be defined as a vast process of collaboration (Arvanitis & Karampatzos, 2013). Because this process is made by people and they are the porters of the individual factors, of their emotional needs, there are some ideas on relation between collaboration and negotiation of point of view of the personality of the partners. Negotiation carries the footprint distinct from human behaviour because it is a process made even by people. The decisive role of behaviour is given due to the fact that the main objective of negotiation is to accomplish certain desires, human needs, the relationship between objectives and means revealed in negotiations. So, negotiation comes to be considered to be a method of intercommunication of the humans. There are authors who consider communication between people as object of study of a much bigger importance than the study of other domains of human behaviour. Penetration and understanding of communication system make easier and open the way to self-government and of those who encircle it being able to clarify the hierarchy of persons in society by criteria of value.

2. The concept of negotiation

As any complex process, the negotiation has several definitions according to point of view adopted by the researcher who is in charge of it. There are in most cases two points of view on negotiation: the one which envisages the result and the one which concentrates on the process. Dimitri Weiss (Weiss, 1976) concentrates on several

characteristics of negotiation. According to his opinion «Negotiate means to act, make, move, circulate, exchange, it is the opposite of inertia». Another approval is by Christophe Dupont (1994) who interprets the negotiation of point of view of the participants and the reasons which bring them to the table of negotiation. He defines negotiation as «an activity which puts in correlation several actors which, confront and have divergences and interrelationships, choose (or find opportune) to search a mutually allowable resolution deliberately». Dupont puts the emphasis on two important elements: nonviolence and taking into account the reality of the other one. George Kennedy (1992) considers that negotiation is «a process by which we follow conditions to acquire what we want of people who want something of us». Important specialists like Roger Fischer et William Ury (1982) maintain that «negotiation is a means to acquire from others what we want, a form of intended, bilateral communication that produces an agreement between people having often common or opposed interests». They introduce new terms as bilateral communication, agreement between people and interests. Therefore, negotiation is an activity which implicates at least two persons who by the intermezzo of dialogue become participants to a debate, are unified by common interests, whom they try to harmonize or by divergent interests which they enforce to ignore. The sequence of a negotiation aims as conclusion an agreement, but if the participants do not agree and reach no agreement, negotiation is not cancelled, because the activity took place. Lax and Sibelius (1995) emphasize the term of process in their definition on negotiation. According to their vision, negotiation is the «process of opportunistic correlation in which two or several actors (parties), in situation of visible conflict, try to acquire by an agreement a better result than by other means of decision». Lionel Bellenger (1998) treats negotiation from the point of view of reports between negotiators. Nearby him «negotiation appears as a confrontation of closely or hard

interdependent protagonists, scum by a certain report of force and introducing a minimum of will to succeed an arrangement aimed to reduce a distance, a divergence, to construct an allowable resolution with regard to their objective». Therefore negotiation is a competition of ideas, which at the end, if it speaks about a success, records a winner and a loser. Of course, a loser also wins something, but less compared with winner.

3. The elements of business negotiation

There are several criteria that help to establish the types of negotiations (2009). The most important classifications are made according to:

The domain of activity. We can differentiate commercial negotiations (business or financial), between leader and subordinate, inside of a society (between the colleagues or between various departments), political, economic, diplomatic, social, cultural, international, of projects (which combines commercial, financial, political and diplomatic elements) etc.

The number of participants. We can detect negotiations in which participate two persons who represent two parties and those in which participate several negotiators. In the second category can be included the negotiations in which participate two parties, each party represents at the very least by two persons and negotiations with several parties. These can be influenced by several factors or it can be introduced an intermediate (referee or mediator).

The political or legal status of the participants. They can have intergovernmental or not governmental negotiations which can be separated between two legal persons or between a legal person and an individual.

The length of negotiation. This aspect includes negotiations of small length, medium length and long length.

On the first place must be placed the participants (two or several). The number of the protagonists is taken into account as criterion of classification of a negotiation and as an element of typology. Always, it must be raised the importance of the watcher which sums up the results of sessions and reminds the protagonists subjects to be discussed and their order. In a business negotiation, corporate social responsibilities (CSR) should be taken into account as a efficient business strategy (Iamandi, 2007). In second place, it is necessary to put the object of negotiation which must be clear, very well delimited of other objects related to which it can be touched. On the third plan, it comes the time which is essential in the first stage of negotiation (the preparation) until the last (the analysis of the results of the contract and the valuation of acquired experience) (Keenan, 2007). In his book, *La négociation d'affaires*, M. Delahaye (2002) offers a typology of commercial negotiations by adding that «this typology, which is only a tool of analysis, aims at understanding and at anticipating foreseeable difficulties of negotiations according parameters easy to provide».

