Interpersonal Communication Skills

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Abstract

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The main objective of this study is to analyse different interpersonal communication skills that individuals use to establish and maintain effective business relationships and explore their practical applications. To support this goal, following sub-objectives were achieved:

- Considering various theories of interpersonal communications and types of interpersonal messages for strong theoretical basis.

- Analysing explanation and persuasion skills.

- Evaluating the importance of nonverbal communication.

- Conducting research among individuals involved in interpersonal communications in their work process to complement the theoretical basis from a practical point of view.

The work consists of an Introduction, two chapters of theoretical framework, Research and Discussion parts.

Theoretical part provides a foundational understanding of the underlying principles, elements, and factors of interpersonal communications, then examines explanation and persuasion skills, their characteristics, challenges of their application, and nonverbal communication peculiarities.

The theoretical foundation is enriched by qualitative research, conducted through interviews. Research offers a nuanced and in-depth exploration of individual's perspectives, experiences, and behaviors, allowing to conduct detailed analysis of the research topic. The main target of the conducted research is to investigate the subjective experiences of individuals regarding interpersonal communication skills within their professional environment and assess the degree of situational variability of common explanation and persuasion tactics.

| **Key words** |
| Communication, interpersonal relationships, communication skills |

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1   Introduction

Different scholars give different definitions to the term «interpersonal relationships». DeVito (2016) describes interpersonal communication as the exchange of information between individuals who share a form of connection, mostly dyadic (involving two individuals), but sometimes expanded to embody small groups. Wood's (2015) definition also includes diverse ways of communication — verbal and nonverbal, and emphases their influence on the quality of relationships. Including all essential elements, interpersonal communications can be characteries as «exchange of messages between people, with a focus on building and maintaining relationships, using various channels and adapting to different contexts» (O'Hair, Wiemann & Mullin 2015).

Invention of social media platforms has introduced new dimensions to interpersonal communication. The definition of this communication has evolved, with activities such as sending messages to a selected group on social media being considered by some theorists as interpersonal communication (DeVito 2016).

Nowadays people usually have the hybrid type of interpersonal communication, including interactions both face-to-face and online. The combination of these interactions is integral to modern interpersonal communication. Additionally, employers value communication skills in both oral and written (including online) forms, emphasizing the importance of a diverse communication skill set (Bersin 2013). Both forms of communication are vital for achieving personal and professional goals, with effective communication playing a central role in employability: interviews and networking. The ability to communicate effectively, using various interpersonal skills, can be pivotal in running a business and building a career.

Communication skills, as outlined by DeVito (2016), refer to the ability to convey and receive information effectively. In this work skills considered by the author most useful in interpersonal communication are examined from theoretical and then practical points of view.

This research does not explore written communication field.

1.1   Objectives

The main objective of this study is to analyse different interpersonal communication skills that individuals use to establish and maintain effective business relationships and explore their practical applications.

To support this goal, following sub-objectives were achieved:

- Considering various theories of interpersonal communications and types of interpersonal messages for strong theoretical basis.
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- Conducting research among individuals involved in interpersonal communications in their work process to complement the theoretical basis from a practical point of view.

The theoretical foundation of this thesis is enriched by qualitative research, conducted through interviews. Research offers a nuanced and in-depth exploration of individuals perspectives, experiences, and behaviors, allowing to conduct detailed analysis of the research topic.

1.2 Literature and references

In the process of developing the thesis, a large amount of educational and research literature was used, with focus on works that significantly contribute to the understanding of interpersonal communication and social interaction skills, providing a comprehensive overview of existing knowledge, theories, and methodologies. Key references include articles and chapters from "The Handbook of Communication Skills" edited by Owen Hargie (2019), "The Interpersonal Communication Book", written by Joseph A. DeVito (2016) and "Auditing organisational communication: a handbook of research, theory and practice" by Hargie and Tourish (2009). Insight into nonverbal communication was mostly obtained from Andersen's "Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions" (1999), textbook "Nonverbal behaviors in interpersonal relations" by Richmond by McCroskey (1995) and research work "Towards a Technology of Nonverbal Communication: Vocal Behavior in Social and Affective Phenomena" written by Vinciarelli A. and Mohammadi G. (2011).

Research data were taken from published articles and reports, such as «Effects of normative antismoking messages in China: A brief report» by Bresnahan and Zhuang (2016) or "Highlighting the injunctive norm to reduce phone-related distracted driving" published by Lawrence (2015).

Guidance for conducting research was taken from "Research methodology: Methods and techniques" by Kothari (2004), "Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches" by Creswell (2009) and "Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide" by Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey (2005).

Beyond those works, a diverse number of articles and research were used in process of writing theoretical framework, ensuring a in-depth exploration of the subject.

1.3   Relevance of the topic

The research considering interpersonal communication skills holds paramount significance in contemporary context for several reasons. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancements and globalization, effective interpersonal communication skills are not only pivotal for personal professional success but also crucial for fostering positive interactions in diverse and interconnected environments. Emphasis on collaboration in professional settings and the increasing connectiveness of global societies underscore the practical importance of effective interpersonal communication in both personal and professional spheres.

Moreover, in a time marked by heightened awareness of diversity and inclusion, exploring interpersonal communication skills becomes instrumental in developing mutual understanding across various cultural, linguistic, and social contexts. The ability to communicate effectively is not only a personal asset but also a vital competency for building bridges between individuals and communities and promoting the increase of worldwide cooperation.

This work has no commission company, the research is conducted independently.

2   Theoretical Foundations of Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication operates on a continuum, ranging from relatively impersonal, such as conversations between customer and client, to highly personal, involving intimate connections. This process can be described by several characteristics, including the nature of social roles, societal versus personal rules, and the emotional content of exchanged messages (Miller 1990). Effective communication is imperative in the workplace, where it promotes team cohesion, boosts productivity, and facilitates the exchange of ideas. It is equally crucial in personal relationships, as clear communication helps in resolving conflicts and building trust. However, communication is a complex and multifaceted process, and to communicate effectively, it is important to understand different elements of communication and various types of communication messages, define communication skills and utilize them sensibly. Developing communication skills and adapting communication strategies to different contexts are essential components of effective communication.

Studying theories of interpersonal communication provides a foundational understanding of the underlying principles, dynamics, and factors influencing human interaction. This theoretical knowledge serves as a framework, guiding the research of practical communication skills.

2.1   Overview of the theories of interpersonal communication

2.1.1   Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory claims that interpersonal interactions are based on the principle of reciprocity, where individuals seek to maximize rewards and minimize costs in their relationships (Blau 1964). This theory provides insights into the dynamics of give-and-take in interpersonal communication, aiming to explain the dynamics of "when" and "why" individuals disclose specific information about themselves to other people. This process is similar to a bartering system, involving the exchange of rewards and costs between partners, or between several members of the partnership.

Central to social exchange theory stands the affirmation that the primary driving force in interpersonal relationships lies in satisfying the interests of all individuals involved. Actions such as self-disclosure occur when the ratio of costs to rewards is acceptable for the individual. As a relationship develops, if the rewards consistently outweigh the costs, individuals enhance their closeness by gradually sharing personal information (Blau 1964).

