

Analysis of Negotiation Board Games for Business Negotiation Course

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Abstract

Original Research Article

The objective of this study was to analyze negotiation board games that could be utilized as a teaching material in business negotiation class. Analysis of secondary data was conducted through the Internet using “negotiation board game” as a key term for data collection. Findings revealed that four related board game websites provided information about favorite board games for negotiation. However, not all of these related to negotiation board games could be employed in business negotiation course. Some games heavily focused on specific situations such as political situation or risky situation, which may not be appropriate for business negotiation course. As this study attempted to focus on two negotiating strategies in business - distributive bargaining strategy and integrative bargaining strategy, negotiation board games for business negotiation course should provide the game mechanism that permits learners to experience these two strategies during the gameplay. Results found two negotiation board games: “Chinatown” and “Genoa” that demonstrated the appropriateness to be used as a educational material in business negotiation class.

Keywords: Negotiation, Board game, Game-Based Learning, Business students.

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INTRODUCTION

In modern education, teaching approach needs to be more attractive and supportive for engaging students in the learning process. With the growth of digital technologies, students can easily learn and gain knowledge through a variety of digital platforms. This change in learning environment is challenging educators and instructors in all educational levels to adjust and improve the way of teaching that reassures students to maintain their interest in learning.

Game-Based Learning (GBL) is one of various methods that can be used to improve learning and teaching in numerous topics. The concept of Game-based learning refers to the utilization of gaming principles by applying to real life situations that allows students to participate in lively and self-motivated learning environment [1]. Game-based learning plays a vital role in teaching by encouraging students to cooperate and communicate with each other and helps them acquire necessary skills and knowledge that can be learned through a lecture method. As students can develop their skills and knowledge and build an emotional connection to learning and subjects through games, gaming is considered as an essential tool for modern educators [2]. Using games in the classroom provide a lot of benefits for students such as their

enhancement in creative thinking and problem solving skills, their imagination, and knowledge embedded and retention. Besides, games can also help instructors to change the way of measuring students’ understanding of the subject matters. With the traditional teaching style, teachers may use the quiz to test students’ learning, but when classroom game is applied, instant valuable feedbacks from students will be given through their engagement. This approach helps instructors learned instantly how well students are doing in that topic [3]. Past research indicated that game plays a vital role in establishing learners’ self-confidence, and helps minimize the gap between fast and slow learners [4]. In addition, a recent report demonstrated that games increasingly become more popular in higher education, as shown by 68 percent of people who play games aged over 18 years old, which “college student age” indicating that games are very useful tool for improving university students’ learning process [5].

Although educators consider games as an effective tool for improving teaching and learning processes, cost-related issues of utilizing games as part of classroom instruction are controversial particularly digital games. In the light of this, some practitioners try to produce or utilize non-digital games such as board games, which apparently are viewed as cost-effective

instruction material [6]. Board game refers to “any game in which pieces are moved in particular ways on a board marked with a pattern” [7]. Like other types of games, board games are simply viewed as a fun game, but research indicated that board games can be very useful in developing social skills and self-esteem, as well as make the players learn about rules, competition, fairness, and values [8]. In addition, board game can also help learners harmonize between digital and real life connection with cost-effective benefits in teaching preparation. A recent article pointed out many benefits of board games in which players can develop to apply in real life situation. For instance, board games can help increase players’ frustration tolerance and concentration. Also, players can soothe their anxiety and stress while playing game. More importantly, board games provide learners a value of teamwork and learn how to be a good loser [9]. All of these benefits are necessary for business students who studied a negotiation course.

Negotiation refers to “a process in which two or more parties have something the other wants and attempt to come to an exchange agreement” [10]. To have successful negotiation, individuals need to possess these key skills including preparation (oneself and with team), patience, active listening, emotional control, verbal communication, problem solving skills, and ethics and reliability [11]. Negotiation skill is an essential key to business success in which those who study in a business program and today’s executives are required to attend this course [12]. Most of teaching negotiation courses designs their course to be more applicable and practical for the real life situation through the use of interactive role-play exercises, case studies, role-play simulations, movies, and training materials to ensure that learners acquire practical skills to carry out in the real negotiation situation. Numerous board games for negotiation have been reviewed in the famous board game website like Boardgamegeek.com, which describe negotiation games as the game that involves making deals and agreement with other players and use some unethical tactics when necessary. Negotiation games focus on competitiveness, but allow players to have times for discussion to make mutual agreements [13]. With a variety of board games related to negotiation, instructors need to carefully choose negotiation games that provide the most practical skillset for learners and students. However, information about proper board games for negotiation to be selected for negotiation class has been little. Previous research also indicated that board games in negotiation have been rarely discussed and reviewed in past research [14].