The criteria which keep for this classification are (Delahaye, 2002): the peculiarity of agreement to negotiate which concerns the object of agreement, the amount of the contract, strategic importance of the agreement to be negotiated, as well as the complicacy of the contract to negotiate. Of these four elements, the first two are of objective nature as other two are likely rather subjective.

the approaches and conditions of negotiation which refer to contractual process, in practical modalities of negotiation and to the number of parties in presence.

the entity of the partners is overwhelm of the legal status of parties, the nationality of the mother society and on the quality of the commercial partner.

the nature of relationship between partners can be appreciated according to the respective positions of parties, the respective size of parties and the atmosphere assumed in the negotiations.

4. Life insurance sales and negotiation process

In the field of insurance life the main activity is constituted by sale based on the needs of customers who buy insurance policies because they follow the custom of a need etc. Insurance companies offer attractive packages on short, medium or long term. The sale of insurances constitutes a “control”, an occupation which requires much competence and an accumulation of knowledge specific to the field. The object of sale is formed by programs of insurances, which have like finality intangible and abstract benefits in present. If the agent wishes to surpass customer expectation, to obtain his satisfaction, then he must provide high quality services, so that it bursts the customer who will probably buy in future only from the respective advisor. The agent role in customer life is of third pillar. If the customer wants to invest his moneys in various financial instruments, he would need a piece of advice from an agent.

The sale insurances offer the agent the freedom of expression and of success, personal development and a financial situation above average. To become a winner, it is necessary to have desire, plan activities, to professionally prepare all the time, set goals.

Life insurance sale is different from other product or services sales because life insurance is an abstract, intangible and not familiar thing to the customer. So, to sell such a service must first make customer understand insurance assistance. Second, the sale of a life insurance is based on a relationship of trust between the agent and the customer (Bikker, 2012). So before selling something, earn the trust of the person. Third, the sale of a life insurance is carried out from financial necessities of the client. An important step in the sale and negotiation

process is the analysis of the client potential needs and financial possibilities.

Whatever field we are talking about the sale implies the existence of a buying and selling process. Depending on the product or service that is sold, the sales process is different. Sales techniques are used depending on the specific product, but also according to the company that promoted them. The process of selling a life insurance although it differs fundamentally contains some features from one company to another. Professionals in this category insurance consider the sale of a life insurance is a process in which each step is important and generates the next step.

The process of selling a life insurance (Badea, 2008) begins with the exploration and continues with the contact leads to establish a face to face meeting in which the agent will identify customer needs. On the basis of information obtained he develops solutions and recommends an appropriate insurance product (Ho Taek Yi, Dubinsky & Chae Un Lim, 2008) to the customer. Then establishing a meeting with the client is needed to present solutions and after the sale is finalized. Thereafter, customers will need advice services even after the completion of the sale. Briefly, the steps of the sales process to conclude a life insurance policy are:

- Prospecting
- The approach to potential clients - telephone contact
- The briefing
- The meeting of selling
- Objections to resolve and completion.

5. Hidden meanings in conversations

While negotiating, each must search signification hidden in what the others say. Very often, what is skipped of a speech has so much signification or importance as what is said. Besides, it must be specified not to reveal our own hidden significations. Here are some

expressions and words which point out signification hidden in dialogues.

phrases (expressions) which mean the opposite: By time people say certain things which are exactly the opposite of their true thought or intention: *It is very interesting...*; *In my unassuming opinion...*;

throwaway expressions which at first glance point out an insignificant reference but which precede a major announcement: *Oh, referring to...*; *I was going to forget*;

legitimate expressions used to legitimate the enunciating sentences which are not completely true: *Honestly*; *Frankly*; *Truly*;

mandatory expressions which prepare for failure. The speaker changes mode: Before: *I think that...*; Afterwards: *We think that...*;

expressions which in fact erase or cancel all that preceded, such as: *but*; *however*; *on the contrary*;

disappointment expressions which precede normally an effacement and mean exactly the opposite of what is said: *I am not a lawyer, on the contrary*; *I am only a small guy from country, but listen, I really did not study the fund of the question, however*;

preparatory expressions which prepare the speaker what to tell or make: *I do not want to bother you*; *Without being indiscreet*; *This is a bit embarrassing for me*;

trial balloons: sentences which point out that the speaker it is already made an idea and wants to have an opinion: *Let us assume that*; *What would arrive if*; *There is an idea which crossed my thoughts*;

sensory orientation: the most part of people use one of the senses more than the others, often one which is predominant. It is a rule to know how to guess the predominant sensory side of our speaker:

6. Research premises and methodology

The questionnaire contains a series of five questions addressed to participants in a life insurance negotiation. Each issue is a category of subjective factors. The questions are everyone's opinion regarding the

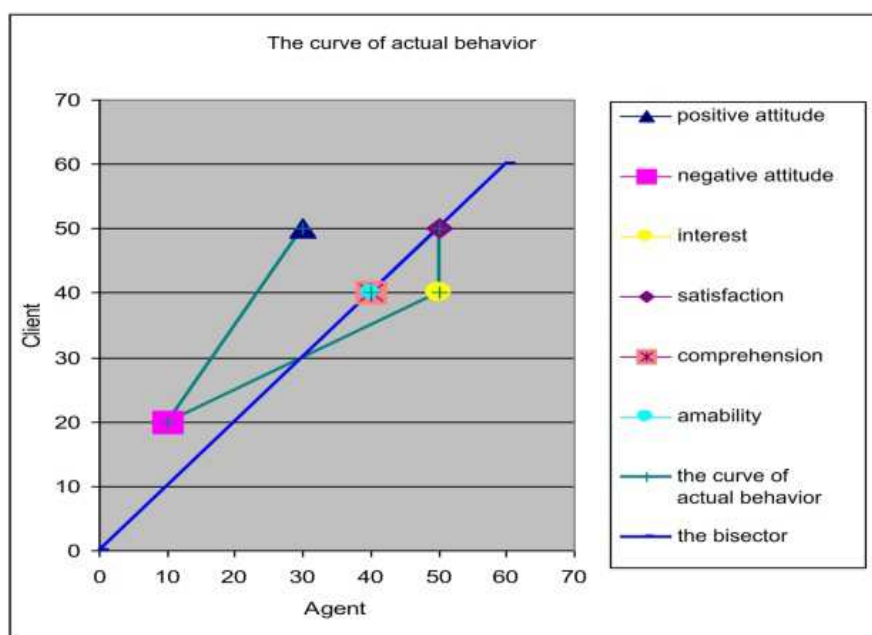
degree of influence of each subjective factor identified in the negotiation dialogue. To interpret their influence in the outcome of the negotiation, it was used a semantic differential scale with scores of 1 to 5 with the following remarks: 1 - no influence, 2 - low influence, 3 - moderate influence, 4 - influence of high-impact, and 5 - full-influence. Both parties, the agent and the customer responded to the questions by giving scores for all factors of each category according to their own point of view and that of the interlocutor. Extracting their answers in a lookup table, there were built into Excel 2007 the graphic curves influence of subjective factors categories.

7. The analysis and results of subjective factors in a life insurance negotiation

In Figure no. 1, the curve of actual behaviour represents the behaviour curve based on the client's and agent's answers which regards the behaviour factors in their acception and interpretation. It can be observed that the satisfaction, understanding and patience points can be found on the bisector line which reveals the fact that the answers are similar (both agent and client have similar answers).

Figure no. 1

The curve of actual behaviour



Source: Microsoft Excel 2007

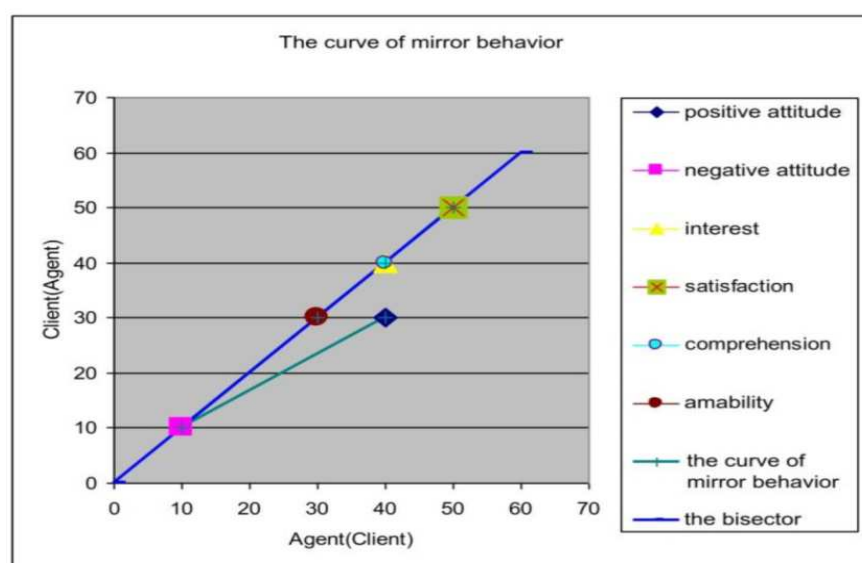
They consider that understanding (comprehension) and patience (amiability) have a great influence on the negotiation result and the satisfaction is total. It can be seen that the negative attitude and the interest can be found under the bisector line which shows that both client and agent have similar opinions. The client thinks that the interest has an important influence over the negotiation result and he thinks all the contrary regarding the negative attitude. The agent considers that the interest has a great impact on the negotiation result but he thinks that the negative attitude has no influence. The positive attitude can be found on a beyond (further) point on the bisector line which means that the respondents' point of view are divergent. The agent considers that the positive attitude has a maximum influence, but the client believes that its influence is moderate. It can be said that