Being one of the first theories of interpersonal interaction, social theory considers such elements as revealing information, relationship expectations, and cost versus rewards system of communication process. Subsequently, theories of interpersonal interaction became more complex and included a larger number of elements.

2.1.2   Uncertainty Reduction Theory

The Uncertainty Reduction Theory, formulated by Berger & Calabrese (1975) from a socio-psychological standpoint, analyses the fundamental process of acquiring knowledge about others. At its core, the theory recognizes the challenge people face in dealing with uncertainty, particularly in anticipating future events and preparing for them. To conquer this uncertainty, individuals are driven to gather information about those they interact with, aiming to predict behavior and establish preferences.

The theory suggests (Berger & Calabrese 1975) that during the first encounter, strangers follow specific steps and checkpoints to reduce uncertainty about one another, and formulating judgments. Decreasing certainty reduces confidence in the original plan, motivating individuals to formulate contingency plans. Additionally, this theory posits that heightened uncertainty increase interpersonal distance, with nonverbal messages playing a pivotal role in reducing this uncertainty.

Key constructs within the theory include three elements:
- level of uncertainty
- nature of the relationship
- strategies employed to reduce uncertainty.

According to the theory (Berger & Calabrese 1975), uncertainty reduction occurs through three methods: passive strategies, involving observation of the person, active strategies, such as seeking information from others or from researching, and interactive strategies, involving direct engagement through asking questions, motivating for self-disclosure.

The theory is widely used in the field of uncertainty management and motivated information management, examining the comprehensive understanding of how uncertainty functions in interpersonal communication and what motivate individuals to seek information (Afifi & Weiner 2004).

2.1.3   Social Penetration Theory

The Social Penetration Theory was formulated in 1973 to explain the dynamics of information exchange in the evolution and dissolution of interpersonal connections. This theory analyses the process of bonding that transforms relationships from surface-level to more intimate stages (Altman & Taylor 1973). Central to this progression is self-disclosure, a deliberate act of revealing personal information (Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis 1993). Social penetration is applicable in various contexts, including friendships, social groups, and professional relationships. Moreover, the theory has found application in computer-mediated communication settings, including virtual teams.

The "onion" model serves as a representation of social penetration theory, illustrating the gradual unfolding of personal information through interpersonal communication. This process involves metaphorically removing layers to access the "core" of an individual. Social penetration theory categorizes these layers into superficial, middle, inner, and core personality, implying varying depths of personal information (Carpenter & Greene 2016).

Critical to social penetration process are two factors (Carpenter & Greene 2016): the width, referring to the variety of topics covered, and the depth, implying the level of intimacy that characterizes interactions. This means that when an individual reveals something, the recipient is motivated to share something of equal intimacy to correspond the principle of reciprocity and maintain a sense of equity. Relying on this tendency, it is strategically advisable to disclose information to encourage other individuals to share in return.

Self-disclosure goes through various phases in the process of interpersonal relationship. These phases embody orientation, exploratory affective exchange, affective exchange, and stable exchange (Taylor & Altman 1973). In the beginning of the exchange process, individuals usually express caution and discretion in revealing information.

Diverse theories of interpersonal communication approach the subject from various perspectives, yet they universally view it as a dynamic process of exchanging information. Most individuals are constantly involved into interpersonal communication, even if it is not straightly connected to their formal responsibilities, so understanding the mechanics of this process is paramount for successful existence in work life. Comprehending the nature of interpersonal communication aids in fostering a positive work atmosphere, choosing the right strategies during interviews, and navigating in work discussions.

Now, after exploring interpersonal communication theories, which give the overall understanding of the nature and dynamics of human interaction, it is prudent to review the interpersonal communication in more detailed way, focusing on the elements of the communication process.

2.2 Types of interpersonal communication messages

During the process of communication, individuals use two primary signal systems — verbal and nonverbal. Verbal messages consist of communicated words, embodied in either oral or written form, excluding vocalized pauses and responses that lack words. Nonverbal communication, on the other hand, occurs without the use of words, manifesting through gestures, facial expressions, eye movements, and some sounds — for example, laughter (DeVito 2016, 135).

Verbal communication comes in two main forms: written and oral.

Written communication involves various forms such as traditional letters, typed electronic documents, e-mails, text chats, SMS, and anything else conveyed through written symbols. This form of communication is essential for conveying information in a written format, providing a record of details that can be referred and archived. It plays a crucial role in formal business interactions and the communication of legal instructions. The success of written communication depends on various factors: grammatical correctness, vocabulary, writing style, and overall clarity (James 2014).

Another type of verbal communication involves spoken language, whether in person, over the phone, through voice chat or video conferencing (Barley, Meyerson & Grodal 2011). Informal communication methods, like "rumour mill", as well as formal channels such as lectures and conferences, are also considered as oral communication. It is commonly employed in discussions and casual, informal conversations. The success of oral communication relies on factors such as clear speech, voice modulation, volume, speed, and nonverbal cues, including body language and visual signals.

To explain the essence of verbal messages and the impact they evoke in recipients, it is important to outline various principles of the process:
- the packaging of messages,
- the subjectivity of meanings,
- the denotative and connotative nature of messages,
- the spectrum of abstraction,
- the nuances of politeness,
- the dichotomy of onymous and anonymous messages,
- the possibility of deception,
- the variability in assertiveness,
- the confirmatory or denying nature,
- the cultural nuances (DeVito 2016, 104-123).

Principle	Verbal Message Impact
The packaging of messages	Verbal and nonverbal messages can work together or against each other.
The subjectivity of meanings	Considering not just the message, but also the individual who is speaking.
The denotative and connotative nature of messages	Considering both objective and subjective meanings.

The spectrum of abstraction	Usage of both general and specific terms in messages.
The nuances of politeness	Creating messages having a positive view of others.
The dichotomy of onymous and anonymous messages	Considering the ownership of the message.
The possibility of deception	A truth-oriented approach is generally advisable, but some messages may be false or intentionally misleading in certain situations.
The variability in assertiveness	Acting assertively is often the preferred communication style, but cultural attitudes towards assertiveness can vary significantly.
The confirmatory or denying nature	Confirming messages typically receive positive responses, disconfirming messages are usually met with negative.
The cultural nuances	It is important to be mindful of cultural differences to avoid causing offense.

Table 1

Verbal communication stands out as the most prevalent and informative form of interpersonal interactions, with spoken or written words conveying meanings and ideas. However, nonverbal cues also play a crucial role in transmitting emotions, attitudes, and additional layers of meaning that enrich the overall communication experience. While verbal communication provides the content of a message, nonverbal elements add depth and nuance to the informational exchanges (Anderson, 1999).

Nonverbal communication, or transmission of messages without the use of words, can be expressed through various actions, with the most crucial ones being body language, facial expressions, eye contact, and touch communication. The pivotal characteristic of nonverbal communication lies in the reception of the messages by other individuals (DeVito 2016).

Effective usage of nonverbal communication gives dual advantage (Burgoon & Hoobler 2002). Firstly, mastery in transmitting and interpreting nonverbal signals correlates with increased

attractiveness, popularity, and psychosocial well-being. Secondly, proficiency in nonverbal skills contributes to success in diverse interpersonal communication scenarios: organizational communication, teacher-student interactions, intercultural communication, legal proceedings and political engagements (Richmond, McCroskey & Hickson 2012).

