

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS ON SPOUSAL INFLUENCE STRATEGIES DURING COUPLE PURCHASE DECISIONS

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of social network closeness on the use of spousal influence tactics among immigrants to Israel from the Former Soviet Union (FSU). A survey questionnaire was completed by 442 FSU immigrants, either married or cohabitating, who were asked to describe their social networks and to evaluate their own use of seven influence strategies during a dyadic purchase decision. Our findings shed light on the relationship between macro-level variables of the ecological environment of an individual and micro-level processes and phenomena that exist within his/her family nucleus, namely the marital dynamics and relationships; we also provide practical recommendations for family therapists and practitioners.

Key words: purchase decision, social network, couple decision making, influence strategies, power tactics, immigrants.

Introduction

In the increasingly mobile society that characterizes our industrial and post-industrial eras, relocation (within countries) and migration (between countries) constitute a frequent, almost normative, phenomenon that unavoidably entails a major disruption in the social niche of the individual [18, 2–4; 19, 359–364]. Our personal social network – that rather stable but continually evolving interpersonal fabric comprising close and distant family members, friends, work and study connections, and relationships that result from informal and formal participation in community organizations (religious, social, political, health-related, etc.) – constitutes a key depository of our identity, our history, and our well being [20]. Little is done in terms of public policies and practices and, unfortunately, not enough is done by therapists unless they are sensitized to these issues [18, 2–4; 19, 359–364].

The present study is the first to reveal and examine a hitherto unexplored aspect of immigrants' social networks, namely the impact of the social network on tendencies to employ spousal influence tactics during family purchase decisions. We base our study on the assumption that the social network has an indirect effect on family processes and dynamics. The present study focuses on a hitherto unexplored topic in the field of couple relationships, as well as the field of social networks, namely, the impact of the social network on spousal influence strategies used by marital partners during purchase decisions.

Social network and couple dynamics

As couples manage their conflicts, one should keep in mind that they do not live in a social vacuum; rather, they are embedded in social networks that may influence

their intimate relationships [5, 1259–1287]. In the early 1950s, Elizabeth Bott studied the connection between household social networks and the division of labor between husbands and wives. She defined a social network as a social relationship system in which some of one's friends and relatives know one another [1, 345–384; 2]. The level of connectedness of social networks varies considerably. A dispersed network is one with a small number of relationships between its components (individuals or families). A highly connected network is characterized by a large number of such relationships [Ibid.]. Felmlee [5, 1259–1287] found that social networks have a relatively large and multifaceted effect on the stability of intimate relationships. Family and friends may influence important decisions made by spouses, such as decisions regarding the number of children they plan to have [13]. Couples are embedded in social networks that also affect their relationships with others outside the marital relationship. Very little research has been undertaken to date regarding the role of the social network within the family nucleus. A landmark study was undertaken by Bott [2] which found that the level of density of the social network of married couples influences the degree of differentiation in gender roles within the household: the denser the network, the higher the degree of gender differentiation. This is due to the larger consensus between the spouses as well as the greater social control to conform to common norms. A dense network provides external assistance and support to the family nucleus. However, one cannot benefit from this support without being exposed to possible involvement and even direct intervention of third parties. For example, Greene [6, 226–254] has found that couples who undergo fertility treatments avoid sharing this information with their relatives and friends in order to protect themselves from mockery and gossip.

It is therefore reasonable to assume that the social network of a person is correlated to additional variables in the couple relationships. In this paper we propose that spousal influence attempts during purchase decisions may also be associated to each spouse's social network. We shall begin our paper with a brief review of the literature on the subject of spousal influence strategies, and then present our theoretical conceptualization of the social network.

Spousal Influence Strategies

Most couples tend to engage in joint discussion before purchasing a product for their shared use, such as electric appliances, furniture, financial investments, and so forth. In a study of recent purchasers of major durables, Spiro [21, 398–402] found that a surprising 88 percent of the married couples in her sample reported that they had encountered disagreements during the purchasing process. Each spouse will often try to persuade the other in various ways, employing a range of influence tactics, communication styles, and behaviors designed to help them secure their desired outcome [11, 407–414].

Six influence strategies are described by Raven, Centers, and Rodrigues [14]: Expert power, legitimate, reward, identification, coercion, and information management. **Expert** influence is reflected in the spouse's enumeration of specific information concerning the various alternatives. **Legitimate** influence deals with one spouse's attempts to draw upon the other's feelings of shared values concerning their role expectations.

Reward influence is based on the reward that the influencer can give the person being influenced. **Identification** is the feeling of oneness between the two individuals. **Coercion** is the punishment or unpleasant results and behavior that one spouse can employ. **Information management** includes the content of the persuasive attempts and careful and successful explanations or arguments, sometimes by attributing the influence attempt to external pressures beyond the influencer's control. Spiro [21, 398–402] also suggested the use of an **Emotional** strategy, which involves displaying some emotion-based reaction has called attention to the **Triangulation** strategy, in which one spouse enlists the assistance of a third person in order to have this person persuade his spouse.

