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Final Thesis

NEGOTIATION & PERSUASION:

**An experimental study to evaluate the effectiveness of applied
methodologies on personal development**

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Preface

Social interactions are constant and ongoing exchanges between individuals, which require both personal and social skills. These skills have been named in many different ways, as soft skills, transversal skills, general skills, key skills, etc. and have in recent years become a hot topic of research. In fact, it has been demonstrated that possessing them results in creating more value both in one's workplace, while enhancing one's hard skills, and also in one's personal life. Two interrelated skills used in our daily lives: Negotiation and Persuasion, are the object of analysis of this study.

This thesis aims at defining them together with existent links with some of the other main soft skills, in particular Empathy, and at examining the most renowned training methodologies. It focuses particularly on the analysis of the effectiveness of the development methodologies applied by the Ca' Foscari Competency Centre, analysing data acquired from the students participating at the "Competenze in Pillole" of Negotiation and Persuasion.

Many Academic articles have been published regarding the concepts and the strategies of these two skills, but there are hardly any studies relative to practical self-development approaches and their outcomes. Therefore, this thesis intends to analyse this aspect, which is important and useful for students who approach the labour market and seek employment. It's a research that paves the path for further related studies deferred by age, university, nationality, work experience, and other variables.

Research Object: Negotiation and Persuasion skills development.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to describe the concepts of Negotiation and Persuasion, and analyse and assess the impact of these two soft skills' training methodologies applied during the "Competenze in Pillole" by the Ca' Foscari University Competency Centre.

Methodology: The methodology underlying this research has both a quantitative and qualitative orientation. Ad hoc pre- and post-training validated questionnaires have been used as tools to assess students' skills development, as well as short post-simulation performance and perception surveys and worksheets and self-reflective journals. Moreover, the results of the Experimental Research Samples have been compared to the ones of the Control Research Sample.

Findings: The participants at the Seminars of Negotiation and Persuasion have been found to have significantly improved their skills after the training sessions.

Research limitations: The main limitations of this study are having small research samples, which didn't consent the collection of data from different samples that used different self-development methodologies, and the inability to observe all simulation performances and the research samples' behaviours directly.

Practical implications: With this research practical self-development tools for the soft skills of Negotiation and Persuasion are presented, as well as measuring methodologies, in order for anyone to have practical tools at their disposal, and pave the path to further related studies, varying in variables.

Social implications: Self-reflective, observational and experiential learning are effective training approaches, which allow the acquisition of these two everyday personal and social skills, and help become more confident and successful in any interpersonal context.

Originality: This study presents clear practical self-development tools and evaluates the impact of the applied didactic, analogical, observational and experiential training methodologies of Negotiation and Persuasion skills development, analysing these tools together and separately.

Keywords Soft Skills, Negotiation, Persuasion, Training Approaches, Experiential Learning, Evaluation Methodologies.

Chapter I – Negotiation & Persuasion Skills

1.1 Introduction

We're currently living in a volatile and uncertain environment which changes continuously, consequently having an impact on social interactions as well and requiring new skills. So, soft skills have become a crucial and increasingly sort after quality for careers in the corporate world, irrespective of the sector, as organizations search for candidates that can add value and make a difference. This requirement has made job acquisition and job sustainability tougher, making candidates refine their soft skills in order to have an edge over their competitors. Furthermore, these two skills are integral to managerial effectiveness, although little research has been conducted on their development, and have been considered to be essential to students' employability. (Kiffin-Petersen, 2006). However, as it will be further described in the chapter, soft skills are not substitutes for hard skills, but instead they enhance the latter, allowing it to have a more effective performance. Moreover, these skills exist in every individual to a particular level, but if not practiced or discovered in one's self, they become unutilized; so, soft skills training benefits anyone and helps to become more aware of one's self and abilities, develop them and consequently one's self too, and become more successful. In particular, this thesis focuses on Negotiation and Persuasion, two very important soft skills we use in our everyday lives, often without even realizing. This chapter will focus on analysing the concept of what soft skills are and why they've become increasingly important for job selection and job sustainability, as well as for one's personal life, and in specific on the concepts of the two skills object of analysis. Their main definitions and strategies are described in this chapter, as well as how they are interconnected with many other soft skills, whereas, the most renowned training and measuring methods will be described in the next chapter.

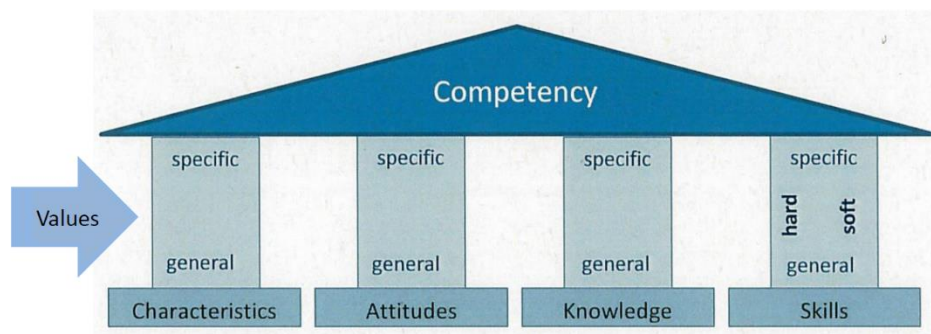
1.2 Soft Skills: A hot topic of research