A symbiotic relationship between verbal and nonverbal messages can be expressed in six principal ways (DeVito 2016, 131-135):

1. accent

Nonverbal communication is frequently employed to highlight a specific aspect of the verbal message, adding emphasis through vocal intonation or gestures.

2. complement

Nonverbal communication serves to complement and convey nuanced meanings not expressed in verbal message, such as smile while sharing a story to indicate amusement, or frown while talking about someone's deceit to express disapproval.

3. contradiction

It is possible to intentionally oppose verbal statements with nonverbal gestures, such as crossing fingers or winking, to signal that individual is not telling the truth.

4. control

Nonverbal movements can be used to express the intention to navigate the flow of verbal messages – like making hand movement to signify the desire to speak. Additionally, raising a hand or using vocalizations may signalise that person hasn't concluded their thoughts.

5. repetition

An individual has option to emphasize a verbal message through nonverbal means: raised eyebrows, questioning look, or gesturing with the head or hand to reinforce the verbal statement.

6. substitution.

Nonverbal communication can serve as a substitute for verbal messages. For instance, expressing consent through a hand gesture, or shaking head as an indication of disagreement (Anderson 1999).

In the field of electronic communication, where facial expressions and gestures are absent, emoticons are recognised as typed symbols to compensate nonverbal cues. Even listening, traditionally associated with verbal communication, expands in the digital age to embody the reception and processing of written messages on social media platforms. Considering sharing messages on social

media as a type of interpersonal communication, it is logical to interpret the act of reading these messages as listening (DeVito 2016).

The initial step in comprehending effective interpersonal communication lies in understanding its origins and categorizing the various message types prevalent in human interaction. Despite the differences, all interpersonal communications theories consider communication as a process of exchanging information between individuals and acquiring knowledge about others. In the process of communication, individuals exchange different types of messages: verbal (in written and oral form) and nonverbal. The importance of written communications in business, public and private life of individuals can't be underestimated. However, this work is focused on oral communication, including both verbal and nonverbal manifestations. While verbal communication delivers the message's content, nonverbal elements contribute depth and subtlety to the exchange of information.

Now, as the basic concepts of interpersonal interactions are outlined, it is logical to proceed to the exploration of the specific skills individuals use in interpersonal communication process and social behavior.

3   Interpersonal Communication Skills

Achieving an understanding between individuals is one of the most important steps of interpersonal interactions. Explanation skill plays a pivotal role in the process of providing comprehension on the subject or action, and the skill of persuasion allows to influence the attitude of individuals and perception of the ideas. Nonverbal communication is either reinforcing, altering, or contradicting the spoken message. Understanding of these communication skills is a toolset, allowing individuals to navigate complex social landscapes. Ability to inform, persuade, and convey messages with precision encourage cooperation and minimise the possibility of misunderstanding. As a result, using these skills becomes crucial for building mutual understanding, resolving conflicts, presenting, and promoting ideas and fostering positive relationships in professional context.

This chapter examines mentioned communication skills, their characteristics, challenges of their application, and the possibilities of overcoming obstacles for effective communication.

3.1   Explanation skill

The etymological origin of the term "explaining" lies in the Latin term "explanare" - "to make a plain." This meaning suggests two metaphors: "stripping bare" and "revealing." These metaphors foreshadow different objectives in the act of explanation. The first metaphor implies a focus on distilling information to its essentials, second suggests a deeper exploration, uncovering subtleties and unique qualities of a subject, action, or phenomenon. The first metaphor aligns with quantitative approaches, while the latter resonates with qualitative research methodologies (Brown & Edmunds 2019, 184).

One of the pioneering scholars in developing a theoretical framework for informative discourse, formerly referred to as exposition, was George Campbell. Campbell (2009) studied the concept of exposition, claiming that effective persuasion hinges upon establishing a thorough understanding among the audience, defining exposition as "to set forth, disclose, unmask, or explain in detail" (Mish 1981). Campbell's understanding of exposition reflects his perspective on the task of informative communication. According to Campbell (2009), the content already exists, awaiting presentation. The effective communicator simply chooses the appropriate organizational structure that aligns logically with the subject matter and naturally engages the audience's intellect. This approach implies minimal need for strategic thinking or artistic manipulation, as the content is considered pre-existing (Greene & Burleson 2003).

The core responsibility for providing comprehension lies in the skill of explaining. Explaining is conducting by establishing connections between explainers and explainees and the cognitive links

formed in their minds. The significance of the definition revolves around the nature of understanding. In essence, understanding entails recognizing connections that were previously overlooked. These connections may exist between concepts, pieces of information, or facts (Brown & Edmunds 2019).

Basic classification of types of explanation includes interpretive, descriptive, and explanatory reasoning (Brown 2006). Interpretive explanations seek to clarify the essence of a subject, answering the question "What?" by defining its central meaning. Descriptive explanations, on the other hand, focus on illustrating processes or structures, addressing the question "How?". They provide detailed answers of procedures or actions. Reason-giving explanations examines the motivations or principles behind phenomena, answering the question "Why?". It offers insights into the underlying reasons, be it based on principles, motives, obligations, values, or something else.

The role of the explainer is to articulate the issue at hand and guide the audience through a series of statements, each contributing to a resolution. These statements, or "keys" (Brown & Edmunds 2019, 187-188) serve as the pathway to understanding. "Keys" may include examples, metaphors, and clarifications to the main principle, particularly when dealing with complex problems. In such cases, a summary of key statements may be provided during the explanation, along with a final recap.

However, effective explanation requires considering not just the problem but also the audience's or individual's characteristics. What constitutes a good explanation varies depending on the personality. The quality of an explanation lies in its ability to foster understanding in the other person, making it contingent on their cognitive framework. Thus, different groups require different keys and approaches, although the fundamental strategies remain the same. It is also important to highlight the difference of organisation's structure and relationships within. The ethos or subculture significantly influences willingness to provide and receive information and explanations. Open climates, characterized by empathy, understanding, openness, egalitarianism, respect, trust, and honesty, foster collaboration and information-sharing. In contrast, closed climates, marked by non-caring, control, and deceit, generate distrust and reluctance to share intellectual capital. Power differences, language usage, and cultural diversity also impact organizational communication, especially in international settings (Brown & Edmunds 2019).

The essence of explaining lies in achieving understanding and aligning new information with the audience's existing information. Explaining is not solely about providing solutions, it also involves clarifying the problem itself and establishing connections between problems and solutions. In some cases, a problem may not have a definitive solution, but understanding the problem's nature and

exploring potential solutions are crucial aspects of effective teaching and counselling (Ericsson 2009).

It is possible to establish the hierarchy of communication explanation modes, with face-to-face interactions at the top, followed by videoconferencing, telephone conversations, emails, and memoranda. Different communication modes require distinct approaches of explaining (Hargie & Tourish 2009).

Brown and Edmunds (2019) suggest following principles to guide explanation process:

1. Understanding audience's preferences and choosing arguments accordingly.
2. Establishing credibility, trustworthiness, and showcasing expertise increases the likelihood that people will listen and be open to suggestions.
3. Present both sides of arguments, advocating proposals with opposing viewpoints.
4. When emphasizing potential risks, avoiding excessively arousing fear.
5. Referencing the actions taken by experts or expert groups when confronted with the issue under discussion.
6. Assessing the complexity of the problem for the group; provide conclusions, but, if it's manageable, allow group members to draw their own conclusions.
7. Anticipating challenges to suggestions and presenting opposing views in advance and providing counterarguments.