We propose a distinction between 'negative' versus 'non-negative' tactics: negative tactics involve the use of a broad spectrum of behaviors that lead to negative consequences for the persuaded spouse, ranging from minor emotional inconvenience to illegitimate behaviors (such as lying, aggression etc.):

- "Coercion" strategy is considered negative because it involves implicit or explicit violence, either verbal or physical;
- "Information" strategy is considered negative because the persuader does not give accurate or true information;
- "Triangulation" strategy may cause feelings of anger or inconvenience when the persuader enlists a third figure to join the intimate space of the couple's relationship;
- "Emotional" strategy is based on causing the partner to feel insulted, guilty or fearful of abandonment.

Contrary to these negative tactics, non – negative tactics can lead to either positive or neutral consequences:

- "Reward" strategy involves offering the partner desired objects or activities; this kind of offer usually flatters and/or pleases the persuaded spouse;
- "Expert" strategy involves using professional and objective information relevant to the spousal decision; contrary to the "information" strategy, the persuader delivers reliable data obtained from independent sources such as internet websites, professional books or specialists.

"Legitimation" strategy draws upon common gender roles accepted by both spouses; when both spouses have a similar ethno-cultural background and are surrounded by relatives and friends that share the same gender ideology and roles, this strategy is expected to be effective.

The strategies described above relate to influence between partners without considering the potential effects of the social network within which they live (Except perhaps for "Triangulation" in some cases). An ecological perspective emphasizes the importance of the social context in understanding human behavior and interpersonal interactions. One of the pivotal ecological theories is the theory of human development [3, 4].

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory is a useful framework for analyzing human behavior by addressing individual, social-cognitive, and contextual influences.

According to Bronfenbrenner [3] and Bronfenbrenner and Morris [4], the social environment within which people live is not a simple or unified context. Rather it is comprised of five hierarchical embedded ecological systems: the *microsystem*, the *mesosystem*, the *exosystem*, the *macrosystem*, and the *chronosystem*. An individual's relatives and friends constitute his or her ecological microsystem. The interpersonal interactions between these people, as well as the individual's interrelations with them, constitute the mesosystem. Exosystems are contexts in which people in one's microsystem participate; individuals are affected indirectly by these contexts during interactions with members of their microsystem. The social activities and interactions of each individual are formed and affected by social and cultural norms and beliefs. These ideological blueprints underlie every interpersonal interaction and constitute the macrosystem. Finally, the chronosystem refers to time and time-related variables that can potentially shed additional light on human behavior, such as intergenerational relationships, age differences and aging, and other issues that are affected by the time variable.

Ecological theory implies that each of these five systems will, in varying degrees, influence the tendency to prefer one persuasive tactic over the others. We will focus on the impact of the microsystem and mesosystem upon one of the common behaviors between marital partners, namely the strategies employed by partners in order to get their own way during the purchase decision processes. The microsystem and mesosystem comprise the social network of each individual. Whereas some network studies focus on the entire social structure of a population and explore the "complete" network, this project focuses on *egocentric networks* [12, 354–463]. An egocentric network is an individual's unique set of social contacts. Studies of egocentric networks do not provide an overall description of the social structure of a certain society; they are useful for understanding how a person's unique personal contacts relate to variables at the individual level of analysis, such as social support, power, advancement, perceptions, and attitudes [22, 71–98; 23, 1149–1160]. Egocentric social networks differ from each other in various aspects, such as density, cohesiveness, or closeness [7].

A social network is composed of one's nuclear and extended family members, as well as friends of various degrees of emotional closeness. We define a social network as 'close' when the individual interacts with a relatively larger number of members of his/her network on a regular basis, and when he/she is satisfied with these relationships. A person who lives in a very close network is assumed to gain expressive and/or instrumental support, as well as exposure to social sanctions and social control; he may feel lonely only rarely; that person may feel secure and assured that he will get assistance from his relatives in cases of crisis or distress.

The impact of the social network on family life in general, and especially on spousal influence strategies, is expected to be more complicated in immigrants' communities as compared to those of the natives. That is why we have chosen to deal with the wave of immigration from the Former Soviet Union to Israel which began in 1989 and continues to this day. We will discuss the relevance of this study population later on p. 11–12. Obviously, one's family size influences one's social network, it is therefore necessary to examine the main characteristics of the FSU family patterns.

The family patterns of FSU population

The Jewish population that lived in various republics of FSU for centuries is characterized by patterns similar to the non-Jewish Russian population. The main family patterns include a low marriage rate and high divorce rate. Familial instability, together with the participation of women in the workforce, also led to low fertility levels in the FSU. In 1997, the birthrate was 1.23 in Russia, 1.4 in Ukraine, and 1.3 in Belarus. Although Communist ideology was displaced twenty three years ago, Russian culture is still dominated by a collectivist orientation. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the social networks of immigrants from these countries will have greater impact on spousal relationships and behaviors, including implicit or overt social control of influence tactics.

Social networks of FSU immigrants in Israel

An important characteristic of the wave of immigration from the former Soviet Union (FSU) in the 1990s was its large scope, both in absolute terms (about a million people) and in relative terms (15 % of the entire population of Israel). Recent studies indicate that immigrants tend to have close relationships with other immigrants in their community while maintaining a social distance from the native-born Israelis, although we are witnessing the beginnings of processes that bring the two closer, including social and romantic ties between immigrants from the FSU and veteran Israelis [10, 16, 39–66; 17, 847–863]. Members of the immigrant community maintain ties of one kind or another with friends and relatives who remained in the FSU or who migrated to other countries¹ by means of reciprocal visits and telephone and internet ties [15, 515–530]. Therefore it may be reasonable to expect a high degree of variance in the size and closeness of the social networks of these immigrants.

