Developing the Negotiation Skills of Graduate Management Students

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ABSTRACT

Negotiation skills are considered integral to managerial effectiveness. Yet, little research has examined the systematic development of negotiation skills in management education. This paper describes a university course that was developed to improve MBA students' negotiation skills. Results from a quasi-experimental study show that the course significantly improved students' knowledge of negotiation and their distributive and integrative self-efficacy. There was also a significant increase in the extent to which negotiation course students believed competitive bargaining tactics were acceptable, and misrepresenting yourself unacceptable. Implications for the design of courses directed at developing negotiation skills among graduate students are discussed, together with directions for future research.

Keywords: negotiation, skills, management, students, training, employability,

INTRODUCTION

A number of authors have recently criticised MBA programs for failing to develop employability skills such as communication, teamwork, negotiation, and leadership in their students (e.g. Andrews, 2004; Bennis and O'Toole, 2005; Eunson, 2005; Tyson, 2005). Tyson (2005, p. 236), the Dean of the London Business School, observed that "…skill development has been a largely peripheral element of MBA programs. Business schools generally have assumed that the acquisition of skills is the responsibility of companies and individuals …This assumption no longer holds". Bennis and O'Toole are also intensely critical of MBA programs for not only failing to impart useful skills, but also for failing to prepare leaders and to instill norms of ethical behaviour in their students. Such criticisms are not confined to MBA programs with a recent Business Council of Australia report also raising concerns about the failure of universities in Australia to instill employability skills in their undergraduate students (Green and Hammer, 2006; Maiden and Kerr, 2006). The demand for these so-called soft or generic skills has increased because of the need for a more flexible, adaptable workforce in the current dynamic business environment (Kemp and Seagraves, 1995).

Negotiation and conflict resolution skills are among a number of skills identified as being essential to the employability of students (Carnevale, Gainer and Meltzer, 1990; Eunson, 2005; O'Neill, Allerd and Baker, 1997) and to managerial effectiveness in general (Lax and Sebenius, 1986; Mintzberg,

1973). Recent trends requiring managers to increasingly coordinate lateral relationships, such as greater diversity, globalisation, networked organisations, and the prevalence of work teams, has further highlighted the importance of negotiation skills for managers (Fortgang, 2000). Nevertheless, O'Neill et al. (1997, p. 24) concluded that, "what remains largely undone is the development of methods to assess the necessary skills that have been identified and, further, the teaching of such skills, that is, their integration in some manner into the [educational] curriculum". Sullivan, O'Connor and Burris, (in press) have also observed that few studies have sought to examine the processes involved in the acquisition and maintenance of complex interpersonal skills (for exceptions see Chen, Donahue and Klimoski, 2004; Gist, Stevens and Bavetta, 1991; Kemp and Seagraves, 1995; Stevens and Gist, 1997). Kemp and Seagraves (1995) concluded from their study of the development of communication skills in undergraduate students that such skills, at least, can be delivered provided that courses are restructured with skills at the forefront. While Chen et al. (2004) found that a specifically designed team course significantly improved undergraduate students' teamwork knowledge and skills, students' self-efficacy was unchanged after completing the course. Accordingly, the main purpose of this research was to develop, implement and evaluate a course specifically designed to increase MBA students' knowledge and skills in negotiation. The systematic development of students' negotiation skills should not only improve their employability but also enhance their satisfaction with the course, as well as helping to meet the expectations of employers. It is intended that this research will also help inform the design of future courses aimed at improving the employability skills of students. Further, by contributing to the training literature this study also helps to redress the paucity of research which has examined the development of complex interpersonal skills, such as negotiation. Finally, this paper also examines whether the negotiation course succeeded in influencing students' perceptions of the ethicality of various bargaining tactics, an area which has also received little research attention.