However, the most significant hurdle lies in establishing a connection between professional explanation and its outcomes. This requires an examination of explanation not only as a cognitive process, but also as an emotional one, when persuasion and influence prompt shifts in attitudes, potentially resulting in lasting changes in cognition and behavior (Brown & Edmunds 2019, 207). While the primary aim of explanation remains understanding, within professional contexts, the overarching objective may be understanding that guide to action.

3.2   Persuasion skill

Persuasion stands out as a pervasive function in communication, which individuals consistently are trying to achieve across various domains such as the marketplace, legal proceedings, politics, family dynamics, healthcare, and the workplace. Given its importance, substantial research has been dedicated to identify the elements that contribute to the effectiveness of persuasive messages (O'Keefe 2019).

Persuasion can be described as "active attempt to change a person's attitudes, beliefs, or behavior" (Cacioppo, Cacioppo & Petty 2018). At the core of persuasive success lies a fundamental skill – message adaptation. Successful persuaders exhibit the ability to adapt their messages according

to the specific demands of the situation and the uniqueness of the target audience. However, four (O'Keefe 2019, 320-328) general challenges of persuasion situations can be identified - common scenarios that persuaders often encounter. These challenges transcend target audiences, or behavioral contexts, and can be viewed as responses to a fundamental question: "Why are people not already engaging in desired behavior or share the preferred opinion?" (Fishbein & Ajzen 2010).

The first challenge revolves around attitudes, suggesting that individuals may not perceive recommended action or viewpoint as best option. Thus, persuaders must navigate the task of creating a positive attitude towards their proposals. The second challenge involve social considerations, or the tendency of people to predict other's thoughts or actions. Here, persuaders must address the barriers posed by communal opinions, which may contradict individual positive attitudes. The third challenge involve perceived ability – a situation where individuals may hesitate due to doubts about their competence or knowledge regarding the recommended actions, even if their attitude and social considerations are positive. So, persuaders must prove themselves highly qualified in the matter. The final challenge involves the translation of intentions into actions, as individuals may struggle to transfer to actual behavior. Persuaders need to facilitate the process effectively (O'Keefe 2019).

Thereafter, varied approaches are suited to different challenges in persuasion. What effectively addresses one persuasion obstacle may not be applicable to another. However, evidence-based strategies exist for each unique challenge. Once a persuader identifies the specific problem to compliance, the strategies outlined below can be used as a toolkit for creating impactful convincing messages.

3.2.1 Attitude challenge

A common strategy for fostering positive attitudes involves presenting supportive arguments aimed at providing compelling reasons for proving a particular viewpoint. These arguments often emphasize the ethically positive outcomes, associated with the recommended view. The persuasiveness of such consequence-based appeals varies depending on individual differences, such as considerations of future consequences and self-monitoring tendencies. Individuals with a greater focus on immediate consequences tend to be more persuaded by short-term benefits, whereas those emphasizing long-term consequences are swayed by arguments highlighting future gains (O'Keefe 2019, 320-323).

In addressing potential objections to the advocated viewpoint, persuaders have three options: ignore opposing arguments, refute them directly, or acknowledge them without undermining their validity (Eisend 2007). Directly refuting counterarguments through two-sided messages can be the

most persuasive approach, however, the effectiveness of this strategy depends on the relevance and credibility of the objections.

In summary, the effectiveness of persuasive messages relies on their ability to resonate with the audience's values, preferences, and objections. By crafting arguments that align with the audience's mindset and directly addressing potential objections, persuaders can gain audience's or interlocutor's attitude change (O'Keefe 2019).

3.2.2 Social considerations

Even when individuals hold positive personal attitude towards a persuader's viewpoint, they may not adopt the advocated view due to social considerations, which are influenced by perceptions of other's thoughts and actions. Two key social factors are descriptive norms and injunctive norms (O'Keefe 2019, 323-324).

Descriptive norms refer to perception of other's behavior, influencing individual's actions as they align their behavior with what they perceive other people are doing (O'Keefe 2019). According to research, providing information about other people's law-abiding increases the level of responsibility of individuals to comply with these standards: for example, informing about tax payments made by others increases the efficiency of taxpaying of informed individuals (Hallsworth, List, Metcalfe & Vlaev 2014).

On the opposite, injunctive norms refer to perceptions of other's approval or disapproval of person's behavior, which can influence individual's willingness to engage in that behavior (O'Keefe 2019). Messages conveying injunctive norms have been effective in influencing behaviors related to distracted driving (Lawrence 2015), healthy eating, smoking (Bresnahan & Zhuang 2016), and environmental concerns. These interventions may refer to generalized social norms or specific groups or individuals.

Despite the effectiveness of injunctive-norm interventions, further research is still required for better understanding of the conditions under which such messages are most impactful and how they can be optimized to promote behavior change effectively across different contexts (Chung & Rimal 2016).

3.2.3 Perceived ability

Individuals may refrain from taking actions if they experience obstacles. These obstacles are often related to perceived ability, also known as perceived behavioral control or self-efficacy. If individuals are not confident in their competence or feel that they have insufficient information, they may

choose inaction as the safest behavior scenario. There are several methods through which persuaders can attempt to overcome this reaction, each suitable in different contexts (O'Keefe 2019, 324-326).

Firstly, persuaders may address barriers to compliance by providing reliable information or removing situational obstacles. Supplying clear instruction on how to perform an action or addressing possible issues can enhance perceived behavioral ability (Feufel, Schneider & Berkel 2010). In best scenario, explanation should allow people to act according to the instructions immediately. For instance, individuals who have shown positive views towards becoming an organ donor are more inclined to register if presented with an immediate chance to do it (Sharpe, Moloney, Sutherland & Judd 2017).

Secondly, creating opportunities for successful performance, such as rehearsal or practice, can improve self-efficacy. Role-playing discussions or demonstrating effective behavior management techniques through modelling can prepare individual to take a real action (O'Keefe 2019).

Thirdly, presenting examples of others successfully performing an action can also enhance self-efficacy. Viewing videos demonstrating effective breast self-examinations has been shown to increase perceived self-efficacy (Anderson 2000). Individuals tend to show less stress if they are repeating an action after someone.

Finally, receiving encouragement from others can significantly boost perceived behavioral ability. When persuaders express confidence in individual's abilities and verbally motivate them, it can stimulate to an action (O'Keefe 2019).

These methods, whether used individually or in combination, offer possibilities for enhancing perceived behavioral ability and promoting desired behavior change. The strategy can widely vary in detail, depending on the situation and personality of the individual.

3.2.4 Translation of intentions into actions

Finally, individuals hold positive attitude, do not have expect negative social considerations and have high self-efficacy, however they may still struggle to translate their intentions into action. In such cases, persuaders face the challenge of bridging the gap between thought and behavior, for which three general strategies can be facilitated (O'Keefe 2019, 326-328):

1. Prompts (cues, triggers or reminders) can be used to make the performance of the behavior more salient. Simple prompts, such as reminder calls for medication adherence, have

been shown to effectively stimulate the desired behavior in various contexts (Cook et al. 2017). It is important to note that for prompts to be successful, individuals must already be willing to perform the behavior and have high perceived behavioral ability.