Research hypotheses

The purpose of this study is to broaden the existing knowledge about the impact of the social network, as part of the ecological environment, on spousal influence strategies during a purchase decision process. The community of FSU immigrants in Israel can serve as an appropriate case study. For this purpose, we measured the closeness of FSU immigrants' social networks, and their tendencies to use spousal influence strategies of various kinds. A very close social network is assumed to provide the individual with greater social and psychological support. Accordingly, it can be expected that a weaker network would allow its members to include negative strategies in the repertoire of spousal influence tactics.

A very close social network is characterized by greater social control over its members. Frequent and intensive social interactions enable people to watch and control each other's behavior, both outside and inside the family nucleus. Some of these

¹ Today, there are probably no more than 400,000 Jews living throughout the former Soviet territories, about 230,000 of them in Russia itself; approximately 500,000 Jews live in the United States, and some 150,000 in the Federal Republic of Germany. http://daviscenter.fas.harvard.edu/seminars_conferences/diaspora/

behaviors may have negative interpretations. Accordingly, we assume that social network closeness would impact the use of *'negative'* and *'non-negative'* spousal influence tactics in a different manner. We expect that the use of *'negative'* tactics is likely to elicit a wide spectrum of social sanctions, ranging from gossip and criticism to group excommunication. Accordingly, we hypothesize that there is a negative correlation between the use of *'negative'* tactics and the level of social network closeness. The use of "expert power" as well as "reward" tactics does not challenge common social norms; therefore it is not likely to arouse any third party involvement. Conversely, we hypothesize a higher tendency to use a "legitimate" tactic in very close social networks because the persuader can rely on support from the close environment. Relatives of the same ethno-cultural background may re-confirm accepted norms of gender roles, thus increasing the persuader's tendency to rely on these cultural norms and expectations.

We therefore hypothesize as follows:

H1: The closer social network the immigrant has, the lower his tendency to use negative spousal influence strategies:

H1 (a) : The closer social network the immigrant has, the lower his tendency to use **coercive** strategy during the purchase decision process.

H1(b): The closer social network the immigrant has, the lower his tendency to use **information** strategy during the purchase decision process.

H1 (c): The closer social network the immigrant has, the lower his tendency to use **triangulation** strategy during the purchase decision process.

H1 (d): The closer social network the immigrant has, the lower his tendency to use **emotional** strategy during the purchase decision process.

H2: There will be no correlation between social network closeness and the use of **reward** strategy during the purchase decision process.

H3: There will be no correlation between social network closeness and the use of **expert** strategy during the purchase decision process.

H4: The closer social network the immigrant has, the higher his tendency to use **legitimation** strategy during the purchase decision process.

Methodology

Research population

We believe that the appropriate research population for an empirical examination of our research hypotheses is a population characterized by a relatively higher variance in the variable of 'closeness of social network'. We therefore chose the sector of Former Soviet Union immigrants for our study. There are some typical factors that contribute to the differences between individual's social networks, such as personality traits, place of residence, and place of work. The immigrants' social networks are influenced by many other factors. They had to part with their former social network and were faced with the challenge of building new networks in their new country. Some of them immigrated alone; some arrived to Israel with their extended family and friends; some of them had success in integrating rapidly into the new society and building a new social network, while others did not manage to do so and remained isolated. Another factor that contributes to the large variance in the closeness of immigrants' social networks

is the differences between the immigrants in the extent to which they maintain close social ties with friends and relatives who stayed in the FSU or immigrated to other countries [10].

Measures

Independent Variables

The independent variable of the study is the level of social network closeness of the respondent. In accordance with our definition of social network closeness, which we introduced earlier in this paper on p. 7, we applied an operational definition. To measure this closeness, we created an index which includes the following items:

Satisfaction with the quality of the relationship with the close family; existence of close friends; satisfaction with the number of friends one has; frequency of meetings/telephone conversations with friends; satisfaction with the quality of the relationship with friends; frequency of feelings of loneliness; ability to rely on the help of others in times of crisis or distress. The index range is from 1 = very weak to 5 = very close. Cronbach's alpha for this index is 0.74. We also took into consideration gender, educational level, income, level of religiosity, length of stay in Israel, and length of marriage as covariates.

Dependent Variable: Spousal Influence Strategy

The main study was carried out following a pilot study, aimed at exploring behavioral tactics used by individuals who wish to persuade their spouses (to be described hereafter in the 'procedure' section). Analysis of the data obtained in this preliminary phase yielded specific behavioral tendencies which, after being classified into categories, served as measures for each spousal influence strategy.

In order to evaluate the frequency of use of spousal influence strategies, the research questionnaire included items for each of the influence strategies. Questions regarding each of the strategies were formulated as: "When you and your partner disagree during a dyadic purchase decision, how often do you do each of the following?" Here we present some examples for items for each strategy :

(1) Coercion: Refuse to give my husband/wife things he requests; Make my husband/wife's life hard; Enforce my wishes physically.

(2) Information : I provide erroneous or partial information about the product.

