

REVIEW

by Prof. Georgi Kirilov Petkov, PhD
on the thesis called “Rational and Emotional Influences on the Degree of
Success of Mediation” written by Yael Sne, PhD Candidate for Doctor of the
New Bulgarian University

The candidate Yael Sne has chosen a contemporary and prospective topic which is not only scientific, but also connected with the social practice. We have been living in a world of technological revolutions and permanent information renewing, a world in which the opportunities for direct communication between people are becoming less and less, hence lessening the opportunities for developing skills and forming strategies for coping with conflict situations among them. We have been witnessing cases when settling conflicts between two countries, for example, requires interference of a third party; when inter-agency problems are solved by arbitrators; when even the conflict relations within the family are solved by the judicial system.

Obviously there exists a deepening the mediation role in the processes of interaction between social partners. This becomes extremely necessary when relations are of conflict nature, and their urgent solving is required in order the system to continue working in a status quo. Even regarding this aspect of the topic only, the actuality of this thesis is an irrefutable fact.

Based on correctly formulated theme, the chosen objective and subject of research, as well as on the well defined research process and the chosen method, the author describes the model and the hypotheses of the scientific research. This fact gives her opportunity to set clear goals, and to formulate several important questions of research (p. 12), like: Do rational (emotional) promote or impede resolution through mediation? To what extent do the different models on mediation influence to promote or impede the resolution? How does the use of a variety of strategies cause the cooperation and agreement among the parties? With the graphic presentation of the model though, (p. 5), due to using bilateral links between all factors, the direction of influence is not very clear. Even if this is true for the real life – everything influences everything; for the purpose of this research she could have reduced the influences to the investigated ones only. Certain incorrectness exists in formulating the second hypothesis (p. 6), as far as the emotions by themselves are not behavior regulators. They participate in the regulation by increasing or decreasing the influence of the other factors. Personally they are mediators of the interaction between dependent and independent variables. Probably this incorrectness is due to the fact that the hypotheses are formulated in the beginning of the study, with terms not defined yet, which was done by the author on the following pages.

The review of the literature sources (more than 80) creates conditions for profound analysis of the possibilities for solving social conflicts through mediation processes, as well as comparatively complete presentation of the most famous emotion theories like the Intuitive Theory of James and Lang; Jerome and Singer's theory, Stanley Schachter's theory, etc. the newest theory about the Emotional intelligence is present too.

Presentation of emotion theories and their participation in behavior regulation are a good prerequisite for the next paragraph, where the author presents literature review connected with the leadership and its possibilities for mediating the social processes. In this connection, what was written on p.43 of the study sounds extremely credible: "...emotional intelligence, especially the ability to control the emotions of the self and of others, is one of the skills that allow leaders to hold enjoyable moods".

The following pages concern analyzing various models of conflict solving, and various forms of mediating of coping processes (Enabling Mediation, Evaluative Mediation, Formative Mediation etc.).

In the third chapter the author presents particular cases of applying mediation in the practice, which confirms the theoretical model. Here, on more than 30 pages the author presents interviews with real persons from the political and economic life in Israel whose participation in significant social events as process mediators reveal the possibilities and the effectiveness of this approach.

In the fourth chapter entitled "Discussion", getting back to the main goal of the research "The research goal was to examine the impacts that exist on the disputants in different cases. In other words, what guides the people involved in the mediation process in the resolution of the conflict?", the author raises again the questions posed in the research (p. 12), but this time from the positions of the experience.

Concluding her research and receiving the respective scientific results, the author does not claim that the topic is exhausted. On the contrary, with humbleness and scientific correctness, characteristic for the good scientific researcher, she dedicates her last sentences to the white spots and to the horizons that stand before the researchers who want to take on this topic: „The question is what is the degree of true influence of mandated mediation on social changes; this topic has not yet been researched. The change of the face of society is a slow and complicated process, in which many variables have impact".

Having in mind the scientific results achieved in this thesis, I suggest the respectable members of the scientific jury to confer on Yael Sne the scientific degree Doctor of the New Bulgarian University in scientific specialty 05.02.24 Organization and Management (Mediation in Resolving Arguments and Conflicts).

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