2. Explicit planning can help individuals convert abstract intentions into concrete action plans, known as "implementation intentions" (O'Keefe 2019). Planning the specifics of when, where, and how to perform a behavior has been found to significantly increase the possibility of following through with intentions, as demonstrated in studies of voting process (Nickerson & Rogers 2010), for example. However, the effectiveness of these explicit-planning approaches relies on meeting certain conditions beforehand. Specifically, individuals must already possess the necessary abstract intentions (Elliott & Armitage 2006), and their perceived behavioral control must be high. If the initial conditions are favourable, explicit planning have the potential to be highly successful tool in the process of translating intentions into actions.

3. When individuals possess positive attitudes and intentions but fail to act on them, evoking feelings of guilt or hypocrisy can serve as a motivator. However, this strategy must be deployed carefully to avoid potential backlash, as appealing to guilt may generate anger or resentment as an emotional response and could lead individuals to justify their previous behavior rather than changing it (Fried 1998).

While these strategies offer potential avenues for converting intentions into action, they must be implemented thoughtfully and tailored to the specific context to maximize effectiveness and minimize unintended consequences.

Summarizing the possible scenarios, it will be wrong to assume that person's reluctance to embrace a proposed action or viewpoint stems primarily from negative attitude. In different situations, individuals may refrain from acting even when considering the advocated option as the most preferable. In such cases, skilled persuaders must carefully identify the source of this resistance. It could be related to social influences (such as descriptive or injunctive norms), perceived ability to perform the behavior, or the need for assistance in translating intentions into action. Effective persuasion entails adapting to the specific circumstances.

3.3   Nonverbal communication skills

In the examination of communication, the focus is typically directed towards the exchange of information through verbal means. Although verbal communication holds undeniable significance, it is imperative to acknowledge that nonverbal communication predates the usage of language capabilities by millennia. Nonverbal communication is defined as the process of signifying meaning through behavioral expressions other than linguistic constructs (Andersen 1999). Instead of

imagining nonverbal communication in an opposition to verbal communication, a more accurate perspective considers them as components of one system. However, their coexistence is noted by differences, including distinctive neural processing, with nonverbal communication governed by the right hemisphere of the brain, while verbal communication is governed by the left hemisphere. In cases of neurological trauma, individuals experiencing damage to the right hemisphere manifest an inability to recognize facial expressions yet retain the capacity to process verbal communication. Conversely, damage to the left hemisphere results in a degradation of language-related functions such as speaking, reading, and comprehension (Andersen 1999, 2–8).

Nonverbal communication differs from verbal communication in both what it conveys and how it is structured. When it comes to content, nonverbal cues play a bigger role in expressing emotions compared to words. Unlike verbal communication, which follows grammar rules, there is no set framework governing how nonverbal signals are used. While there are dictionaries and thesauruses for words, there are not equivalent resources for nonverbal cues. Also, human ability to use language to talk about abstract ideas is not unique to verbal communication – animals also communicate nonverbally in similar ways (Hargie 2011, 49).

Nonverbal communication possesses a distinct evolutionary trajectory and serves distinct functions compared to verbal communication. While verbal communication is shaped by cultural factors, nonverbal communication is deeply rooted in human biology. This divergence is evident in the universal recognizability of certain nonverbal cues across different cultures, contrasting with the absence of such universality in verbal communication (Andersen 1999, 17).

The significance of nonverbal communication lies in its ability to convey emotions and intentions more effectively than verbal communication alone. Nonverbal communication includes various types, each contributing unique nuances to interpersonal interactions. Unlike verbal communication, which relies on words and syntax, nonverbal communication operates through visual and auditory cues.

It is essential to recognize that nonverbal cues often work in harmony, either reinforcing, altering, or contradicting the spoken message. These cues encompass a vast array of observable behaviors present in human-human and human-machine interactions. Social psychology categorizes nonverbal behavioral cues into five distinct groups known as codes (Hecht, De Vito & Guerrero 1999): physical appearance, gestures and postures, facial and ocular behavior, vocal behavior, and space and environmental cues.

1. Physical appearance

Physical appearance, particularly attractiveness, serves as a signal with significant effect on individual's perceiving. The "Halo effect," or "What is beautiful is good," underlines the tendency to attribute good personality traits to physically attractive individuals, as evidenced by various studies. For example, research has shown that attractive politicians enjoy higher success rates in elections (Surawski & Osso 2006). Physical appearance, to some extent, is influenced by natural factors such as genetics, body type, and facial features. However, individuals have the agency to enhance their appearance and convey positive signals. By maintaining cleanliness, wearing well-fitted and appropriate clothing, and even using perfumes, individuals can positively influence how they are perceived by others. These efforts not only contribute to a favourable first impression but also communicate a sense of self-respect and attention to detail, which can enhance interpersonal interactions and relationships.

2. Gestures and postures

Gestures serve various purposes in communication, ranging from deliberate signalling of specific meanings to unconscious expressions of emotions and states (Poggi 2007). There can be defined three general types of gestures: adaptors, emblems, and illustrators. Adaptors, including touching gestures and movements, indicate internal states usually associated with arousal or anxiety (like unconscious leg movements). Emblems, on the other hand, are gestures with agreed-upon meanings (raised thumb or the "OK" sign). Illustrators, the most common, complement verbal messages by visually representing object's visual appealing, or motion.

Postures are considered as highly reliable nonverbal cues because they are typically occurred unconsciously (Richmond & McCroskey 1995). Unlike gestures, which can be consciously controlled to some extent, postures often manifest involuntarily, providing honest indicators of an individual's mental or emotional state. Head movements and posture convey acknowledgment, interest, or attentiveness. For instance, a head nod universally signals acknowledgment, while a headshake signifies disagreement. Posture, including standing, sitting, squatting, and lying down, offers various expressions of attitude.

3. Facial and ocular behavior

Faces are highly expressive, and basic facial expressions like happiness, sadness, fear, anger, and disgust are universally recognizable. However, cultural and social norms influence the displays of these expressions (Andersen 1999, 35). Inconsistencies between facial expression and speech content can confuse an audience, potentially leading them to doubt honesty and credibility of the individual.

Eye contact, a crucial nonverbal cue, serves multiple functions, from providing signals to establishing connections. It conveys information and can be used for intimidation or flirtation. Eye contact

indicates attention and eagerness to listen (Martin & Nakayama 2010, 276). Pupil dilation, a biometric measurement, indicates arousal, attraction, stress, or information processing (Guerrero & Floyd 2006, 177).

4. Vocal Behavior

Vocal behavior encompasses various aspects of communication that do not use verbal language. Nonverbal vocal behavior includes prosody, linguistic and non-linguistic vocalizations, silences, and turn-taking patterns (Richmond & McCroskey 1995). Prosody shapes how speech is delivered and influences perceptions. Linguistic vocalizations, such as "um" or "ah", can convey hesitation or support, while non-linguistic vocalizations like laughter or crying express strong emotions or indicate social bonds. Silences and pauses could be used to stress the statement or express uncertainty. Turn-taking, the process by which individuals rotate speaking turns in conversations, plays a significant role in shaping roles, preferences, dominance, and status dynamics within social interactions (Vinciarelli & Mohammadi 2011).