Negotiation Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs)

The negotiation literature describes two different types of negotiation processes: distributive and integrative. Distributive negotiations are typically described as situations where there is (1) usually a

fixed amount of resources to be divided, (2) negotiators pursue their own goals at the expense of those of others, and (3) where the parties focus on the short-term because they do not expect to work together in the future (Lewicki, Barry, Saunders and Minton, 2000). The negotiator's primary motivation in a distributive situation is to 'claim value' or 'maximise their share of the pie'. In contrast, integrative negotiations are often characterised as being variable-sum, whereby a party's primary motivation is to 'create value' or 'expand the pie' so as to maximise the gains to *both* parties. In integrative negotiation situations there are often multiple issues which the negotiators value differently and this provides the opportunity for negotiators to trade-off one issue against another in order to increase the joint gains (Pruitt, 1981). Walton and McKersey (1965, p. 138) advocate a three-step problem-solving approach to potentially integrative situations that includes: (1) identifying the problem, (2) searching for alternative solutions and their consequences, and (3) preference ordering of solutions and selecting a course of action. Fisher, Ury and Patton (1992) argue that 'principled or interest-based negotiation' also produces an optimal outcome in integrative situations. Principled negotiation, also referred to as 'side-by-side problem solving', incorporates four steps: (1) separating the people from the problem, (2) focusing on interests, not positions, (3) generating a variety of possible solutions, and (4) insisting that the result be based on some objective standard.

In reality, purely distributive or purely integrative negotiating situations are rare; most situations are mixed-motive, containing some elements that require distributive behaviours and others that require integrative. Nevertheless, the two processes are considered to be conceptually distinct (Walton and McKersey, 1965). In both processes the parties start with differences and are seeking to realize the most satisfaction possible, but the means by which they settle their differences are quite different. Each process therefore typically requires of the negotiator a different skill set or set of behaviours in order to maximise individual and/or joint gains. The implication being that negotiation courses need to address the development of both skill sets, distributive and integrative, in order for students' to become balanced negotiators capable of achieving optimal outcomes in either pure or mixed-motive situations. A second implication being that negotiation courses also need to address the theoretical frameworks of negotiation which underlie each of these processes: (1) the distributive model focusing

on competitive claiming tactics (e.g. Rubin, Pruitt and Kim, 1994), (2) interest-based (e.g. Fisher, Ury and Patton, 1991) or problem-solving approaches (e.g. Walton and McKersey, 1965) focusing on creating value, and (3) a mixed-motive integrative model (e.g. Allred, 2000; Lax and Sebenius, 1986) which recognises that negotiators need to balance creating and claiming value (Fortgang, 2000).

The Present Research

Given the importance of negotiation skills for today's managers the systematic development of these skills in MBA students should contribute to their effectiveness, and hence, the satisfaction of employers. The current research sought to evaluate the extent to which a specifically designed course in negotiation developed the knowledge and skills of graduate management students. The "Negotiation Behaviour" course (hereafter referred to as "negotiation course") is a 12-week elective within the MBA program of a sandstone university within Australia. Little research has been directed at examining whether students' knowledge and skill levels in negotiating can be significantly improved during a typical trimester long course. Assessment mechanisms used within MBA courses (e.g. written assignments or exams) are commonly directed at assessing knowledge acquisition (Michlitsch and Sidle, 2002), rather than skill development. As such, alternative assessment tools (e.g. self-reflective learning journals, assessment centre exercises, simulations) need to be developed and utilised commensurate with the focus on skill development of such courses.

Additional criteria, other than knowledge acquisition, are also needed to assess the effectiveness of skill-based courses. Recent research suggests that self-efficacy may play an important role in negotiation, affecting both the tactics that negotiators use and the outcomes they achieve (Gist, Stevens and Bavetta, 1991; O'Connor and Arnold, 2001; Sullivan, O'Connor and Burris, in press, 2006). Self-efficacy, is defined as "people's beliefs in their capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to exercise control over events in their lives" (Wood and Bandura, 1989: 364). In a simulation of a salary negotiation Gist and her colleagues found that people with high self-efficacy obtained higher levels of salary, performed better on the task and maintained their skill levels better over a seven week period than those with low self-efficacy (Gist et

al., 1991; Stevens and Gist, 1997). O'Connor and Arnold have also found that high levels of self-efficacy insulated negotiators from the relatively negative effects of being caught in an impasse or distributive spiral. Consistent with previous research, Sullivan et al. concluded that there are two different types of self-efficacy in negotiation, distributive self-efficacy (DSE) and integrative self-efficacy (ISE), which predisposes negotiators to select certain tactics, which influences the process and outcome of the negotiation. For example, people who have a low level of ISE are less willing to invest the time and energy in the potential payoffs of a collaborative relationship, and more likely to assume a competitive or accommodating approach to solving the conflict.

