



RESEARCH ARTICLE

2025, vol. 12, issue 1, 478 - 485

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15829042>

The Strategic Role of Communication and Negotiation: An Applied Study Based on a Sociological Survey

Geovana-Albertina ZOICAN

Graduate in Communication and Public Relations, Faculty of Letters, University of Craiova, Romania

Abstract

This article explores the perceptions, attitudes, and practices surrounding negotiation and communication through an applied sociological survey distributed to a sample of 50 individuals of various ages and professional backgrounds. Through a reformulated and modernized questionnaire, the study investigates styles of negotiation, emotional intelligence, communication preferences, and the impact of digital environments. The findings confirm that while most participants recognize the importance of negotiation and communication, many feel underprepared, especially in managing nonverbal and emotional dynamics. The research advocates for the practical development of communicative competence through education and training.

Keywords: communication, negotiation, strategy, communicative competence

Communication and negotiation are fundamental components of interpersonal and organizational dynamics. Effective communication facilitates mutual understanding, trust-building, and the resolution of conflicts, while negotiation enables parties to reach agreements that satisfy their respective interests. In both business and personal contexts, the ability to communicate and negotiate effectively can significantly influence outcomes and relationships. A case study in this field is particularly valuable, as it allows for an in-depth examination of real-life scenarios, illustrating theoretical concepts in practice. Through case analysis, one can better understand the strategies employed, the challenges encountered, and the factors that contribute to successful or unsuccessful communication and negotiation processes. Such insights are essential for developing practical skills and enhancing decision-making in complex, high-stakes environments.

At the same time, negotiation and communication are two inseparable pillars of human interaction. Whether one operates in business, education, health care, or social environments, both skills define the success of interpersonal and institutional relationships. This article presents the findings of a sociological study aiming to assess how individuals perceive and apply negotiation and communication strategies in daily life.

In today's globalized and dynamic labor market, negotiation and communication are more crucial than ever. Whether in personal relationships or professional environments, the ability to communicate effectively and to negotiate successfully can define the trajectory of one's career. The case study "Negotiation and communication" investigates these skills through a sociological survey applied to a demographically diverse group of individuals, revealing both theoretical and practical insights.

The study employed a quantitative research approach using a well-structured questionnaire. This survey, consisting of 26 questions (21 on negotiation and communication practices –18 closed-ended, and 3 open-ended, and 5 demographic), was administered to 50 individuals. The questions were both closed (multiple choice) and open-ended, designed to capture both statistical trends and qualitative nuances.

Participants were selected from a wide range of occupations and age groups, aiming to reflect varied perspectives on negotiation.

A questionnaire is a structured set of questions designed to collect information from respondents. It is one of the most widely used tools in quantitative research, aiming to obtain data about knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, or preferences. Questionnaires can be administered in person, by mail, over the phone, or digitally (e.g., via Google Forms or SurveyMonkey).

In academic and applied research, questionnaires are particularly valuable due to their ability to:

- Gather large volumes of data quickly and efficiently.

- Standardize responses for easy analysis.
- Allow for anonymity, which can result in more honest answers.
- Be replicated and reused in longitudinal studies.

There are different types of questionnaires, such as open-ended (allowing free responses), closed-ended (providing multiple choice or Likert scales), and mixed-format questionnaires. The effectiveness of a questionnaire depends on its clarity, relevance, logical flow, and the appropriateness of its questions to the target audience.

Importance of Questionnaires in Research

In social sciences, psychology, marketing, and education, questionnaires are essential tools. Their advantages include:

- Objectivity: Especially when using Likert scales or multiple-choice questions.
- Quantifiability: Responses can be coded and analyzed statistically.
- Cost-efficiency: Especially when administered online.
- Scalability: They can reach large, geographically dispersed populations.

However, questionnaires also have limitations:

- Misinterpretation of questions can lead to invalid answers.
- Response bias: Social desirability or lack of attention can skew results.
- Non-response: Not all participants complete the questionnaire, which can affect representativeness.