agent and client have similar opinions concerning their expectations of the negotiation.

The figure no. 2 underlines the behaviour factors based on the agent and client's opinions and this opinions can be replaced one another (can switch places). The agent becomes the client and the client becomes the agent. Because of this the curve is named the mirror curve (of the behaviour). In this situation, the negative attitude, satisfaction, interest, comprehension and amiability can be found on the bisector line which once again reveals the opinion coincidences.

Figure no. 2

The curve of mirror behaviour



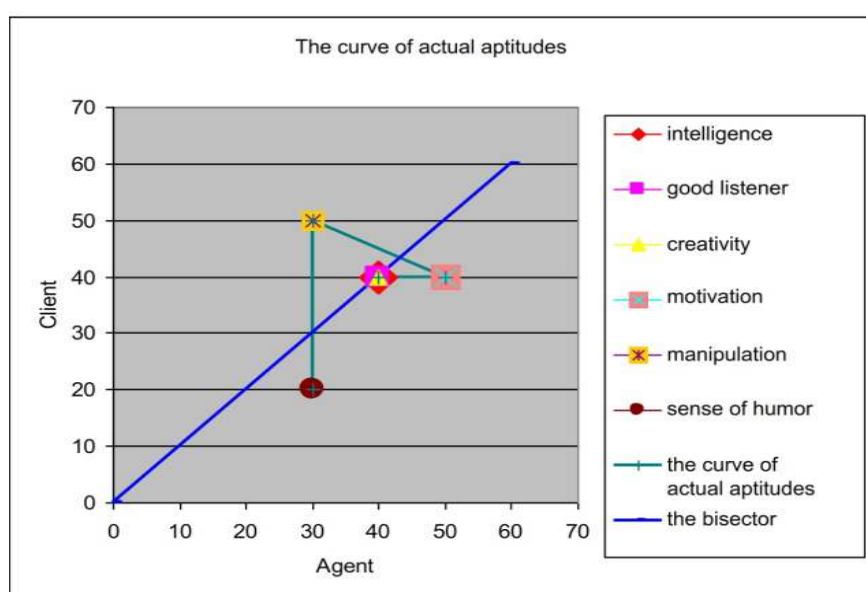
Source: Microsoft Excel 2007

They think (agent and client) that negative attitude doesn't have any influence and amiability has a moderate influence. Interest and comprehension have a maximum influence. On their opinion, the

satisfaction remains the factor with a complete influence over the negotiation result. The positive attitude can be found overhead on the bisector line which indicates similar ideas. So, if client and agent switch places their ideas have a high accord and resemblance.