5. Space cues and haptics

Social and physical space are closely linked, with the distance between individuals often reflecting the nature of their relationship. For example, intimate relationships are characterized by proximity, while casual or formal relationships involve greater distance. Seating arrangements around a table also reflect relationship dynamics, with collaborators often sitting closely, and individuals engaged in discussion typically facing each other (Lott & Sommer 1967).

Touch cues, or haptics, also plays a significant role in communication process. Different types of touch include functional-professional, social-polite, friendship-warmth, love-intimacy, and sexual-arousal touch. Touch is essential for human social development, and its appropriateness varies based on context, relationship, and cultural norms. While touches like patting on a back or squeezing a hand usually are viewed in a positive light and lead to a social distance reduction, rash familiarity could have negative results, such as legal consequences, if individuals engaged in inappropriate physical contact (Andersen 1999).

In conclusion, nonverbal communication is a rich and nuanced aspect of human interaction, embracing wide range of cues that complement and enhance spoken language. Understanding these cues is crucial for effective communication in different contexts.

Moreover, nonverbal communication often occurs involuntarily, making it challenging to control or manipulate. Unlike verbal messages, which are used consciously, nonverbal cues tend to leak out, revealing underlying thoughts and emotions. Public figures usually master the art of controlling their facial expressions and other nonverbal signals, safeguarding against unintended leaks of

personal sentiments (Andersen 1999, 21). While individuals can choose to rely on verbal communication, the nature of nonverbal communication renders it perpetually active, generating meaning for others.

As technology progresses and develops, there is growing interest in machine's capacity to understand and decode not only spoken and written language, but also nonverbal cues. Affective computing (Picard 2000) is assuming that nonverbal behavioral cues, typically precepted unconsciously through visual and audio channels, can be detected by technological means such as cameras, microphones, and other sensors to recognise a subconscious process where observed behavior is connected to perceived emotions and social situations. This means that automated methods, mainly based on machine learning, have the potential to decode emotional and social cues automatically. Research in this area is still ongoing, but it can be expected that improvements in machine emotion recognition will lead to better adaptation for individual needs of users and personalization of technical services.

Summarising the chapter, interaction and communication skills are essential elements of strategic planning and interpersonal dynamics navigation. These skills encompass a range of competencies, each contributing uniquely to the process of communication. Explanation skill is fundamental in conveying information and articulate thoughts and ideas, forging links between problems and solutions, while persuasion ability is aimed at influencing other individuals and changing their viewpoint or behavior. Several universal strategies have been developed for overcoming obstacles appearing during persuasion process, but one of the core abilities is the adaptation messages according to the specific demands of the situation and the uniqueness of the target audience.

Nonverbal communication, operating through visual and auditory cues, contributes unique nuances to interpersonal interactions, conveying emotions and intentions more effectively than verbal communication alone. Moreover, certain nonverbal cues possess universal recognisability across different cultures.

The further research will examine some of the statements and recommended strategies presented in the theoretical part regarding communication skills and their applications.

4 Research

4.1 Research Target, Objectives, Problems, and Development Tasks

The main target of the conducted research is to investigate the subjective experiences of individuals regarding interpersonal communication skills within their professional environment and assess the degree of situational variability of common explanation and persuasion tactics.

The objectives of the research aim to:

- examine individual perspectives on the explanation process,
- assess the potential for behavioural changes as the result of explanation,
- explore various aspect of persuasion skills, such as influence on attitude and potential applications of injunctive norms,
- evaluate motivational factors on the translation of intention into action,
- assess the availability of sending messages via different communication channels at the current level of technology development.

Considering those objectives, potential challenges were determined by different types of diversity in professional environments, inability to assess level of self-awareness of respondents, and various levels of engagement in remote interpersonal communication of interviewed participants.

To address these objectives and challenges, following steps were performed:

- Selecting the methodology and method to obtain the most comprehensive picture.
- Formulating question list aligned with the hypotheses of the theoretical framework.
- Conducting interviews with participants and gathering data.
- Processing and analysing the data.
- Presenting the outcomes of the analysis.

To ensure a comprehensive approach, guidelines and literature regarding the conduction of different types of research were used to select an appropriate methodology and form the foundation of the research design.

4.2 Research methodology

Kothari (2004) categorizes research into descriptive and analytical based on the type of information collection, and into applied and fundamental based on the research focus. Descriptive research captures current conditions through surveys and fact-finding, aiming to describe existing situations without intervening in variables. Analytical research, on the other hand, critically evaluate existing information and doesn't require gathering new data. Applied research addresses immediate

problems, seeking practical solutions, while fundamental research focuses on generating generalizations and theories. Applied research aims for specific problem-solving, while fundamental research pursues knowledge to deepen understanding of the subject.

For this work, descriptive applied research was chosen for a comprehensive understanding of the current state of interpersonal communication skills of different individuals in professional environments, allowing nuanced exploration of communication skills application challenges. By focusing on practical solutions, this approach aims to provide insights that can improve strategies for enhancing interpersonal communication skills.

Although quantitative methodologies can be useful for this type of research, qualitative methods offer several benefits in exploratory research. Unlike quantitative methods, which usually rely on fixed responses, qualitative approaches allow participants to respond in their own words. This flexibility encourages respondents to answer in detail and with more personal insight. Moreover, researcher can delve deeper into participant's answers by asking follow-up questions and adapting to their individual communication styles (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey 2005).

Qualitative research focused on human behavior and motivations allows more solid and thorough study of the subject. Aimed to understand complex cognitive and emotional processes, qualitative research appears to be more suitable to achieve the main goal of the study.

Another reason for qualitative research is the ethical viewpoint. Interviewers should acknowledge the potential stress that sensitive interview interactions may impose on participants and ensure that participants have opportunity to clarify their statements (Creswell 2009). Qualitative research allows participants to express themselves more actively, and interviewers reformulate questions in case of misunderstanding, and adapt the communication style to the respondents for their comfort.

4.3   Research design and implementation:

One of the most well-known and comprehensive forms of qualitative research is interview. The in-depth interview technique aims to capture a comprehensive understanding of the participant's viewpoint on the research topic. During the interview, researcher maintain a neutral position, carefully listening to the participant's responses, and asking follow-up questions for a deeper exploration of the topic (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey 2005).

Interviews are valuable tools for understanding individual perspectives, providing an opportunity for individuals to freely express their feelings, opinions, and experiences. For the current research, a list of following open-ended questions was prepared to gather insight regarding the topic:

1. How significant is the role of interpersonal communication in your work life? Can you name types of interpersonal interactions you experience more often?

2. How diverse is your working community?

3. Please evaluate the importance of interpersonal communication channels from your viewpoint:
   - Oral communication
   - Written communication
   - Nonverbal communication.

4. Do you see the explanation more as a cognitive process, or an emotional one, wherein persuasion and influence can change your attitude?