Despite the popularity of board games as the educational tool in various topics, analysis of appropriate board games to be used in negotiation course has been overlooked. Therefore, this present study seeks to investigate board games in negotiation

and do the analysis of those related to negotiation board games. The limitation of this study is to focus on the favorite negotiation board games listed on famous board game website solely. Also, the analysis of negotiation board games is placed emphasis on mechanism of game that allows learned to two essential negotiating strategies: distributive bargaining strategy and integrative bargaining strategy. Distributive bargaining refers to negotiating strategies used over shares of a fixed stake leading to a win-lose situation, also known as “a zero-sum game.” While integrative bargaining refers to negotiating strategies that allows all parties to make a good deal leading to a win-win outcome [10]. For the originality of this study, this study is remarkable to be the first study in this field that attempts to analyze negotiation board games for business negotiation class.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a documentary analysis approach as a research method. Secondary data were utilized for data analysis. Google search engine was used as a major source for data collection. Key words used for searching for related information include “negotiation board game”, “board games for negotiation”, and “negotiation games.” List of websites were carefully reviewed for in-depth information to examine the appropriateness of negotiation board games that could be selected to use as a teaching material in negotiation class. The first step of analysis was to use the conjoint analysis to determine the list of favorite negotiation board games by using 75 percent rule to make decision. For example, if there were four sources listing different name of negotiation board games, at least three sources must have confirmed the same of favorite board games. The next step was to analyze those conjoined negotiation board games to identify which games were suitable for business negotiation class. Analysis approach used in this study was adopted from Promsri [15] in which 6 criteria were included for data analysis: name of board game, the name of game creator/ company and year of creation, level of age and playing time, purposes of game and type of game, game description, and game materials. In addition, four characteristics of effective classroom board game proposed by Zander [9] including ease of use, engagement, customization, and purpose were employed to decide whether or not those negotiation games were appropriate for business negotiation course. This study use content analysis method to exclude board games for negotiation that were not appropriate or relevant for business negotiation such as hostage negotiation or political negotiation. In addition, negotiation board games that allowed the players to do the bribery or nasty tactics were not included in this analysis though in the real life situation, some people tried to use these tactics to win the negotiation. The business negotiation course attempted to focus on making win-win situation or mutual agreements with an ethical manner.

RESULTS

Results showed four websites that provided information about negotiation board games. Table-1 showed the information on each website related to negotiation board games. Findings revealed that the first website (boardgamegeek.com) provided the highest list of related negotiation board games (n =25) while geekandsundry.com website gave the lowest list of negotiation board games (n =5). To find the conjoint of favorite board games for negotiation of these sources,

this study synthesized the name of board games found in at least 3 sources, according to these websites. However, list of negotiation board game found based on conjoint analysis might not guarantee the suitability of those board games to be utilized in business negotiation class. Thus, this study had placed more emphasis on those conjoined negotiation board games and analyzed information of each board game to examine which games were appropriate for business negotiation class.

Table-1: Information about Favorite Negotiation Board Games from Websites

Websites	Name of the Articles	List of Board Games in Negotiation
https://boardgamegeek.com/geeklist/158560/negotiation-games-your-favourites-and-why	Negotiation Games: Your favorites and why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Santiago - I am the Boss - Chinatown - Quo Vadis - Dragon's Gold - Diplomacy - Genoa - Panic on Wall Street - The Republic of Rome - Bohnanza - Lifeboats - Intrigue - Princes of the Renaissance - Junta - Settlers of Cantan - The Resistance - Oltre Mare - Edel, Stein & Reich - Merchants of Middle Ages - Rolling Stock - Article 27: The UN Security Council Game - Cosmic Encounter - Wealth of Nations - A Game of Thrones: The Board Game - Lords of Vegas
https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/top-negotiation-games-412676	Top 10 Negotiation Board and Card Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diplomacy - I'm the Boss - Chinatown - Intrigue - Genoa - Junta - Dragon's Gold - Quo Vadis? - Lifeboats - Cosmic Encounter
https://www.meeplemountain.com/category/negotiation-board-games/	Category - Negotiation Board Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crusader King - Chinatown - Twilight Imperium - Pax Pamir - Six Degrees of Catan - Zoocracy - Sidereal Confluence - Rising Sun - Star Trek Ascendancy
https://geekandsundry.com/top-five-board-games-for-negotiators-and-bargainers/	Top five board games for negotiators and bargainers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Game of Throne - Intrigue - Bohnanza - Chinatown - Genoa

Based on the synthesis of this study, only three negotiation board games passed the criterion of 75 percent rule, which consisted of Chinatown, Intrigue,

and Genoa. Chinatown was the only one negotiation game among these three listed as a favorite negotiation game in all sources. Next, the in-depth analysis of each

game based on Promsri's six criteria and four characteristics of effective classroom game proposed by Zander [9] was conducted to determine whether these games were suitable for business negotiation class. Table-2 demonstrated the analysis of three negotiation board games. As shown, "intrigue" board game did not have information about game materials and failed to fulfill Zander's four characteristics of effective board

game. According to this analysis, "intrigue" was detached from the list of suitable negotiation board game for business negotiation course. Only "Chinatown" and "Genoa" were incorporated as an appropriate negotiation board game for business negotiation class as these games met all characteristics of effective board game.