(3) Triangulation : I ask my friend to influence my spouse.

(4) Emotional : I cry; I shout at my spouse.

(5) Reward : I buy my spouse a present; I help my spouse with various tasks.

(6) Expert power: I tell my spouse that I have professional information about the subject.

(7) Legitimization: I tell my husband that he should accept my recommendations about what products to purchase because I am his life partner.

Subjects were asked to state their own frequency of use of the strategies, on a five-point Likert scale, similar to the scale used in the pretest to be described hereafter. Internal consistency of each strategy was examined by calculating Cronbach alpha (See Table 1). Based on a previous study, which found a significant and positive correlation between subjects' self-report of their use of spousal influence strategies and

their spouses' report regarding the subjects' use of spousal influence strategies we considered self-reports as adequate sources of data for the present study.

Table 1. Internal consistency of influence strategies, by gender, Cronbach alpha values

Strategy	Items included in the strategy	Men	Women
Reward	Buy my husband/wife a present Propose that my husband/wife and I go out Give my husband/wife money for his/her personal needs	0.82	0.84
Coercion	Revenge if my husband/wife does not act as I want Expresses offensive criticism Refuse to give my husband/wife things he asks Make my husband/ wife's life hard Enforce my wishes physically	0.85	0.77
Emotional	I cry I get angry I am insulted/hurt I deliver implicit threats that I will leave my husband/wife I refuse to talk to my husband/wife for a few hours/days Sleep outside of home Shout at my husband/wife Insult my husband/wife	0.90	0.90
Expert	I say I know a lot about the subject I maintain that I have professional information about the subject I say that I can evaluate the products better than he/she can I say that I have the expertise to make a better decision	0.88	0.84
Legitimate	It is important to my spouse that the choice of the product reflects my preferences, because I have more to lose from the choice. My spouse feels that he should agree with me because the choice of the product will affect me more than him. My spouse has the right to expect that I will agree with him about the purchase of products. My spouse should not interfere in my purchasing decision. My spouse has no right to tell me what to buy. I should accept my spouse's recommendations about what products to purchase because he/she is my life partner	0.65	0.69
Triangulation	I ask my friend to influence him/her I ask my friend to influence him/her I ask our child/ren to influence him/her I ask a family member of his/hers to influence him/her	0.90	0.92
Information	My spouse hides information from me about the product My spouse provides erroneous or partial information about the product My spouse contends that the product I want is no longer available even though this is not true	0.88	0.88

Sample

The sample included 442 new immigrants from the FSU (respondents who immigrated from the FSU after 1989), aged eighteen to seventy-five. All the respondents were married or living with a permanent partner. Data set included answers only from one spouse and not from both. The breakdown of the samples according to gender and age were similar to the breakdown of this sector in the general population. In selecting the sample an effort was made to maintain geographical dispersal in accordance with the figures of the Central Bureau of Statistics [8, *Israel Census Bureau, Statistical yearbook of Israel, no. 58, retrieved on September 11.2007*]. The division of Israel into districts as used by the CBS was adopted in the survey.

Table 2 presents the main characteristics of the sample.

Table 2. The main socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

Gender	Male	50 %
	Female	50 %
	Total	100 %
Education	Secondary	15 %
	Post-secondary	21 %
	Academic	64 %
	Total	100 %
Income	Lower than the average	28 %
	Like the average	24 %
	Higher than the average	49 %
	Total	100 %
Age	Mean	42.0
	(S.D.)	(15.0)
	Median	38.5
	Minimum	22
	Maximum	75
Religiosity	Orthodox	1 %
	Religious	2 %
	Traditional	21 %
	Secular	76 %
	Total	100 %
Length of stay in Israel	Mean	14.9
	(S.D.)	(3.9)
	Median	16
	Minimum	1
	Maximum	25
Length of marriage / relationship	Mean	17.4
	(S.D.)	(14.0)
	Median	15
	Minimum	1
	Maximum	57

Procedure

Procedure: pilot study

A pilot study was conducted in order to formulate items for the research questionnaire. Sixty-four married or cohabiting subjects (34 female, 32 male) –immigrants from FSU answered four open-ended questions regarding the tactics they employ in order to convince their partner to get their way.

Their answers underwent content analysis and were rewritten as behavioral patterns which were then presented to the subjects of the main study in the following form: “When you and your spouse disagree regarding the purchase of a dyadic product, how often do you do each of the following?” The research questionnaire included items for each of influence strategies. Subjects were asked to state their own frequency of use of the strategies on a five-point Likert scale in which 1 represented “never” and 5 “always.” The reliability of the items to be included in the questionnaire was examined in a pretest study that included 88 married or cohabiting subjects (47 female, 41 male). The internal consistency of each strategy was examined by calculating the Cronbach’s alpha (See Table 1). Cronbach’s alpha values in the present study are similar.

Procedure: Main study

The field study was undertaken in Israel in 2011. The respondents were given a questionnaire in their native language (Russian) and asked to complete it by themselves. They answered the questionnaire in the presence of the pollster, who answered their questions and gave explanations on the basis of the briefing given by the researchers. The survey was presented to the respondents as relating to issues of “society and culture.” It was explained that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions, and that it was important to the researchers to hear what the respondents really thought and how they acted. The respondents were assured that the findings of the survey would be used for research purposes only. The questionnaire required approximately twenty minutes to complete and was filled out in the respondents’ homes.