Figure no. 3

The curve of actual aptitudes



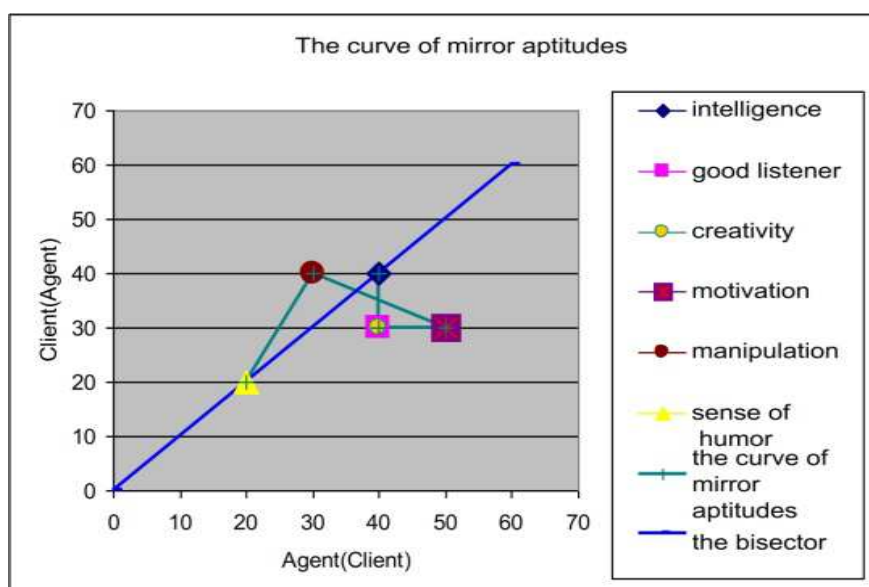
Source: Microsoft Excel 2007

The curve of actual aptitudes, emphasizes very well the curve of the aptitudes (abilities) as subjective factors which influence the negotiation result. Client and agent have the same points of view concerning the intelligence, having good listener skills and creativity. They consider that these aptitudes have an important influence over the final result. There are two points of view which can be found overhead on the bisector line because agent and client have similar opinions. The agent thinks that the motivation has a complete influence and the sense of humour a moderate one. In exchange of it

(in return) the client thinks that motivation is of great importance and the sense of humour is of low importance. The manipulation is the only factor which can be found very far of the bisector line, which shows a disagreement between agent and client' opinions. The agent thinks that manipulation has a moderate influence whereas the client thinks that her influence is complete. This means that the agent and the client think the same regarding three of the six identified abilities (competences).

Figure no. 4

The curve of mirror aptitudes



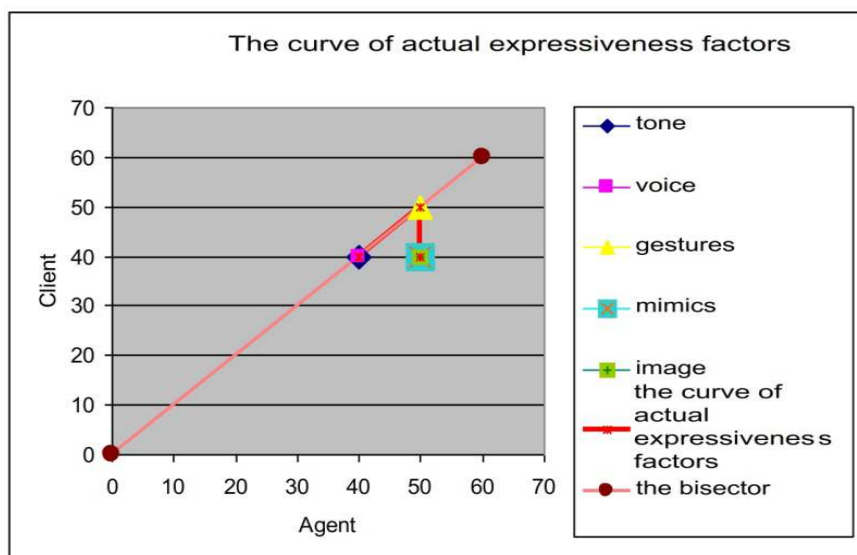
Source: Microsoft Excel 2007

This figure shows that the aptitudes are based on the agent and client' points of view but these answers can switch places. The agent becomes the client and the client becomes the agent. Because of this, the figure was titled 'the mirror aptitudes curve'. On this case the sense of humour and intelligence are on bisector line because both

respondents have similar opinions. They think that intelligence has an important role during the negotiation, while the sense of humour has a lower influence. The manipulation, good listener skills, motivation and creativity are factors which can be found near the bisector line which shows the fact that the agent and the client don't have the same ideas. In this case there is a disagreement between them, in fact of the aptitudes influence.