While the negotiation process has been the subject of considerable research, Robinson, Lewicki and Donahue (2000) argue that the potentially opportunistic aspect of the process has received relatively little attention. In their study of management students, Robinson et al. (2000) found that participants rated competitive bargaining as generally acceptable to use in negotiation, while attacking one's opponent, making false promises, misrepresentation/lying and the misuse of information were seen as somewhat less acceptable. While Robinson et al. (2000) did not find a relationship between students' willingness to endorse these tactics and their performance on the negotiation task; they did advocate the importance of students' understanding what kind of tactics may be perceived as unethical in negotiations. Finally, evidence from the transfer of training literature suggests that students' satisfaction with the negotiation course is also likely to influence whether or not they transfer the knowledge and skill acquired during the course to *actual* negotiations in their workplaces (Baldwin and Ford, 1988). The effectiveness of the negotiation course was therefore evaluated using both cognitive (i.e. knowledge of negotiation) and affective criteria (i.e. distributive and integrative self-efficacy, acceptability of various bargaining tactics, satisfaction with the course).

METHODS

Course Design

The negotiation course was designed based on the principles of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) and social learning theory (Bandura, 1986). A recent survey of negotiation training across four disciplines

- business, law, international relations and public policy - by the Harvard Law School Program on Negotiation found that experiential learning and simulations was the primary teaching tool used by negotiation instructors (Fortgang, 2000). Kolb's experiential learning model is a cyclical, four-stage process involving: (1) concrete experience, (2) reflective observation, (3) abstract conceptualisation, and (4) active experimentation. To provide concrete experiences students participated in seven negotiation simulations in class time during the trimester, including two exercises which were videotaped, one in week two and the other in the eleventh week of the trimester. Experiential learning was also encouraged by requiring students' to keep a self-reflective learning journal throughout the trimester and through the analysis of their own and other students' behaviour in the videotaped negotiation exercises. Both the learning journal and videotape analysis were formally assessed. The self-reflective journal also helped students with the abstract conceptualization stage of the model which requires them to generalise from the simulations and exercises to other contexts. The final entry for the learning journal required students to reflect on the final negotiation simulation and what they had learned since the beginning of the course. Self-assessments and diagnostic instruments (i.e. the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument - TKI) were also used to appraise each student's strengths and weaknesses, and to assist them to develop an action plan to improve their negotiation skills. Shell (2001) has found that the use of the TKI in negotiation training helps negotiators to gain greater insight into their own and others' behaviour at the bargaining table which, in turn, can improve their confidence and skill levels.

Nadler, Thompson and Van Boven (2003) found that negotiation performance improved when experiential learning was supplemented with observational and analogical learning. Derived from social learning theory, observational learning or modeling is based on the premise that negotiators can improve their skills by observing the skills of others and then practicing those behaviours (Bandura, 1986). Modeling is also valuable in a negotiation course because it can help to enhance the observer's self-efficacy. The negotiation course therefore also included the use of videos showing skilled negotiators reenacting various negotiation situations which students analysed during class. The principles of analogical learning were also incorporated into the design of the negotiation course.

Learning by analogy was achieved by having students participate in multiple negotiation simulations that embodied the same principle in order for them to extract commonalities in the underlying structure of the situations (Gillespie, Thompson, Loewenstein and Gentner, 1999; Loewenstein and Thompson, 2000). The process of comparing examples helps students to learn the underlying principles in the examples and to be able to apply those same principles in new situations. Students also completed readings and participated in lectures and discussions which focused on the three most commonly taught negotiation frameworks: (1) competitive or distributive bargaining, (2) interest-based or principled negotiation, and (3) mixed-motive situations (Fortgang, 2000). Additional lecturers and discussions focused on ethical dilemmas, emotions and cognitive biases in negotiation, and cross-cultural negotiation. Students were required to write an essay on one of three topics centred on the theoretical-practical nexus and incorporating the major frameworks of negotiation.