To mitigate these issues, researchers must pilot test the questionnaire, ensure clear wording, and use neutral phrasing.

Research Methodology

The method employed was a structured sociological survey distributed both digitally and in printed form to a group of 50 respondents. The target group was composed of individuals aged between 18 and over 45, including students, professionals, freelancers, and entrepreneurs. The questionnaire was anonymous and required 5–7 minutes to complete.

The key research objectives were:

- to analyze how negotiation and communication are understood and practiced in diverse age and professional categories.
- to identify challenges in verbal, nonverbal, and paraverbal communication.
- to understand the role of emotional control and adaptability in negotiation settings.

Questionnaire Structure

Demographic Questions:

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your age group? (18–25, 26–35, 36–45, 45+)
3. What is your current professional status?
4. What sector are you most active in?
5. What is your highest completed level of education?

Closed-ended Questions:

6. Do you believe negotiation is a vital skill for success in your professional life?
7. How frequently do you find yourself in situations that require negotiation?
8. How important is preparation before entering a negotiation?
9. How do you usually prepare for a negotiation? (Multiple choice)
10. Which negotiation style do you most identify with? (Collaborative, Competitive, Avoidant, Compromising)
11. In a negotiation conflict, how do you typically respond?
12. What type of communication do you primarily use in negotiations? (Direct, Diplomatic, Flexible, Emotional)
13. Which form of communication do you consider most influential during negotiations? (Verbal, Nonverbal, Paraverbal)
14. How frequently do you use personal stories or analogies to strengthen your argument?
15. Do you believe tone of voice significantly impacts the outcome of negotiations?
16. How often do you feel misunderstood during a negotiation due to body language or tone?
17. Have you ever taken part in a negotiation training or course?
18. Would you like to receive further training in negotiation and communication?
19. Do you prefer face-to-face, phone, or online negotiations?

20. Do you believe empathy helps you negotiate better?

Open-ended Questions:

21. Share a situation in which communication skills helped you resolve a negotiation.

22. What negotiation technique do you find most effective and why?

23. Any suggestions or personal views on improving negotiation in your field?

Analysis of Results

Demographic Profile

This demographic variety allowed for cross-generational interpretation of negotiation and communication practices. The sample included: 60% female (30 respondents) and 40% male (20 respondents); 68% aged 18–25 (mostly students), 14% aged 36–45, 14% over 45, and 4% aged 26–35

Occupational Status:

Students: 54% (27 respondents)

Employed: 34% (17 respondents)

Freelancers: 8% (4 respondents)

Professors: 2% (1 respondent)

Entrepreneurs: 2% (1 respondent)

Fields of Activity: 17 fields, including Education (10 respondents), Mechanical Engineering, Public Relations, Agriculture, Construction, Law, Police, National Security, IT, Arts, Medicine, Music, Psychology, Social Work, Tourism, Trade, HR, and Corporate Communication.

Education Level:

Higher education: 68% (34 respondents)

High school: 26% (13 respondents)

Preschool and Secondary School: 4% and 2%, respectively

Questionnaire Responses and Statistical Results

1. Is negotiation an essential skill for professional success?

Yes: 94% (47 respondents)

No: 6% (3 respondents)

2. How often do you use negotiation techniques in daily life?

Sometimes: 32% (16)

Often: 28% (14)

Very often: 24% (12)

Rarely: 12% (6)

Very rarely: 4% (2)

3. How important is preparation before a negotiation?

Important: 54% (27)

Very important: 38% (19)

Less important: 8% (4)

4. Do you use persuasion tactics during negotiations?

Yes: 80% (40)

No: 20% (10)

5. Confidence level in negotiations:

Very high: 22% (11)

High: 44% (22)

Medium: 26% (13)

Low: 8% (4)

6. Preferred negotiation behavior:

Listening more than speaking: 48% (24)

Balanced: 40% (20)

Speaking more than listening: 12% (6)

7. Importance of empathy:

Very important: 62% (31)