Table-2: Analysis of Three Negotiation Board Games

Name of Game	Company/ Producer	Level of Age/ Playing Time	Purposes of Game/ Type of Game	Description	Materials	Zander's Characteristics of Effective Classroom Game
Chinatown [1]	Designed by Karsten Hartwig, published by Alea (original edition) and Z-Man Games	For 3 to 5 players, ages 12 and up. Playing time is 60 minutes	Negotiation (Type of Game is Family and Strategy)	Properties on numerous city blocks located in game board are to be acquired by players in each round and given randomly drawn pieces that represent businesses. Players can negotiate to build contiguous places to gain bonus payments by using their properties, businesses, and cash. Victory is accomplished based on two or more completed businesses in game.	- 1 Game Board - 150 Player counters (30 each of 5 colours) - 90 Business Tiles - 180 Playing Cards (85 Plot Cards, 9 business outlook cards, 81 Money Cards, 5 player aids)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ease of Use <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engagement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Customization <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purpose
Intrigue [2]	Designed by Stefan Dorra, published by Mayfair Games/Amigo Spiel in 2005.	For 3 to 5 players, ages 12 and up. Playing time is about 45 minutes	Negotiation (Type of Game is Strategy)	This game is viewed as one of the nastiest negotiation game as the bribery involved during the gameplay. Players are supposed to be Renaissance-era families searching for secure jobs in the other families' businesses. The main instrument at their removal is bribery.	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ease of Use <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engagement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Customization <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purpose
Genoa [3]	Designed by Rüdiger Dorn, published by Alea/Rio Grande Games (original edition) and Asmodée Editions/Filosofla in February 2009.	For 2 to 5 players, ages 12 and up. Playing time is 60-120 minutes	Negotiation (Type of Game is Strategy)	This game makes players to negotiate in every action on every turn.	- 1 gameboard - 40 ware markers - 2 dice - 28 special cards - 60 game cards - 35 owner markers - 80 bank notes - 1 trader tower - 1 round marker - 1 rule booklet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ease of Use <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engagement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Customization <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purpose

*Information of these games retrieved from the following links

¹<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/47/chinatown>

²<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/265/intrigue>

³<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/1345/genoa>

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to analyze negotiation board games for applying as a teaching material in business negotiation class. Secondary data

analysis was conducted through the Internet using "negotiation board game" as a key term. Findings revealed that four websites provided information about favorite board games for negotiation. However, not all of these related to negotiation board games could be employed in business negotiation course. Some games

heavily emphasized their focus on specific situations such as political situation or dangerous situation, which may not be appropriate for business negotiation course. As this study attempted to focus on two negotiating strategies in business - distributive bargaining strategy and integrative bargaining strategy, negotiation board games for business negotiation course should provide the game mechanism that allows learners to experience these two strategies during the gameplay. Among these three negotiation board games, two of them – “Chinatown” and “Genoa” – demonstrated the suitability to be used as a training material in business negotiation class. The reason “Intrigue” board game was removed from the conclusion was due to the mechanism of this game that focuses on “bribery”, which was against the characteristics of successful negotiation in business world.

As this study briefly provided information about negotiation board game, which may cause some ambiguities for those who have never played these games before, educators, instructors, and practitioners who want to apply these games in the negotiation class are encouraged and recommended reading more information about these games on given links.

For limitation of this study, negotiation board games selected for analysis in this study were based solely on viewpoints of game players who administrated the board game websites. There might be plenty of board games for negotiation listed as a favorite game based on their perspectives that could be employed as an educational material to effectively support the learning process in business negotiation course. In addition, characteristics of effective classroom game used in this study were limited to only four aspects. Hence, the next study should add more additional characteristics of effective board game to ensure the appropriateness of utilizing board game in business negotiation class.

The benefits of this study are clear. Educators and instructors can choose the right educational tool to strengthen teaching and learning processes to be more effective than a traditional teaching style. In addition these negotiation games can be used as the example or viewed as the inspiration to create their own board game for business negotiation class.

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