In recent years, Soft Skills have grown in importance, becoming a hot topic of discussion for recruiting procedures and the subject of many courses. The Economist Gary Becker in 1964 published a book on Human Capital, describing it as an intangible means of a production asset, and today it is described as the set of skills that a worker has and which enhance productivity and result in an economic value: cognitive skills, abilities, knowledge, personality, attitude, motivation, decision-making, interests and creativity. (Holmberg-Wright and Hribar, 2016). In the past, cognitive and hard skills were considered as the most important predictors of success for a job and a company, but as Holmberg-Wright and Hribar write, in the 1990's behavioural science researches started suggesting how an important role in the workplace was played by non-cognitive factors, determining soft skills as more important for success and also as variables that enhance cognitive and hard skills. Many are the definitions of "Competencies" but to summarize a few, Parry (1996) defines them as "a cluster or related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that reflects a major portion of one's job (a role or responsibility), that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured with well-accepted standards, and that can be improved with training and development"; whereas Klemp (2001) defines them as "capabilities that distinguish outstanding from average performers in a variety of occupations, and that enable people to interact effectively". Moreover, Carlotto (2015) defines them as a "condition" which is acquired at the end of a personal development training programme in which knowledge and capabilities are acquired. Knowledge, as Carlotto defines it, refers to the "to know" dimension and is the result of learning through acquired theoretical information; and is different from a competency because its feature is to be easily verifiable. Whereas capabilities refer to the "to know how to do" dimension and are an individual's potential towards the ability to do something using the previously acquired knowledge and improving through repetition. So what are "Competencies" and what do they refer to? According to Carlotto, they refer to a person's "knowledge of how to be" and allow the application of knowledge and capabilities in real contexts where just the letters wouldn't be enough, and, in summary, Boyatzis (2009), referring also to previous studies, describes a competency as a set of related but different sets of behaviours, organized around an underlying construct which is the "Intent" that is manifested by behaviours. For this reason "behavioural event

interviews” (BEI), which are semi-structured interviews in which the respondent is asked to recall recent, specific events in which he or she felt effective, have been created. In fact, according to Pellerey (2018), a Competency is the capability to reach a goal by using internal cognitive and affective resources and external resources effectively. Moreover, Soft Skills are stated not only to facilitate understanding in the workplace but also to be transferable across organization, industries and nations, which make them relevant and of high demand, especially in a constantly changing VUCA environment, characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. (Lepeley, 2021). Furthermore, Soft Skills have been defined as one of the four pillars of a Competency (Figure 1.1 – The four Pillars of a Competency), which have been described to be “a set of inborn and acquired personal characteristics, attitudes, knowledge and skills leading to high-quality performance”, (Dall’Amico and Verona, 2015) making a competency be composed by:

- Personal Characteristics: qualities of an individual such as talent, mental, physical features, etc. which vary from individual to individual and which can be strengthened by further acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- Attitudes: stable, long-lasting and learnt predisposition to respond to internal or external factors, which are based on a “cognitive aspect” made of a person’s beliefs, an “affective aspect” represented by feelings, and a “conative aspect” represented instead by intentions.
- Knowledge: acquired information through learning or experience, which is influenced by a context’s and/or/ group’s culture, and can be divided into “declarative knowledge” (know-that) and “procedural knowledge” (know-how).
- Skills: ability to act both on cognitive and practical levels. They can be considered as the outcome of learning, knowledge, attitudes and experiences, related to an individual’s personal characteristics, and as potential behaviours, influenced by internal and external motivation.

Figure 1.1



Dall’Amico and Verona, 2015. The four Pillars of a Competency.

So it's important to take into consideration when studying competencies and skills, the impact of an individual's values and beliefs, influencing a person's attitude and behaviour. But it's also fundamental to address the difference between skills which increase the value of a person only within a specific task or sector/company, considered as "specific", and skills that are "general" and increase the value of a person across the labour market and private life. In particular, "hard skills" have been considered to be strictly job-specific and a core requirement for a job, closely connected with knowledge, easily observed, measured and trained, whereas "soft skills" have been analysed to be non-job specific and closely connected with personal attitudes, making them more difficult to be quantified and developed. Moreover, it has been described how soft skills can also become hard skills, depending on the specific job or context. (Dall'Amico and Verona, 2015). Furthermore, it also discusses how these skills aren't "soft" but are instead "strongholds" that complement and enhance the value and also the impact of hard skills, and have moreover become a common language, important to be successful in a tough environment and also have a competitive edge in job selections. (Schulz, 2008). In fact, McClelland (1973) defines competencies as personal features that combined with others result in a good job performance, and as Goleman (1998) states, today we're also judged for how we behave towards ourselves and towards others in order to determine who has a higher probability to excel and succeed. Furthermore, Boyatzis (2007) defines competencies as underlying characteristics of an individual that are causally related to a superior job performance, with a nature towards improvement, relationship and cognition, considering them as transversal, not being limited to a specific job. Finally, Soft Skills have been in years also named as Generic Skills, Essential Skills, Skills for Life or Basic Skills, People Skills, Key Skills/Competences, Employability Skills, Core Skills and Transversal Skills, based on their many functions. (Dall'Amico and Verona, 2015). In fact, if a competence refers to the ability to meet highly complexed demands, knowledge refers to the information acquired through study, investigation, observation, or experience, the term skill refers to the "ability to use one's knowledge with relative ease to perform relatively simple tasks". So, there's a slight difference between these terms, as there are in the many interchangeable terms used to define them. For example, "key competencies" are considered to be generic skills which are important and applicable to various areas of human life (educational and occupational, personal and social), soft skills as intra- and inter-personal skills are instead considered as fundamental for personal development, social participation and workplace success. Whereas basic skills are