Research Design

A quasi-experimental design, with one treatment group (negotiation course students, n = 24) and one control group (accounting course students, n = 18) was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the negotiation course (Cook and Campbell, 1979). Such a design overcomes weaknesses identified in past evaluations of teaching methods in the Organisational Behaviour area that have relied solely on end-of-course reaction surveys, instructor impressions, or anecdotal evidence (Shaw, Fisher and Southey, 1999). For ethical reasons, it was not possible to randomly assign students to the treatment and control groups. Students self-selected the negotiation course and participation in the study was voluntary. Pretest and posttest cognitive and affective measures were administered to both the treatment and control groups to see whether the negotiation course made a significant difference in learning outcomes. The qualitative data in students' final learning journal entry was also obtained and analysed for all 24 students in the negotiation course. The average age of participants was 32 (SD = 6.15), the average years of work experience was 11.4 (SD = 6.91) and 33.3% were female. 76% of the students had a Bachelor degree, 9.5% a graduate diploma, 9.5% a Masters degree, and 4.8% had Doctorates. Participants also rated their prior negotiating experience on a scale of 1 = no experience and 7 = extremely experienced. The average of 3.3 being 'somewhat experienced'. An ANOVA

indicated that there were no significant differences in the age, work experience, gender, education level, or prior negotiating experience of the negotiation course and control students.

Measures

Negotiation KSA Test. Students' knowledge of negotiation was measured using a situational judgment test consisting of 30 multiple choice questions regarding hypothetical negotiation situations developed specifically for this study. Questions about both distributive and integrative negotiation situations were included in the test. Scores on the Negotiation KSA Test could therefore vary from 0 to 30 (answering all of the questions correctly).

Distributive and integrative self-efficacy. Distributive self-efficacy (DSE) and integrative self-efficacy (ISE) were measured using the 8-item scale developed by Sullivan et al. (in press). Participants rated their level of confidence in using each of the eight negotiation tactics on a 7-point scale (1 = no confidence; 7 = complete confidence).

Unethical bargaining tactics. Students' beliefs about the appropriateness of various bargaining tactics were measured using the 16-item Self-reported Inappropriate Negotiation Strategies Scale (SINS) developed by Robinson et al. (2000). The SINS scale measures five unethical tactics: traditional competitive bargaining, attacking an opponent's network, misrepresentation/lying, misuse of information, and false promises. Students rated the deceptive negotiation tactics on a 7-point appropriate-inappropriate scale (1 = not at all appropriate; 7 = very appropriate).

Satisfaction with the course. Satisfaction with the course was measured using a 5-item scale developed specifically for the study. Using a 7-point scale (1 = extremely dissatisfied; 7 = extremely satisfied) items included the extent to which participants were satisfied with "the amount learned in the course", "the level of skill development in the course", and "the amount they enjoyed the course".

Control measures. Previous research has found that in situations with integrative potential, joint outcomes were improved by the cognitive ability of one or both negotiators (Barry and Friedman, 1998). Cognitive ability was measured using the Wonderlic Personnel Test which requires participants to answer as many of the 50 questions correctly as possible in exactly 12 minutes (Wonderlic, 2002). Consistent with the instructor's manual, scores on the Wonderlic were age-adjusted for participants aged 30 or over. The Big Five personality traits have also been found to

differentially influence negotiation behaviour and outcomes (e.g. Barry and Friedman, 1998; Graziano, Jensen-Campbell and Hair, 1996; Lynch and Evans, 2002). Barry and Friedman found that negotiators high in agreeableness and extraversion were likely to do less well in distributive situations because they were more susceptible to the trap of 'anchoring' as a result of their greater focus on maintaining social relations. Graziano et al. have also found that people who score high on agreeableness are more likely to choose negotiation or disengagement rather than power tactics, such as making threats and criticisms, when solving conflict. While Barry and Friedman found no support for a relationship between conscientiousness and negotiator success, it is widely assumed that negotiators who plan well, and are careful and organised, are more likely to be successful (Lewicki et al., 2003). In a study of criminal defense negotiators, Lynch and Evans found that emotional stability was an important factor. The Big Five personality dimensions were measured using the 40-item Mini-marker test validated by Saucier (1994). The 40-item test has the advantage that it can be completed in approximately five minutes and can produce reasonable factors even in small samples. The test was administered following the format suggested by Saucier whereby participants rated how accurately each trait described them on a 7-point scale.