- Important: 30% (15)
Less important: 6% (3)
Not important: 2% (1)
8. Focus during negotiations:
Own objectives: 42% (21)
Compromise: 40% (20)
Partner's goals: 18% (9)
9. Main decision factor in negotiations:
Financial benefit: 32% (16)
Relationship quality: 26% (13)
Long-term collaboration: 22% (11)
Personal values: 18% (9)
Other: 2% (1)
10. Frequency of strategic preparation:
Always: 30% (15)
Often: 34% (17)
Rarely: 24% (12)
Never: 12% (6)
11. Preferred negotiation style:
Cooperative (win-win): 54% (27)
Competitive (win-lose): 18% (9)
Avoidant: 12% (6)
Compromise: 16% (8)
12. Conflict resolution approach:
Mediation: 40% (20)
Postponement: 26% (13)
Withdrawal: 20% (10)
Imposing views: 14% (7)
13. Communication style used:
Direct and concise: 46% (23)
Diplomatic: 28% (14)
Creative/flexible: 16% (8)
Emotional/personalized: 10% (5)
14. Frequency of using personal stories in negotiation:
Very often: 20% (10)
Sometimes: 46% (23)
Rarely: 26% (13)
Never: 8% (4)
15. Influence of voice tone on negotiation success:
Very much: 48% (24)
Much: 34% (17)
Little: 14% (7)
Not at all: 4% (2)
16. Usefulness of a case study in professional development:
Very useful: 52% (26)
Useful: 32% (16)
Less useful: 10% (5)
Not useful: 6% (3)
17. Open Responses (Q22 and Q26):

Participants described situations where applied communication strategies—such as active listening, mirroring, and storytelling – helped them resolve disputes with clients, secure better deals in job interviews, or diffuse workplace conflicts. Several highlighted the importance of reading body language and adjusting speech pace to maintain rapport. One student noted that using silence strategically allowed the other party to “fill the gap,” revealing useful information.

Interpretation and Analysis

This dataset reveals several key trends about how individuals from diverse backgrounds perceive and apply communication and negotiation skills:

Negotiation is considered essential.

With 94% affirming its necessity, it is evident that negotiation is not just a desirable soft skill, but a core competence valued in virtually all professional fields.

Young adults dominate the dataset.

The high percentage (68%) of 18–25-year-olds influences some patterns, such as openness to learning, reliance on academic knowledge, and partial practical experience.

Strategic preparation is underutilized.

While 64% prepare often or always, a significant 36% either prepare rarely or never—highlighting a critical area for improvement in negotiation readiness.

Cooperative approaches dominate.

A win-win style is preferred by a majority, indicating a positive shift toward collaborative problem-solving rather than confrontational standoffs.

Empathy, voice tone, and storytelling matter.

The emotional dimension of communication—illustrated through empathy (92% consider it important), tone of voice (82% influenced), and story use (66%)—is seen as pivotal in influencing negotiation success.

Case studies are highly valued for learning.

84% found case studies useful or very useful, reinforcing the importance of applied, scenario-based learning in communication training.

Conclusions

The findings of this case study emphasize the following:

1. Widespread Recognition of Negotiation Skills: There is strong consensus that negotiation capabilities directly influence professional growth and success, regardless of domain.

2. Practical Techniques Are Partially Underdeveloped: Despite recognizing their importance, many respondents—especially those at the beginning of their careers—lack refined strategies for preparation and implementation, highlighting the need for structured training.

3. Emotional Intelligence and Empathy Are Undervalued Assets: Soft elements like empathy and tone are not merely supportive but central tools in creating trust and reaching mutual understanding during negotiations.

4. Diverse Communication Preferences Suggest Training Opportunities: The range of communication styles and negotiation preferences (direct, diplomatic, emotional, etc.) suggests the need for adaptive learning modules that account for individual variation.

5. Storytelling and Nonverbal Cues Enhance Persuasion: Real-life examples and voice modulation have proven to be persuasive tools in building credibility and achieving desired outcomes.

6. Experience and Education Influence Perception: Those with higher education or greater exposure to varied professional environments reported more confidence and awareness of strategic tools in negotiation.