5. Could explanation result for you in a change of behavior and motivate for an action?

6. How can your attitude towards some idea or proposition be influenced?

7. Under which conditions injunctive norms can be most persuasive for you?

8. Please rank in order of importance how you assess following acts to motivate you for action:
   - Receiving reliable information
   - Rehearsal or practise of action
   - Examples of others successfully performing
   - Encouragements

9. Please indicate invoking which emotion most likely motivate you to action.

10. Does technology development change your interpersonal communication process somehow? Do you find both types of communication signal systems (verbal and nonverbal) equally accessible for decoding via remote communication?

The interview involved five participants with diverse professional backgrounds, in age from 25 to 40 years old, residing in three different countries. One of the interviews was conducted face-to-face, four were conducted via remote communication, including video connection. Responses were transcribed for further anasysis with participant's agreement.

4.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The interviews were conducted over a two-week period. All responses were anonymized during data collection, with only age, gender (if provided), and country of origin specified. Participants were informed that gathered data would be used for research work and gave their consent.

Following the data collection process, began the analysis phase. This involved establishing categories and applying the gathered materials to them. Due to the manageable amount of data, a table was manually compiled. To facilitate further analysis, the data were condensed into 10 manageable groups, according to topics. Subsequently, the data were systematically classified into tree usable categories for conclusions:

- Data available for structuring or organization.
- Data with possibility of generalized conclusions.
- Individual variations data.

4.5   Research Results

Data that allow establishing the common views of respondents regarding the topics and drawing conclusions based on the intersecting opinions of respondents, were grouped in three categories:

- Significance of Interpersonal Communication
- Diversity in Working Community
- Impact of Technology on Communication

Data available for structuring and organization, presenting an opportunity to collect statistical insights regarding the respondents as focus-group, were formulated in three information blocks:

- Communication Channels Evaluation
- Perception of Explanation
- Motivation and Engagement Factors

Data containing exclusively personal insight, perception, experience, and characteristics of cognitive-emotional perception, which can not be grouped according to common criteria:

- Impact of Explanation on Behavior
- Factors Influencing Attitude
- Conditions for Injunctive Persuasive Norms
- Emotional Motivations.

In summary, the research was aimed to explore individual's experiences with interpersonal communication skills and the variability of persuasion tactics. Challenges such as diversity in professional environments and engagement in remote communication were acknowledged. To address those tasks, were conducted five interviews, data transcribed and analysed. Findings of the research are presented in Discussion chapter.

5 Discussion

5.1 Results and conclusions

Analysis of respondent's answers allows drawing the following conclusions regarding defined domains:

Significance of Interpersonal Communication

The respondents demonstrate a spectrum of views regarding the significance of interpersonal communication in their work life. While some emphasized its vital role in facilitating effective collaboration and cworking relationships, others perceived it as less significant to their professional activities.

Types of interpersonal interactions mentioned by respondents included communication with colleagues, management, clients, and friends. This indicates a wide range of communication scenarios experienced in various work contexts.

Diversity in Working Community

The diversity of the working community was explored across responses, with some workplaces noted for their significant diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, age, and gender. This diversity fosters a rich variety of perspectives and experiences within the workplace.

Conversely, some workplaces were described as less diverse, with uniformity observed in certain demographic aspects as social groups defined by age and gender. Developing diversity in various workplaces requires a multifaceted approach that goes beyond simply hiring individuals from different backgrounds. It entails fostering an inclusive culture where diverse perspectives are valued and respected, and the present research shows that many working communities remain quite limited in diversity.

Communication Channels Evaluation

Respondents provided insights into the evaluation of different communication channels, expressing their preferences.

Oral communication was valued for its immediacy and ability to convey emotions and nuances effectively. Written communication was praised for its clarity, and suitability for formal correspondence. Regardless, oral communication was unanimously recognized as the most effective and most frequently used channel of interpersonal interactions.

Nonverbal communication, while acknowledged as contributing to communication process, was generally deemed less significant compared to oral and written forms, particularly in professional settings. Thus, Andersen's perspective to consider verbal and nonverbal communication as parts of one system, was not acknowledged by the respondents. The majority contrapose verbal and nonverbal communication and neglect nonverbal signals, considering them insignificant or having difficulties decoding them.

Impact of Technology on Communication

Participants provided insights into how technology development has impacted their interpersonal communication processes. They consider a priority the convenience and accessibility of modern communication tools, emphasizing the ease of staying connected with others, particularly over long distances. Many acknowledged the benefits of technology, such as facilitating remote work and enabling virtual meetings. However, some participants also expressed concerns about the potential drawbacks of technology-mediated communication, noting challenges such as the blurring of work-life boundaries and the loss of nonverbal cues in remote interactions.

Respondents considered that while technology enhances accessibility, it may also introduce complexities and nuances, particularly in decoding nonverbal cues.

Perception of Explanation

Brown & Edmunds (2019) discourse an examination of explanation not only as a cognitive process, but also as an emotional one.

According to conducted interviews, there is a tendency among respondents to view explanations as cognitive processes rather than emotional ones. They emphasized the importance of logical reasoning, factual evidence, and objective analysis in forming attitudes and making decisions based on explanations. Thus, respondents tend to rely on logic, and prefer to avoid emotional judgments from influencing their behavioral strategy. Nevertheless, they suggested that explanations designed to their specific interests, values, or goals were more likely to elicit a positive response.

Motivation and Engagement

O'Keefe (2019) propose several methods through which persuaders can attempt to overcome perceived ability.

The participants provided valuable insights into the hierarchy of motivational factors that influence their behavior. The responses revealed diverse perspectives on what drives them to act, with majority emphasizing the importance of receiving reliable information as a key motivator. For these

participants, access to accurate and credible information was crucial in guiding their decisions and actions. Other respondents highlighted the significance of rehearsal or practice of action, suggesting that experience and preparation play a vital role in motivating them to engage in specific behaviors.

Examples of others successfully performing an action were considered weakly motivating by most participants.

Finally, encouragements were identified as less important motivational factor.

However, respondents confirmed that depending on the situation, the degree of motivation power of different methods can vary.

Impact of Explanation on Behavior

Brown & Edmunds (2019) question the possibility of explanatory skill considered not only as a cognitive process, but as a process of motivating to an action.

Several participants expressed a belief that explanations could lead to changes in behavior under certain conditions. They emphasized the importance of understanding the reason behind a particular action or decision, suggesting that a clear explanation could motivate them to change their behavior accordingly. For these individuals, the most important aspect is the relevance of the explanation, as well as its ability to convey the benefits of the proposed action.

Other participants highlighted the need for critical evaluation and verification of explanations before behavioral change. These participants underlined the importance of receiving information from multiple sources and conducting independent research to validate the claims presented in the explanation. They expressed a preference for evidence-based explanations with credible sources, which inspired confidence and trust in the information provided.

Additionally, some participants emphasized the role of personal relevance and resonance in determining the effectiveness of an explanation. By aligning the explanation with their individual needs and motivations, participants felt more inclined to consider committing an action.

Factors Influencing Attitude

O'Keefe (2019) suggests that the effectiveness of persuasive messages influencing attitude relies on their ability to resonate with the audience's values, preferences, and objections.

Majority of participants emphasized the importance of logical reasoning and evidence-based arguments in shaping their attitudes. They indicated that a well-reasoned explanation supported by

evidence and logical analysis could positively influence their attitude toward an idea or proposition. These individuals valued coherence, consistency, and rationality in the presentation of information, suggesting that logical persuasion played a significant role in shaping their beliefs and opinions.