Procedure

Participants in both the negotiation course and the control group completed the pretest measures during the first week of a 12-week trimester, and the posttest measures during the last week of the trimester. To reduce potential biases, the researcher was not an instructor in either the negotiation or control group course, or in students' assessment. Negotiation course students were also blind to the fact that they were being compared to control students. Pretest measures included the Negotiation KSA Test, distributive and integrative self-efficacy, ethical bargaining tactics, and the control measures (cognitive ability, personality traits and previous negotiation experience). Posttest measures included the Negotiation KSA Test, ISE and DSE, ethical bargaining tactics, and the satisfaction with the course measure. Complete data were available for all 24 students in the negotiation course and 18 control group students. Students in the negotiation course were also videotaped twice in weeks two and eleven of the 12-week trimester. Both videotaped simulations involved a face-to-face two-party negotiation with the student representing a constituent. The first exercise was adapted from the

Bestbooks/Paige Turner exercise in Lewicki, Saunders, Minton and Barry (2003), and the second exercise adapted from an employment contract negotiation exercise in Olekalns, Smith and Walsh (1996). In both exercises, students had 30 minutes to reach agreement on eight issues, three distributive, four potentially integrative, and one issue of equal value to both parties. In each exercise students were instructed to maximise the value of the contract to themselves.

RESULTS

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics and correlations for the pretest and posttest measures for the Negotiation KSA Test, self-efficacy and satisfaction outcomes for students in the negotiation course and the control group. While the correlation between cognitive ability and the Negotiation KSA Test is positive, it is not significant at either Time 1 or 2, providing some support for the discriminant validity of the test. Of the Big Five personality traits only emotional stability was correlated with any of the dependent variables. Emotional stability was positively correlated with both ISE (r=.31,p<.05) and DSE (r=.33,p<.05) at Time 1, and ISE (r=.34,p<.05) at Time 2. Students' performance on the Negotiation KSA Test was unrelated to self-efficacy at Time 1. However, at Time 2 the Negotiation KSA Test was significantly and positively correlated with ISE (r =.28, p<.05) and approached significance with DSE (r =.24, p<.07), suggesting that increased knowledge of negotiation was associated with increased self-confidence.

Table 2 presents a summary of the means for the treatment and control groups on the pretest, posttest and control measures, as well as the results for the independent sample t test of mean differences. No significant differences were found for any of the control variables, suggesting that the two groups were similar in relation to variables such as personality and cognitive ability that could influence the development of negotiation skills. Somewhat unexpectedly there were significant differences in the pretest measures of ISE and DSE between the treatment and control groups, but by Time 2 there were no significant differences. Paired-sample t tests indicated that the improvement in ISE and DSE were significant for negotiation course students, $t_{(24)} = 2.57$, $p < .05$ and $t_{(24)} = 3.11$, $p < .01$ respectively, but not for control group students. The significant difference at Time 1 potentially occurred because

students self-selected the negotiation course. As expected there was a significant difference in the posttest negotiation KSA test between the treatment and control groups. Paired-sample *t* tests also

TABLE 1: Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations for Treatment and Control Groups for Negotiation KSA, Self-Efficacy and Satisfaction

Variable	***M***	***SD***	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**
1. Treatment	0.57	0.50														
2. T1 NEGKSA	11.95	2.12	.05	___												
3. T1 ISE	5.23	0.79	-.44**	.04	(.78)											
4. T1 DSE	4.41	0.81	-.48**	.02	.74***	(.75)										
5. T2 NEGKSA	15.58	3.44	.62***	.19	.02	.03	___									
6. T2 ISE	5.51	0.80	.05	.10	.18	.36**	.28*	(.84)								
7. T2 DSE	4.60	0.77	.06	.02	.18	.37**	.24	.38**	(.82)							
8. T2 Satisfaction	4.81	1.21	-.03	-.15	-.28	-.09	-.17	-.14	-.24	(.94)						
9. Cognitive Ability	28.00	5.67	-.06	.18	.24	.07	.14	-.02	-.14	-.11	___					
10. Agreeableness	5.82	0.54	.01	-.20	-.06	.05	-.04	.20	.07	-.01	-.28	(.71)				
11. Conscientious	5.87	0.62	-.03	-.22	.13	.24	.11	.23	.15	.06	-.05	.16	(.76)			
12. Emotional Stab.	5.32	0.59	-.21	-.04	.31*	.33*	-.04	.34*	.01	-.15	.13	-.02	.46**	(.64)		
13. Extroversion	5.25	0.72	-.15	-.23	.22	.16	.01	.01	-.07	-.12	.10	.30*	-.04	-.02	(.72)	
14. Openness	5.30	0.89	.12	.11	.02	.12	.20	.23	.19	-.02	.05	.19	-.03	-.39**	.44**	(.84)