Figure no. 5

The curve of actual expressiveness factors



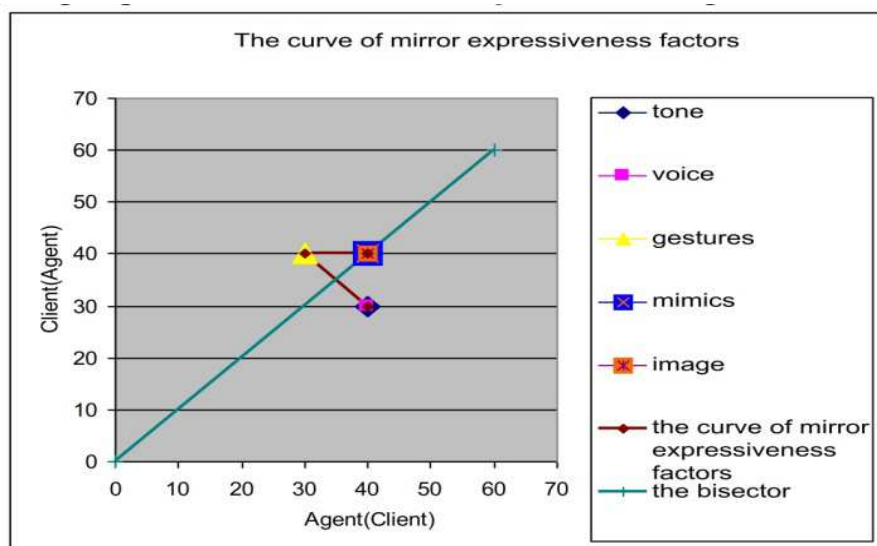
Source: Microsoft Excel 2007

The Figure no. 5 shows what the agent and the client think concerning the emphasis factors. It can be observed that they give the same answers from their tone of voice, their voice, their gestures because the points related to these factors are on the bisector line. The tone of voice and the voice are strongly important, while the gestures have a maximum influence. The mimic, the facial expression are points which

can be found near the bisector line which indicate that the respondents have similar opinions. The agent has chosen from the survey the maximum value for the mimic and facial expression instead of client whose has chosen the value 4 for these two factors, which means an important influence. In conclusion, agent and client express an agreement concerning the emphasis factors. They gave the highest values, 4 and 5 , to these factors.

Figure no. 6

The curve of mirror expressiveness factors



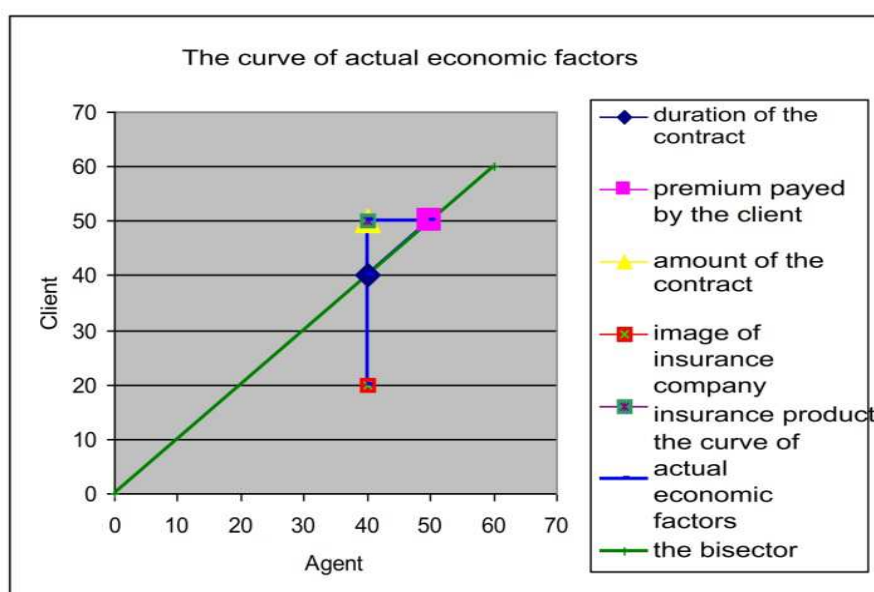
Source: Microsoft Excel 2007

This figure explains the points of the emphasis factors based on the answers of the agent and the client. In this situation the agent becomes the client and the client becomes the agent. Because of this the figure is named 'the curve of mirror emphasis factors'. In this case, the mimic and the facial expression points are on bisector line and this means that if the respondents switch places their answers concur.

They think that mimic and facial expression have a strong influence over a negotiation result. Concerning the other points which are found near the bisector line they have similar points of views. They think that the tone of voice, the voice and the gestures have a 4 value, which represents strong influence. This means that they have similar points of view regarding the influence of the emphasis factors during a negotiation.