Results

We begin the Results section with some descriptive statistics: The tables below present the average indices and variance measures of the main research variables:

Table 3. Social network closeness among total sample, means, (SD) and Standard Error of the Mean

	Mean* (SD)	S E of Mean
Total sample	3.56 (0.57)	0.03
Males	3.57 (0.55)	0.04
Females	3.55 (0.59)	0.04

* Range 1–5.

The findings indicate that the degree of closeness in the social networks was medium-high, with a relatively low variance. The level of closeness of the social networks was similar for men and women.

Table 4. Average indices of strategies among total sample, means* (SD) and Standard Error of the Mean

	Mean (SD)	S E of Mean
Coercion	1.72 (0.74)	0.04
Information	1.44 (0.77)	0.04
Triangulation	1.51 (0.79)	0.04
Emotional	2.12 (0.83)	0.04
Rewards	2.70 (1.12)	0.05
Expert	2.51 (0.99)	0.05
Legitimation	2.44 (1.19)	0.06

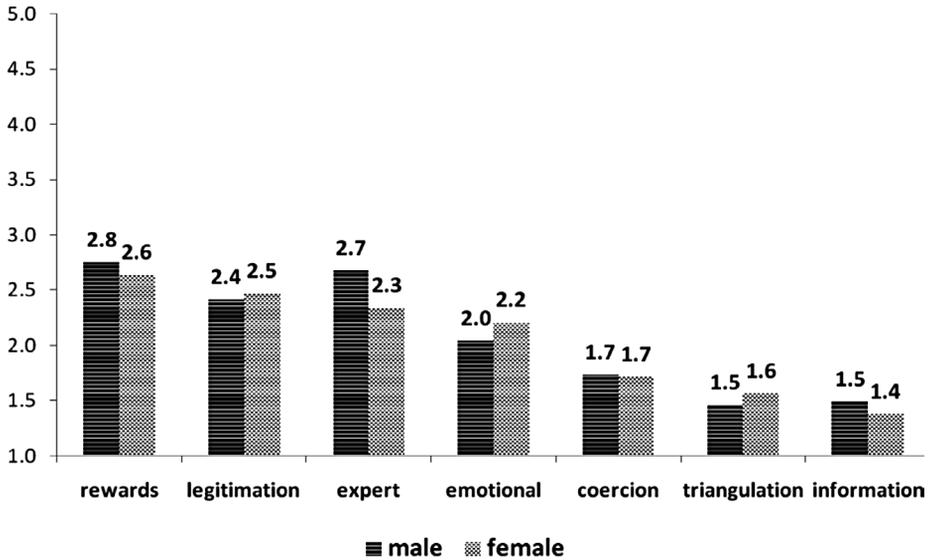
* Range 1–5.

The interviewees tend to report a relatively infrequent use of the various influence strategies. In sum one can see that the non-negative strategies (rewards, expert power, and legitimation) were ranked at a higher frequency of use as compared to the negative strategies.

The graphs below present the average indices for the seven strategies reported by the respondents.

It appears that the respondents tended more to use neutral strategies – the three most widespread strategies were rewards, legitimation, and expert. The negative strategies were used relatively less frequently. Men tended to use the expert strategy more than women, while women tended to use the emotional strategy more than men.

Although interesting, the descriptive data do not tell us whether and to what extent social network closeness affects strategy usage, nor what we want to know about the impact of background variables. In order to examine the research hypotheses regarding the effect of social networks on strategy usage, we applied multivariable analysis. Multivariate Anova variance tests were conducted for the seven strategies. The dependent variables were the usage of each of the influence strategies. Gender was included as factor. The model included both the main effect of gender and closeness of the social network and the effect of the interaction between the two. Although



not hypothesized a priori, we added the interaction between these variables because we sought to examine whether there are gender differences in the impact of network closeness on the use of spousal influence strategies. Covariates were education, income, level of religiosity, length of marriage, and length of residence in Israel. The age variable was not included in the analysis due to the strong positive correlation between this variable and length of marriage ($r = .90^{**}$).

The following table shows the findings of the MANOVA analysis that relates to a test of all of the seven research hypotheses.

H1 was: The closer the social network the immigrant has, the lower his tendency to use negative spousal influence strategies.

Hypothesis № 1 was corroborated: the closer the immigrant's social network, the lower that individual's tendency to use negative strategies, such as **coercive, information, triangulation, and emotional**. The interaction affect was not significant, i.e., social networks have the same effect on males and females.

Further, it emerged that income correlated negatively with the use of coercive strategy. Length of marriage correlated negatively with the use of information strategy. The level of religiosity had a negative impact on the use of emotional strategy – the higher the level of religiosity, the less the respondents tended to use this strategy. The rest of the socio-demographic variables were not found to have any significant effect on the use of negative strategies.

H2 was: There will be no correlation between closeness of the social network and the use of **reward** strategy during the purchase decision process.

Hypothesis № 2 was corroborated: the effect of social networks on reward strategy usage was not found. A weak but significant effect was found for income – the higher the income, the less the immigrants used this strategy. Other demographic variables were not found to influence the frequency of use of the reward strategy. The interaction effect was also not significant.