Note. $N = 42$; Treatment Group (0 = control; 1 = negotiation course); Internal consistency reliability estimates (Cronbach α) are shown on the diagonal; T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2; NEGKSA = Negotiation KSAs Test; ISE = Integrative self-efficacy; DSE = Distributive self-efficacy;
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

TABLE 2: Summary of Mean Group Differences on Pretest, Posttest, and Control Measures

Variable	Negotiation Course (n = 24)		Control Group (n = 18)		
	M	***SD***	***M***	***SD***	***t***
Time 1 (Pretest) Measures:					
1. Negotiation KSA Test	12.04	2.37	11.83	1.79	0.31
2. Integrative Self-Efficacy	4.96	0.82	5.68	0.48	-3.35**
3. Distributive Self-Efficacy	4.12	0.71	4.91	0.74	-3.23**
4. Competitive Bargaining	4.17	0.96	4.14	1.05	0.09
5. Attacking Opponent	1.85	0.88	1.90	1.30	-0.14
6. False Promises	2.25	1.06	2.00	1.16	0.67
7. Misrepresentation	3.11	0.89	3.05	1.20	0.20
8. Inappropriate Information	2.79	1.41	2.78	1.69	0.02
Time 2 (Posttest) Measures:					
9. Negotiation KSA Test	17.38	2.87	13.17	2.60	4.98***
10. Integrative Self-Efficacy	5.51	0.71	5.52	0.98	0.03
11. Distributive Self-Efficacy	4.64	0.59	4.54	1.05	0.36
12. Competitive Bargaining	4.83	0.99	4.54	1.09	0.67
13. Attacking Opponent	1.90	0.98	1.94	0.92	-0.14
14. False Promises	1.97	0.90	1.98	1.05	-0.04
15. Misrepresentation	2.65	1.11	2.74	0.98	-0.25
16. Inappropriate Information	2.86	1.60	2.21	1.13	1.31
17. Satisfaction With Course	4.78	1.36	4.86	0.80	-1.65
Control Measures:					
18. Cognitive Ability	27.68	5.82	28.39	5.63	-0.39
19. Agreeableness	5.81	0.51	5.81	0.62	0.03
20. Conscientiousness	5.85	0.66	5.89	0.57	-0.20
21. Emotional Stability	5.22	0.62	5.47	0.53	-1.25
22. Extraversion	5.17	0.74	5.38	0.71	-0.87
23. Openness	5.38	1.02	5.17	0.66	0.70

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

show that the improvement in negotiation KSAs in the negotiation course students was significant, $t_{(24)} = 7.96$, $p < .05$, but not among control students, $t_{(18)} = 1.90$, n.s.

Analysis of the unethical bargaining tactics shows that there were no significant differences in the acceptability of the tactics between the treatment and control groups either at Time 1 or Time 2, as

shown in Table 2. However, further analysis using paired sample *t* tests shows some interesting results. Competitive bargaining tactics were reportedly *more* acceptable among negotiation course students, $t_{(24)} = -3.66$, $p < .001$, than control students $t_{(18)} = 0.94$, n.s. Misrepresentation or lying also became significantly *less* acceptable among negotiation course students $t_{(24)} = 1.82$, $p < .05$, compared to the control students $t_{(18)} = 0.92$, n.s. A comparison between men and women in the sample found no significant differences in the acceptability of the five tactics at Time 1. However, consistent with Robinson et al.'s findings, at Time 2 men were reportedly *more* accepting of four of the tactics than women ($p<.05$). Only for traditional competitive bargaining were there no significant differences, $t_{42}= 1.35$, $p=0.19$. A hierarchy of unethical tactics in negotiations also emerged with all students rating traditional competitive bargaining as the most acceptable, followed by misrepresenting information or lying, inappropriate information gathering, making false promises, and finally, attacking your opponent's network (e.g. threatening to get them fired) as being least acceptable.