Some participants expressed the opinion that the impact of personal experiences can affect the attitude formation. They noted that firsthand experiences, stories, or examples could resonate emotionally in them, leading to a shift in attitude or perspective. These participants valued emotionally compelling narratives that allowed them to connect with the idea on a personal level.

Furthermore, responses expressed a preference for ideas that aligned with their worldview or moral principles, suggesting that congruence between the new information and their existing beliefs facilitated attitude change. Conversely, ideas that contradicted their core values or beliefs were met with scepticism and resistance.

In summary, while correspondence of new ideas and proposals with existing views hold its influence, respondents identified various factors that could affect their attitudes towards ideas or propositions. These included the level of detail in explanations, logical reasoning, positive examples, and the practical implementation of ideas.

Conditions for Injunctive Persuasive Norms

Chung & Rimal (2016) in their review of social norms determined the effectiveness of injunctive norms, but underlined the need of research for better understanding of the conditions under which such messages are most impactful.

Participants emphasized the importance of perceived legitimacy and relevance in determining the persuasiveness of injunctive norms. They indicated that norms established by credible authority figures or institutions were more likely to be followed, especially if the consequences of non-compliance were clearly determined. Participants expressed a willingness to follow norms that were perceived as fair, reasonable, and beneficial for the well-being of themselves or community.

Responses highlighted the role of consequences and risks for disobeying injunctive norms. Participants noted that norms associated with severe penalties or negative outcomes for non-compliance were more likely to be followed, especially if the potential costs outweighed the benefits of disobedience. The clarity and immediacy of the consequences, as well as the likelihood of detection and enforcement, were noted as important factors influencing the norms compliance.

Some participants noted that the fear of social disapproval, ostracism, or punishment could motivate them to comply with norms, especially in public or group settings where their behavior was observable by others. The desire to maintain social harmony, avoid conflict, or gain approval was defined as a powerful motivator for compliance to injunctive norms.

Overall, the responses accented the complex interplay of social, psychological, and ethical factors that influence individual's response to injunctive norms. Respondents emphasized the importance of avoiding unnecessary complications and ensuring the relevance of norms to their personal or professional context.

Emotional Motivations

When individuals possess positive attitudes and intentions but fail to act on them, Fried (1998) suggests that evoking feelings of guilt or hypocrisy can serve as a motivator.

The research confirms that feelings of anger and guilt were identified by respondents as most powerful emotional motivations. They expressed the opinion that feelings of guilt could arise from a sense of obligation or responsibility to act in a certain way, especially when failing could result in harm to them or others. Guilt was often associated with moral dilemmas or situations where individuals felt personally accountable for their actions. Anger was indicated a possible catalyst for action, especially in response to perceived injustices, violations of rights, or acts of aggression.

However, respondents also indicate other emotions that they considered possible motivators:

Fear is defined as a significant motivator mentioned by participants. Fear was described as a primal instinct, prompting individuals to take measures to address perceived risks or dangers. Respondents noted that fear of negative consequences, such as loss, harm, or failure, could compel them to take action to avoid potential threats.

Some participants identified sympathy as an emotion that motivated them to act. They explained that feelings of empathy or compassion towards others could inspire altruistic behavior, kindness, or support.

Participants mentioned a sense of obligation or duty as possible motivator. This sense of obligation was often linked to personal values, moral principles, or professional ethics, guiding individual's behavior and decision-making. Respondents expressed a commitment to fulfilling responsibilities, and obligations according to societal expectations.

During the interview process respondents expressed a collective interest in further developing their interpersonal communication skills and exploring new opportunities for growth, mentioning the

importance of ongoing learning. The research they participated gave nuances insights on the diversity of working communities, the importance of communication channels, the cognitive and emotional aspects of persuasion, motivational factors, exploring of potential applications of injunctive norms, and the impact of technology on communication process. This study contributes to the research in the field of practical applications of communication skills, especially persuasion and explanation, and holds a potential of being used in the process of development and improvement communication tactics.

5.2   Evaluation of research process

Qualitative methodology facilitated comprehensive understanding of the researched subject. The chosen methodology allowed a deep exploration of participant's experiences, providing a rich dataset for analysis.

According to ethical standards, careful attention was paid to creating a comfortable environment for participants, establishing open and honest dialogue during interviews. Interview format allowed to clarify questions and ensure participants understood the context, enhancing the quality of responses.

Additionally, observing and interpreting nonverbal cues during interviews, particularly in process of discussing nonverbal communication, provided more complete insight into participant's experiences and perspectives.

In general, the results of the research are satisfactory, answer posed questions and complement the theoretical framework from a practical point of view.

However, several problematic issues regarding the conducting of the research can be identified.

Some questions were perceived as overly specific, requiring additional explanation of terms and concepts, which may have influenced the responses due to a superficial understanding of the matter.

Certain aspects of the collected data presented challenges during analysis, such as the need for further interpretation of responses and categorization of unstructured amount of information.

Although personal acquaintance with the interviewees helped to establish the preferred communication format for the respondents and approach them individually, this also could influence the honesty and openness of the received answers.

5.3   Future development

To overcome the encountered issues, further improvements can be made in future research related activity:

- Simplify question formulation: Future research could benefit from simplifying questions to ensure clarity and accessibility for participants, potentially receiving more diverse and comprehensive responses.
- Provide additional context: Offering more context or explanations for terms and concepts within the interview questions to enhance understanding and encourage deeper engagement with the topics discussed.
- Enhance data analysis strategies: Adopting more data analysis strategies, such as employing additional coding techniques or utilizing software for analysis.

In addition, some other improvements may enhance research process and results:

Increasing the number of participants across diverse demographic backgrounds and professional settings could provide a more comprehensive understanding of interpersonal communication dynamics and analyse various groups of respondents. Comparative studies across different cultural contexts would shed light on how cultural norms and values influence communication styles and preferences.

Combining qualitative approaches with quantitative methods could offer a more holistic understanding of communication process, allowing both in-depth exploration and statistical analysis.

Given the evolution of communication technologies, future research could investigate the impact of emerging platforms such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence on interpersonal communication processes.

Using advanced data analysis techniques, such as machine learning algorithms or network analysis, could uncover complex patterns and relationships within communication data.

Conducting research with practical applications, such as developing communication training programs or interventions for specific industries or contexts, could address real-world challenges and contribute to the improvement of communication practices more precisely.

Planning and conducting current study proved both challenging and enlightening. Examining a vast array of literature provided a solid theoretical foundation but also presented its own set of difficulties in navigating complex concepts and theories. However, studying literature and searching for reliable sources offered valuable learning experience. During the research process, applying the

theoretical knowledge acquired from extensive literature proved highly valuable. Understanding the nuances of interpersonal communication processes enabled insightful questioning and a deeper exploration of participant's experiences. Moreover, observing, and interpreting participants' nonverbal cues during the interviews added an extra layer of understanding, emphasizing the importance of context in communication dynamics.

Overall, this research served as a significant learning experience, allowing the practical applications of theoretical knowledge. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of theory and practice, highlighting how theoretical frameworks can enhance understanding of real-world phenomena.

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