Table 5. Multivariate ANOVA for influence strategies

	H.1a: Coercion		H.1b: Information		H.1c: Triangulation		H.1d: Emotional		H.5: Rewards		H.6: Expert		H.7: Legitimation	
	F(8, 371)	Partial Eta Squared	F(8, 371)	Partial Eta Squared	F(8, 371)	Partial Eta Squared	F(8, 371)	Partial Eta Squared	F(8, 371)	Partial Eta Squared	F(8, 371)	Partial Eta Squared	F(8, 371)	Partial Eta Squared
Gender	1.06	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.32	0.00	0.24	0.00	5.50*	0.01	0.00	0.00
Religiosity	1.12	0.00	1.13	0.00	1.16	0.00	5.97**	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.17	0.00	0.22	0.00
Income	6.42*	0.02	2.00	0.01	0.38	0.00	3.41	0.01	3.93*	0.01	0.00	0.00	3.02	0.01
Education	1.04	0.00	0.17	0.00	3.50	0.01	1.29	0.00	1.41	0.00	2.02	0.01	0.00	0.00
Length of marriage	2.52	0.01	8.33**	0.02	1.28	0.00	0.59	0.00	1.58	0.00	6.83**	0.02	0.16	0.00
Length of residence in Israel	0.38	0.00	0.97	0.00	0.39	0.00	0.58	0.00	0.97	0.00	0.69	0.00	0.03	0.00
Social network	20.21***	0.05	18.11***	0.05	15.16**	0.04	12.91**	0.03	0.05	0.00	0.01	0.00	1.66	0.00
Gender * social network	1.06	0.00	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.12	0.00	3.27	0.01	0.03	0.00

* $p < 0.05$.

** $p < 0.01$.

H3 was: There will be no correlation between closeness of the social network and the use of **expert** strategy during the purchase decision process.

Hypothesis № 3 was corroborated. The closeness of social networks has no effect on expert strategy usage. Males tend to use this strategy more than females. The longer the marriage, the less this strategy was used. Other demographic variables were also not found to influence the frequency of use of this strategy. The interaction effect was also not significant.

H4 was: The more connected a social network the immigrant has, the higher his tendency to use legitimation strategy, during the purchase decision process.

Hypothesis № 4 was not corroborated: the effect of social networks on legitimation strategy usage was not found. The demographic variables were also not found to influence the frequency of use of this strategy. The interaction effect was also not significant, i.e., social networks have the same effect on males and females alike.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship between macro-level variables of the ecological environment of an individual and micro-level processes and phenomena that exist within his/her family nucleus, namely the marital relationships. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory [3, 4] in order to understand human behavior accurately, it is important to examine the ecological systems in which individuals participate. This theory recognizes the possible impact of family members and friends on behavior in various spheres of life. In addition to the dyadic interaction, social interactions and relationships have the potential to affect preferences for spousal persuasive tactics during a purchase disagreement. The findings of the present study support this view and highlight the social network as an ecological factor in the family decision-making process – an aspect not previously studied by family and network researchers. Our findings indicate that social networks impact spousal influence behavior during spousal negotiations on joint purchase decisions.

Generally, our findings seem to show a low level of use of spousal influence tactics among the respondents. It should be kept in mind that each spouse uses multiple strategies during a purchase decision, and not necessarily a single one.

The data regarding the frequency of utilization of the various tactics provide indirect confirmation of our suggested distinction between “negative” versus “non-negative” tactics – the latter are used more frequently than the former (see Figure 1 above).

The relatively lower use of “negative” strategies can be explained by two complementary considerations. The first pertains to the long-term impact of such strategies on the couple relationship. For example, emotional tactics such as implicit threats of separation or coercive attempts such as insults can cause psychological angers and frustrations that percolate into the common consciousness of both partners. Another possible result could be a loss of trust, as when the persuaded spouse finds out that his/her mate lied. The second consideration explaining the lower use of “negative” strategies might be the “social desirability” effect, as the respondents might have felt uncomfortable admitting their own use of the “*negative*” tactics.

We expected that the closeness of the social network would have a negative correlation with the use of each of the four “*negative*” tactics. Our findings support this hypothesis. Moreover, the only systematic and significant predictor of the use of each of the “*negative*” tactics was social network closeness. In addition to that, the social network variable did not appear to have any predictive value of “*non-negative*” spousal influence strategies. These findings imply that social control mechanisms can reduce behavioral tendencies that have the potential to threaten common social norms. Thus, these mechanisms are not “activated” when there is no potential damage to the prevailing behavioral patterns.

We also hypothesized no correlation between social network closeness and the use of ‘reward’ and ‘expert’ tactics; our findings support both these hypotheses. Using either of these tactics does not impose any requirements for any kind of resources and also does not violate any social norm.

The ‘legitimation’ tactic was expected to be positively correlated to the level of social network closeness but our findings did not provide empirical proof for this hypothesis. We believe that the unique characteristics of the population studied in this specific study may be the reason: our respondents are immigrants going through a continuous process of socio-cultural adjustment; some of them have retained an affinity to Soviet family patterns while others have adopted the Israeli patterns, and yet others are undergoing the adjustment process to this day [16, 39–66]. Immigrant couples interact with very different others in the social network and may adopt a variety of coping styles. Furthermore, Israeli society itself is highly heterogeneous in terms of family norms and patterns [9]. The immigrants are exposed to this large diversity and experience confusion, ambivalence, and even anomaly. Diverse family patterns may exert various influences, which may have been reflected in the empirical data regarding the legitimacy tactic. Therefore it is recommended to conduct future research among native-born respondents in their native land and in a more homogeneous society than the heterogeneous Israeli society.