Figure no. 7

The curve of actual economic factors



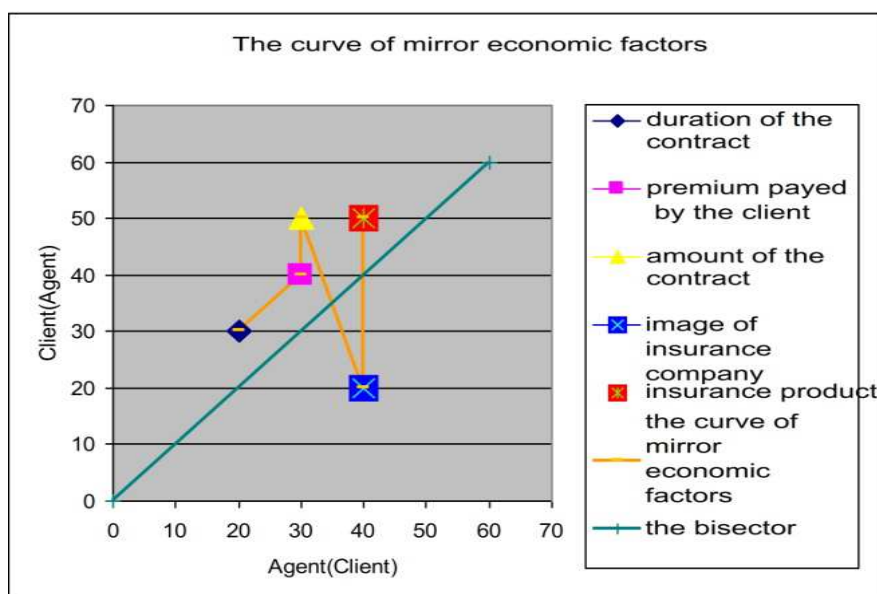
Source: Microsoft Excel 2007

The curve of actual economic factors presents the curve of the economic factors which have a subjective influence on a negotiation result. It can be seen that the points which represent the contract validity and the bonus (insurance) paid by the client can be found on

the bisector, which indicates that agent and client have the same opinion. They consider that the paid bonus (insurance) has a major role in the contract conclusion. In their opinion the contract validity has a strong influence. They disagree in which concerns the image of the company. The agent think the imagine of the company is an important element, while the client thinks that it has a strong influence. The client has given the maximum value to the product and to the amount of the contract while the agent considers that these two elements have a moderate influence. It can be suggested the idea that both of them appreciate the subjective and major influence of the economic factors in a negotiation result.

Figure no. 8

The curve of mirror economic factors

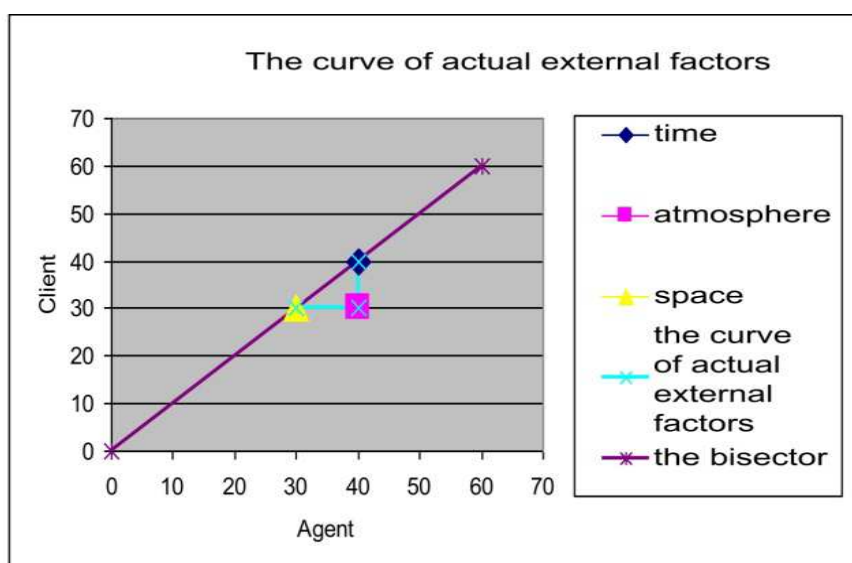


Source: Microsoft Excel 2007

The Figure no. 8 presents the economic factors based on the answers of the agent and the client, and, like in the other cases, they can switch places. The agent becomes the client and the client becomes the agent. Because of this the figure is named 'the curve of the mirror economic factors'. It can be observed that no point is on the bisector line. All points are near the bisector line which shows the fact that they (agent and client) have similar opinions. As a result, if they switch places, the agent and the client share the same ideas concerning the influence of a contract validity, the paid (bonus) insurance, the image of the company and the product they have chosen.