Analysis of the qualitative date from the final learning journal entries of students in the negotiation course provided additional insight as to their learning outcomes. Consistent with the quantitative data students commented on their improved knowledge and understanding of the negotiation process, development of skill levels, and enhanced self-confidence. Greater understanding of bargaining tactics, and distributive and integrative negotiation frameworks were mentioned by a number of students. Students also commented on their improved communication skills including active listening, and ability to prepare for the negotiation including setting goals and selecting a strategy. Finally, students also commented in their learning journals on their improved confidence. Some examples of learning journal entries were:

- I felt comfortable during the negotiation; I was never intimidated or felt under pressure to agree on a point.
- I was better prepared for the second exercise. I was less intimidated and more confident during negotiations.
- I was more satisfied with my technical competence in this negotiation than the previous exercise with regards to areas such as preparation, communication skills, active listening, and re-framing.
- I am satisfied that my ability to negotiate has progressed significantly over the course.
- Jenni was much more forceful and held her ground much better than in our original negotiation and it was evident that her skills have improved significantly.

- I am no way yet a skilled negotiator but I would like to think that I am a little closer than what I was at the beginning of the course.
- I was better prepared for the second exercise, being more aware of the possible tactics and my failings; I was less intimidated and more confident during negotiations.
- I believe the exercises conducted throughout the trimester actually prepared me to negotiate better. There seemed to be more of a purpose in what I was doing.
- It was helpful that by the time of this negotiation, I had acquired more knowledge on the negotiation tactics and strategic options and was able to identify them and even apply them during the negotiation.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This paper has presented the results of an evaluation study of the development of negotiation skills in graduate management students. This study is of significance because teaching evaluations often lack rigor in the research design. Results demonstrate that it is possible to significantly influence students' knowledge and self-confidence over a twelve week trimester. While there were no significant differences between the treatment and control group students at Time 2, results show a significant improvement in both integrative and distributive self-efficacy for the students enrolled in the negotiation course. O'Connor and Arnold (2001) suggest that there may be an upper limit to self-efficacy in a negotiation which may explain why there was no difference between the groups at Time 2. It is also possible that the small sample size may have biased the results. The qualitative data provides additional evidence for the improvement in knowledge, self-confidence and skill level of the negotiation course students. The fact that students rated competitive tactics as more acceptable following their participation in the course is an interesting, but not concerning, finding given that a competitive strategy is taught as a legitimate strategy choice based on the dual concerns model. The author concurs with Robinson et al.'s (2000) suggestion that the SINS scale could provide an avenue for the discussion of the issue of ethics in negotiation. While the results of the SINS scale were not discussed with students in this course because of the potential to confound the results, a lecture and discussion was specifically devoted to ethics. Whilst a social desirability bias cannot be ruled out it is heartening that all MBA students considered the tactics to be unethical, and misrepresentation more so after completing the negotiation course. However, future evaluation studies are needed to test whether students' willingness to endorse unethical tactics translates into *actual* behaviour during classroom negotiation exercises (e.g. lying, making promises that can't be kept).

At this point, a brief discussion of factors that might limit the generalisability of the findings is necessary. First, although the students were graduate management students with an average of 11 years of work experience they were not necessarily practicing managers at the time of taking the course. Second, because it is unethical in classroom situations to incorporate manipulations which may have a performance impact results may have been influenced by the non-random assignment of students. Third, although this evaluation of a negotiation course did not include behavioural measures, the qualitative data suggests that many students felt their skill level and confidence had improved. No research could be found to date that has been conducted into the extent to which negotiation skills training results in measurable changes in behaviour and so this requires future research.

Practically, the design of this course can be used as a template for instructors wishing to develop skills-based units for graduate students. Videotaping students while negotiating is a valuable learning experience for students, providing the opportunity to practice and to receive feedback about their skills. Comments in the learning journal suggest that the experience could be further enhanced with the use of self and peer assessments. This approach has the added advantage of providing students with ongoing formalised feedback about their developing reputation as a negotiator.

The nature of the workplace is changing and with it, there is a greater need for the development of interpersonal skills such as negotiation among graduate management students. To prepare students to be effective leaders in a changing business environment requires high level negotiation skills. New organisational forms, such as network organisations and self-managing teams, place increasing demands on the negotiation skills of managers. MBA programs and management education, in general, need to do more to ensure that these requisite skills are being developed in their students. This paper has argued that it is possible to improve the knowledge and self-confidence of students, and potentially influence students' perceptions of ethical tactics in negotiation provided the course is designed specifically with this end in mind.

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