Recommendations

Based on the data, several practical suggestions can be drawn for educators, trainers, and professionals:

-Integrate role-play and real-life simulations in training to improve strategic preparation and responsiveness in negotiation scenarios.

-Encourage reflective practices such as journaling negotiation experiences to enhance self-awareness and confidence.

-Develop modular workshops on empathy, non-verbal communication, and tone control to complement technical negotiation strategies.

-Leverage case studies more extensively in university and corporate settings to contextualize theoretical principles with real-world outcomes.

-Promote cross-functional team exercises to expose participants to different communication styles and strategic viewpoints.

This case study, while based on a relatively small sample of 50 respondents, provides a powerful snapshot of current attitudes and practices surrounding negotiation and communication among diverse individuals. By building on this foundation through broader research and targeted interventions, meaningful development in both individual capability and organizational effectiveness can be achieved.

In summary, we will examine respondents' perspectives on this entire and complex process.

Importance of Negotiation:

94% of respondents stated that negotiation is essential or very important to their professional success.

Negotiation Frequency:

While 26% use negotiation techniques “often” and 48% “occasionally,” only 10% declared “rarely” or “never,” showing broad engagement with negotiation in both formal and informal settings.

Preparation Habits:

85% believe that thorough preparation is “very important” or “essential.” However, fewer respondents stated that they actively engage in systematic preparation, indicating a theory-practice gap.

Preferred Styles:

- Collaborative (win-win): 80%
- Competitive: 10%
- Compromising: 10%
- Avoidant: Less than 2%

This reinforces the modern tendency toward constructive negotiation approaches.

Emotional Intelligence in Conflict:

82% attempt to mediate conflict when it arises, while only 10% insist on their point of view. A small percentage prefer to pause and return to the discussion later.

Communication Styles:

- Flexible and creative: 40%
- Direct and concise: 32%
- Emotional and expressive: 16%
- Diplomatic and formal: 12%

Use of Personal Examples:

60% use personal narratives “sometimes,” 24% “frequently,” and only 16% “rarely.” This demonstrates the value of storytelling as a persuasive tool.

Impact of Voice Tone:

54% believe that tone strongly influences negotiation results, while 46% affirm it has significant influence.

No respondents dismissed it as unimportant.

Communication Challenges:

Respondents cited issues like:

- Difficulty in expressing needs clearly
- Trouble interpreting body language
- Fear of confrontation
- Limited experience in negotiation

Open-Ended Highlights

When asked to describe situations where communication skills impacted outcomes:

One participant shared how adjusting tone and choosing simpler words de-escalated a heated work-related negotiation.

Another reported success in a personal matter by using nonverbal calmness and open posture to lower tension.

In terms of effective techniques, respondents cited:

- Active listening
- Mirroring
- Balanced speaking and pausing
- Using humor to disarm tension

Suggestions included:

- “Make negotiation part of school curricula.”
- “We need workshops for digital communication and body language.”

The study reveals a strong awareness of the role of communication, but also a gap in formal training and applied skills. Key recommendations:

1. Include negotiation and communication training in all educational paths.
2. Offer hands-on workshops focused on practical techniques and emotional intelligence.
3. Adapt training for digital negotiation, addressing tone in emails and video calls.
4. Promote peer-to-peer learning and role-playing simulations in professional environments.

This study affirms that effective communication and negotiation are not innate abilities, but can be developed through structured learning and conscious practice. Respondents recognize their value, yet lack full mastery – especially in areas like emotional control, tone calibration, and reading nonverbal cues.

As our world becomes increasingly mediated by technology, these skills are more vital than ever. Negotiation must be reframed as a relational tool, supported by listening, empathy, and adaptability – not just a means to reach an agreement, but a pathway to understanding.