Although this study enhances social scientists’ understanding of the impact of social networks, we should note certain limitations regarding interpretation of the data. Firstly, an implicit assumption was made in this study that the influence of the microsystem and the mesosystem is similar among all respondents. Individual differences, however, may moderate the impact of these ecological systems among individuals of different character types. Therefore, causal interpretations concerning the relationship between the composition of the social network and preference for a given influence strategy must be made with caution. Secondly, it should be noted that subjects were asked to report their own frequency of use of the influence strategies. Because participants were not asked to evaluate the frequency of purchase decision conflicts with their partners, it is unclear whether the reported frequency of use of influence strategies reflects the tendency to use a certain strategy, or the frequency of conflicts is reflected by the frequency of use of influence strategies. Therefore, future research should evaluate the “base rate” of these conflicts, and measure frequency of use of influence strategies relative to this base rate. Future research should also focus on the perceived effectiveness of each strategy. Furthermore, if multiple strategies are used in each purchase decision process, it would be interesting to reveal a chronological

order of use, i.e., which is used first, second, etc., and by whom. Another limitation is that our analysis is based on self-report, while an ideal research design should include corroboration from the spouse who is to be affected.

When coming to suggest some practical recommendations, one should bear in mind that applying one or more of the negative strategies may impede the harmonious relationship between the spouses as well as their marital quality and happiness. The tendency to use spousal influence tactics was not correlated to length of marriage, implying that the use of negative strategies can do damage to young as well as older families. Since immigrant families confront more social and cultural challenges and difficulties thus are characterized by a higher divorce rate [10], marital therapists who work with these families can obtain a wider perspective and arrive at a better diagnosis by identifying the closeness of network and tendency to employ various influence tactics by each spouse. Accordingly, practitioners can use our findings and recommend to their clients to avoid negative strategies. A closer social network diminishes the use of these strategies; therefore, couple therapists can consider this factor and try to benefit from it. For example, marital therapy can be enhanced if the counselor delves in more detail into the social network of each of the marital partners, using the operational measure proposed in the present paper.

In conclusion, this study has shown that during a joint purchase decision process, couples do not live in a social vacuum; either or both of the spouses may consider the social implications that can arise from using a specific influence strategy. Family and social networks researchers studying couple decision making should take into account that 'no couple is an island'.

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ВЛИЯНИЕ СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ СЕТЕЙ НА СТРАТЕГИИ ПРИНЯТИЯ РЕШЕНИЙ СУПРУГОВ ПРИ ПОКУПКЕ ТОВАРОВ

Целью данного исследования является изучение влияния социальных сетей на использование тактик супружеского влияния среди иммигрантов из бывшего Советского Союза в Израиле. В анкетировании принимало участие 442 иммигранта из бывшего СССР, как состоящих в браке, так и сожительствующих, которым было предложено описать свои социальные сети и оценить использование стратегий влияния при совместном принятии решения о покупке.

Данные исследования проливают свет на отношения между переменными макроуровня экологической среды индивида и микроуровня процессов и явлений, которые существуют в его/ее ядре семьи, а именно динамики супружеских отношений. Нами также даны практические рекомендации для семейных психотерапевтов и практиков.

К л ю ч е в ы е с л о в а: решение о покупке, социальная сеть, принятия решений парой, стратегии влияния, силовые тактики, иммигрант.

Важной характеристикой новой волны иммиграции из бывшего Советского Союза в 1990-х гг. являлась ее многочисленность как в абсолютном выражении (около миллиона человек), так и в относительном (15 % от всего населения Израиля). Последние исследования показывают, что иммигранты, как правило, имеют тесные связи с другими иммигрантами в их сообществе и дистанцируются от израильтян, родившихся в этой стране. Иммигранты также поддерживают связи с друзьями и родственниками, проживающими в бывшем Советском Союзе или иммигрировавшими в другие страны. Кроме того, они начинают взаимодействовать с израильтянами.

Еврейское население, которое проживало на территориях бывшего Советского Союза на протяжении веков, характеризуется моделями семьи, похожими на нееврейские семьи в России. Среди них также наблюдаются большое количество внесемейных лиц и высокий уровень разводов. Нестабильность семьи, высокая профессиональная занятость женщин также привели к низкому уровню рождаемости в странах бывшего СССР. Так, в 1997 г. уровень рождаемости составил 1,23 ребенка — в России, 1,4 ребенка — в Украине и 1,3 ребенка — в Белоруссии. Несмотря на то, что с коммунистической идеологией было покончено в России двадцать три года назад, в русской культуре по-прежнему доминируют коллективистские ориентации. Поэтому разумно предположить, что социальные сети иммигрантов из этих стран будут иметь большое влияние на отношения супругов в семье и их поведение.