Figure no. 9

The curve of actual external factors



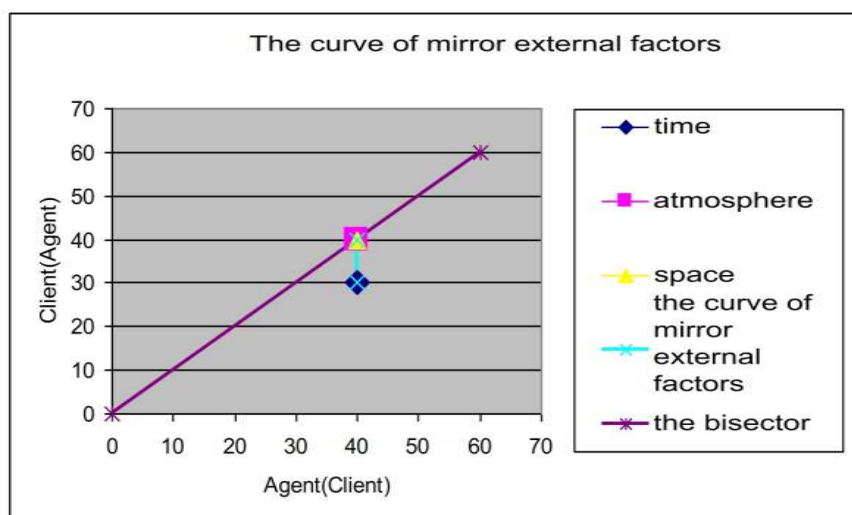
Source: Microsoft Excel 2007

The curve of actual external factors analyses the curve of the external factors in a life insurance negotiation. In this case, there are two points which can be found on the bisector line which shows the accord

(agreement) between the agent's and the client's point of view. They think that the space (the place) has moderate influence over the negotiation result and the time has a major influence over this result. The ambience (environment) is situated near the bisector line, which indicates similar points of view. The ambience (environment) has a major influence for the agent more than for the client. It can be concluded that the external (environmental) factors have a visible influence over the negotiation result.

Figure no. 10

The curve of mirror external factors



Source: Microsoft Excel 2007

In the Figure no. 10, the curve of mirror external factors emphasises the external factors based on the agent's and client's point of view, who once again switch places. The agent becomes the client and the client becomes the agent. In this situation, using the mirror concept, it can be observed that the environment (ambience) and the space

(place) crosses the bisector line in the same point. And it is obvious that agent and client have the same opinion. They consider that environment (ambience) and space (place) have a major influence over the negotiation result, while for the time they have given different values. The agent considers that the time has a major influence, while the client considers that it has a moderate influence. To conclude, it can be said that the external factors have a moderate influence.

8. Conclusions

It can be concluded that negotiation is a form of art. It provides the master with a great power. Knowing how to use it properly, how to structure it so that others get what they want, and all get what they want, a lot more success it will be gained. Not only that, but a large share of pressure, stress and friction will be eliminated. If the five basic facts will be respected in a negotiation, the result will be improved:

- negotiating all the time;
- not assuming that everything is currently owned or controlled by someone else;
- there are answers or reactions, predictable strategic manoeuvres or tactics in negotiations;
- there are three critical factors in every negotiation: understanding the power, information factor and time element;
- people are different and have different personality styles, which must be considered during negotiations.

At the same time there are three simple rules to follow to get a win-win negotiation:

There is a tendency to narrow the scope of the negotiations to a single element? When it happens this, it can only be one winner and a loser. It is important to broaden the scope of negotiations. Consider all the elements and the patch as a head case until all parties are satisfied and can win.

Never assume what the other party wants. It is important to know the person rather than just the business or prospective agreement.

Understand that people are different and have different perspectives regarding the negotiation. It is important to know the person rather than just the business or prospective agreement. Never assume that money is the crucial factor.

An example is the case study of a negotiation in life insurance domain. Both sides have met their expectations in this negotiation. The agent was able to gain a new customer for its portfolio and seek a new source of customers, because he knows a lot of people and it can recommend potential customers. In addition, the customer chose an advantageous life insurance product with the officer. We note that each category of subjective factors identified had a degree of influence higher or lower in the outcome of this negotiation. From the analysis of the questionnaire we can conclude that the agent and the customer were in a win-win position, although it is difficult to psychologically accept it. In addition, in the field of life insurance, if the negotiation ends with the signing of the contract, everyone is satisfied. The customer buys a product that fulfils his demands and insurance companies often offer attractive packages. The agent earns a commission contract and add a new client to his portfolio that will bring him an income guarantee for a long-term period.

Therefore, we try to highlight in this research that negotiation is strongly related to psychological phenomenon. Everyone can act on his own perception of the situation and prejudice others more or less conscious. The customer has moments of refusing to negotiate, but, if he is open-minded and shares a common perspective with the agent, an agreement could be achieved. In the present case the point of view of the agent has overleaped with that of the client, which is highlighted in their agreement case.

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