REFERENCES

- Abdelnabi, S., Gomaa, A., Sivaprasad, S., Schönherr, L., & Fritz, M. (2024). Cooperation, competition, and maliciousness: Llm-stakeholders interactive negotiation. *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems*, 37, 83548-83599.
- Adinda, R., Barkah, C. S. A., & Novel, N. J. (2022). The importance of communication process in negotiation. *Bisnis & Entrepreneurship*, 16(2), 132-139.
- Basic, G., Yakhlef, S. (2025) From stigma to inclusion: Ethnographic studies in social pedagogy. *Ethnography*, 1-21. <https://lnu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1974164/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Bateson, N. (2025). *Data construction in social surveys*. Taylor & Francis.
- Bazerman, M. H., Curhan, J. R., Moore, D. A., & Valley, K. L. (2000). Negotiation. *Annual review of psychology*, 51(1), 279-314.
- Brett, J., & Thompson, L. (2016). Negotiation. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*, 136, 68-79.
- Dumitru, A. (2023). Migration-the premise of socio-economic development ?. *Annals of the University of Craiova for Journalism, Communication and Management*, 9(1), 41-49.
- Enăchescu, V. A. (2025). Rethinking Educational Management: Preparing Leaders for Global Sustainability and Ethical Challenges in a Digital Era. *Review of International Comparative Management/Revista de Management Comparat International*, 26(2).
- Fedorenko, E., Piantadosi, S. T., & Gibson, E. A. (2024). Language is primarily a tool for communication rather than thought. *Nature*, 630(8017), 575-586.
- Florea, M. (2024). Modernization of education and optimization of communication. *Social Sciences and Education Research Review*, 11(1), 359-362.
- Hargie, O. (2025). Skill in theory: Communication as skilled performance. In *The handbook of communication skills* (pp. 3-40). Routledge.
- Iorgulescu, A., & Marcu, M. (2021). The perspective of feminist sociology-source of human diversity. *Social Sciences and Education Research Review Volume 8, Issue 1, 2021*, 216.
- Iorgulescu, A., & Marcu, M. (2022). Persuasion, an imponderable form of communication. *Social Sciences and Education Research Review*, 9(2), 76-79.
- Leotescu, G. S. (2024). Mapping AI in the News Media Sector-Technological Disruption in Practices of Journalism. *Social Sciences and Education Research Review*, 11(2), 102-108.
- Marcu, M. (2024). Organizational crisis situations resolved through the media. *Some significant milestones in the social sciences*, 10.
- Marsh, C. (2025). *The survey method: The contribution of surveys to sociological explanation*. Taylor & Francis.
- Mocanu, A. (2020). Storytelling And Cinematic Strategies In Advertising Spots. *Annals of the University of Craiova for Journalism, Communication and Management*, 6(1), 5-12.
- Pogan, L. (2024). Dyadic perspectives on work-family conflict and balance. *Social Sciences and Education Research Review*, 11(2), 17-20.
- Santalova, M. S., Soklakova, I. V., Saifieva, S. N., Kusainova, A. S., & Lesnikova, E. P. (2020, October). Sociological survey as a management tool in the digital economy. In *International Scientific and Practical Conference* (pp. 174-181). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Selepe, M. A., & Mphahlele, R. S. (2025). Number sense skills in the foundation phase through technology-enhanced mental mathematics activities. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, 15(1), 1650.
- Stanescu, G. (2018). The Role Of Mass-Media In The Rise Of Nationalist Movements In The European Union. *Annals of the University of Craiova for Journalism, Communication and Management*, 4(1), 112-121.
- Stanescu, G. (2023). Informational war: Analyzing false news in the Israel conflict. *Social Sciences and Education Research Review*, 10(2), 307-310.
- Teodorescu, B., Calin, R. A., & Busu, O. V. (2016). Communication Gift Code. *New Approaches in Social and Humanistic Sciences*, 1(1), 503-506.

Tenescu, A. (2016). Perspectives On Marketing And Organizational Advertising. *Social Sciences and Education Research Review*, 3(2), 120-125.

Vlad, D. (2023). The evolution of internet radio broadcasting. *Social Sciences and Education Research Review*, 10(1), 253-257.

Vlăduțescu, Ș. (2014). Actants of manipulative communication. *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences*, (40), 41-47.