

Dissertation Evaluation for DBA Candidate, David Ferguson

DBA Thesis Title

“Behind the Table” in Negotiation: Behaviors and Functions of Effective External Leaders

June 6, 2017

ICS DBA Candidate, David Ferguson has successfully completed his dissertation defense on June 5, 2017. The Dissertation Committee conclude that David Ferguson’s dissertation has fulfilled the requirements for the DBA degree and recommend to grant him Hitotsubashi University’s doctoral degree in business administration. Below is a summary of this dissertation research, followed by the Committee’s evaluation and conclusion.

1. Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation is a thorough investigation into a very important, but overlooked area of negotiation research: behaviors of external leader, the leader who has responsibility for a negotiator or negotiation team, but is external to the negotiation team and so is normally not at the negotiation table. The external leader may be line manager or senior manager to whom the negotiator is accountable.

Negotiation has received much research over the years, but most of the negotiation research has focused on the negotiators at the bargaining table, with limited attention to their “bosses” such as line managers and senior executives who manage the negotiators. This dissertation study is intended to fulfill this research gap and uses an inductive approach to investigate the behaviors and functions of effective external leaders in a negotiation setting. Thirty experienced negotiators and external leaders from large multinational organizations were interviewed, and the transcripts were analyzed for consistently identified behaviors. As the result, this study identifies six behaviors that characterize effective external leaders: negotiator-focused behaviors (strategizing, empowering and developing), intra-organizational behavior (championing), and inter-organizational behaviors (scene-setting and intervening). Furthermore, this study proposes that these six behaviors represent three key functions of an external leader: supervisor, advocate, and representative.

This study highlights the importance of considering the behaviors and functions of external leaders in a negotiation setting, and has implications for previous negotiation research that has ignored the external leader's contribution as part of an "expanded negotiation team." This study has also offered useful lessons for negotiation practitioners who are interested to know how to effectively manage in negotiation settings.

2. The Dissertation Committee's Evaluation

This dissertation has successfully fulfilled DBA research requirements: the research is grounded both in the practice and academia, investigates and addresses a real, important managerial issue with solid academic research methods, and makes a couple of contributions to the negotiation and leadership research.

Contributions This dissertation advances the literature and contributes to the practice in the following ways: First, this dissertation expands negotiation research to consider the behaviors and functions of external leaders of negotiation. It provides an important first step in going beyond the negotiation team, to consider the broader range of players that contribute to negotiation group dynamics.

Second, this research finds that effective external leaders perform not only negotiator-focused and intra-organizational behaviors, but also inter-organizational behavior (scene-setting and intervening) which has been overlooked in the traditional leadership literature. By identifying the inter-organizational behavior, this research may help to expand the traditional leadership research into an important new area.

Third, the study derives three functions (supervisor, advocate and representative) that have implications in selecting and training external leaders of negotiators, as well as for organizations seeking to make negotiation a corporate capability.

Limitations and Further Development As any piece of research, this dissertation has limitations. Some of these are areas that can be further developed and improved as the dissertation is revised for publication. Others offer starting points for new research. One limitation is the fact that this study focuses on negotiators and external leaders from Western multinationals in Pacific Rim countries. It may be necessary and would be an important research area to consider the cross-cultural differences between East and West.

A second further development area that the Committee would like to see is to complement this inductive, explorative research with a large sample, generalizability test study.

Having inductively identified six behaviors and derived three functions of effective external leaders, the Committee recommend that the findings of this study be deductively tested on a larger population of negotiators and external leaders. This would involve testing a series of hypotheses relating to the relationship between each of the behaviors and the perceived effectiveness of external leaders of negotiators.

Finally, given this study's exploratory nature, the Committee believe this dissertation study would lead to a broader research agenda for the author. It is expected that there will be an ongoing development of areas for further research.

Conclusion The Dissertation Committee conclude that David Ferguson's dissertation has fulfilled the requirements for the DBA degree and by successfully conducting this research he has demonstrated his qualifications as an academic scholar. The Committee therefore recommend to grant David Ferguson Hitotsubashi University's DBA degree.

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