Социальные сети имеют достаточно большое и многогранное влияние на стабильность интимных (близких) отношений. Семья и друзья могут повлиять на важные решения, принимаемые супругами, например, решение о наличии детей в семье и их численности, трате денежных средств и покупке товаров и пр. Современные семейные пары встроены в социальные сети, что также влияет на их отношения с другими людьми вне системы брачных отношений.

Однако на сегодняшний день недостаточно исследований, посвященных влиянию социальных сетей на семейные отношения. Практически все имеющиеся исследования учитывают один из важных факторов влияния социальных сетей на семейные отношения. Недостаточно исследований, посвященных проблеме роли социальной сети в рамках семейной ячейки (ядра).

Социальные сети иммигрантов находятся под влиянием многих других факторов. Расставшись со своими бывшими социальными сетями, они сталкиваются с проблемой создания новых сетей в новой стране. Некоторые из них эмигрировали в одиночку, некоторые прибыли в Израиль с расширенной семьей и друзьями; некоторые успешно интегрировались в новое общество и создали новую социальную сеть, в то время как другие не смогли сделать этого и остались изолированными в новой культуре. Другим фактором, который вносит вклад в дисперсию близости в социальных сетях иммигрантов, является разница между иммигрантами той меры, в которой они поддерживают тесные социальные связи с друзьями и родственниками, оставшимися в бывшем Советском Союзе или иммигрировавшими в другие страны.

Исследование нацелено на расширение имеющихся знаний исследователей о влиянии социальной сети на супружеские стратегии в процессе принятия

решения о покупке в рамках экологической среды. Сообщество иммигрантов из СНГ в Израиле послужило соответствующим кейс-стади. Для этого была измерена близость социальных сетей иммигрантов из бывшего СССР и их тенденции в использовании различных видов супружеских стратегий влияния.

Исследование проводилось в два этапа. Пилотное исследование осуществлялось для того, чтобы сформулировать вопросы для анкеты основного исследования. В опросе приняли участие шестьдесят четыре человека, состоящих в браке или сожительствующих. В дальнейшем их ответы подверглись контент-анализу. Полевое исследование было проведено в Израиле в 2011 г. В опросе участвовало 442 респондента — бывшие выходцы из СССР.

Материалы исследования продемонстрировали, что степень близости в социальных сетях оказалась средней и высокой с относительно низкой дисперсией. Уровень близости в социальных сетях был практически одинаков как для мужчин, так и для женщин. Респонденты показали относительно редкое использование различных стратегий влияния. В целом можно увидеть, что неотрицательные стратегии (награды, экспертизы и легитимации) чаще используются по сравнению с отрицательными стратегиями. Исследование выявило, что для большинства иммигрантов характерны широко распространенные стратегии: вознаграждение, легитимация и экспертиза. Негативные стратегии используются гораздо реже. Мужчины чаще используют стратегию экспертизы, в то время как женщины — эмоциональное воздействие.

Также интересно, что данные исследования не показали, в какой степени близость сети воздействует на используемые людьми стратегии, равно как и влияние основных переменных. Для изучения влияния социальных сетей на используемые людьми стратегии необходим анализ нескольких переменных. Гендер рассматривался в исследовании как важный фактор. Помимо гендера важными факторами в исследовании выступали близость социальной сети и взаимодействие между ними (переменными).

Исследование подтвердило, что важным фактором принятия решения семьи о покупке выступает экологический фактор. К сожалению, его действие практически не исследуется учеными при анализе проблем социальной сети и семьи.

Материалы исследования показали влияние социальных сетей на поведение супружеских пар во время переговоров супругов по поводу совместного принятия решений о покупке. Следует иметь в виду, что каждый супруг (пара) использует сложные стратегии во время принятия решения о покупке, а не какую-либо одну стратегию. «Не-негативные» (положительные) стратегии используются супругами гораздо чаще, чем «негативные» (отрицательные).

Относительно редкое использование «негативных» стратегий можно объяснить двумя причинами. Например, эмоциональные стратегии, такие как неявные угрозы, принуждения, оскорбления, могут вызвать психологический дискомфорт у обоих супругов. Другим возможным результатом может стать потеря доверия, уличение во лжи и пр. Вторая причина, связанная с редким использованием «отрицательных» стратегий, может стать эффектом «социальной целесообразности», когда у одного из супругов возникает чувство неловкости за использование данной стратегии.

Безусловно, что данное исследование расширяет понимание социальных ученых о влиянии социальных сетей на принятие супружеских решений, однако имеются определенные ограничения в отношении интерпретации данных. Во-первых, причинно-следственные связи, касающиеся отношений между составом социальной сети и предпочтениями супругов в выборе той или иной стратегии, должны быть сделаны с некой осторожностью. Во-вторых, не учтена частота конфликтов при принятии решений о покупке супругами. Таким образом, будущие исследования должны оценить основу этих конфликтов, измерить частоту использования влияния стратегии по отношению к ней. Последующие исследования должны также сосредоточиться на воспринимаемой эффективности каждой стратегии. Кроме того, если несколько стратегий используются в каждом процессе принятия решения о покупке, было бы интересно выявить хронологический порядок их использования. Еще одним ограничением является то, что данный анализ основан на самооценке, в то время как идеальный дизайн исследования должен включать подтверждение от супруга (супруги), участвующего в принятии этого решения.