instrumentally essential in a given culture for every person and job (e.g. the ability to do basic calculations or read, write and speak in one's mother tongue), and generic skills are easily transferable and applicable and useful in various contexts (e.g. the ability to use basic technological devices). In summary, soft skills can be considered as a subset of generic skills and, in order to emphasize the fact that they can be learned and developed by suitable training efforts, and moreover can be combined towards the achievement of complex outcomes. (Kechagias, 2011).

So, for job selection, technical skills are not sufficient and companies focus on personal traits, on how empathic, flexible or persuasive a person is. McClelland (1973), in fact, analysed how traditional intelligence tests and parameters of evaluation weren't able to foresee the quality in a person's performance at work nor the success in his life, and observed the best individuals, also called stars, to determine which competencies they displayed, considering them as personal traits or set of habits that lead to a superior job performance, adding a clear economic value on the efforts shown in the job. Expertise has become a threshold requirement, whereas what's important to consider when selecting candidates relates to handling people, and in order to recruit those who have a higher potential of doing better or helping employees grow, competency models have been developed. Competencies have also been defined to be a "behavioural approach to emotional, social, and cognitive intelligence". (Boyatzis, 2007), and in the last decades, another related term that has been studied is "Intelligence" which has been defined by Gardner (1983) as "the ability to solve problems or to create products that are valued within one or more cultural settings", and differentiated by McClelland and Boyatzis into three types of Intelligence Competencies:

- Emotional Intelligence competency: ability to recognize, understand and use emotional information about oneself that leads to or causes effective or superior performance;
- Social Intelligence competency: ability to recognize, understand and use emotional information about others that leads to or causes effective or superior performance;
- Cognitive Intelligence competency: ability to think or analyse information and situations that leads to or causes effective or superior performance.

Goleman (1998) defined “Emotional Competence” as a “learned capability based on Emotional Intelligence which results in outstanding performance at work”, important for individuals, groups and organizations. Furthermore, he differentiates Emotional and Cognitive competencies based on the feeling factor, but describes how Emotional Intelligence skills are synergistic with cognitive ones. Emotional competencies, in fact, combine thought and feeling and are learnt competencies based on Emotional Intelligence, and result in an excellent performance by empathy and social skills. If Emotional Intelligence represents the potential of learning practical skills based on self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and ability in interpersonal relationships, Emotional Competencies shows how much potential has been translated into actual capabilities. According to Goleman (1998), Emotional Competencies can be classified into different groups, each of which is based on a specific capacity that is fundamental in order to acquire the needed competencies to succeed. In fact, if, for example, an individual lacks social abilities, he or she won’t be able to influence or inspire others, and if there’s a lack of self-awareness, an individual won’t be able to recognize his or her weaknesses and strengths which would improve self-confidence. As Goleman describes, the capacities of Emotional Intelligence are:

- Independent: each gives its contribution to the performance;
- Interdependent: each absorbs from and has an effect on others with numerous strong interactions;
- Hierarchical: they build on each other, for example, passing from self-awareness to self-regulation and empathy and from these to motivation, resulting in social competencies;
- Necessary, but not sufficient: having emotional intelligence abilities doesn’t guarantee having the related competence because there are many other factors to consider;
- Generic: this generic list is applicable to different jobs.

1.2.1 The Emotional Competence Structure

The Emotional Competence Structure developed by Goleman, is divided into Personal competencies, which determine how we manage ourselves, and Social competencies, which determine how we manage our relationships with others.

1.2.1.1 Personal Competencies

Personal Competencies, also defined as Emotional Intelligence Competencies by Boyatzis, are:

- **Self-Awareness:** knowing one's self, which can be divided in:
 - Emotional Awareness: recognizing one's emotions and their effects;
 - Accurate Self-Assessment: knowing one's strengths and limits;
 - Self-Confidence: a strong sense of one's self worth and capabilities.

- **Self-Regulation:** managing one's self, which can be divided in:
 - Self-Control: keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check;
 - Trustworthiness: maintaining standards of honesty and integrity;
 - Conscientiousness: taking responsibility for personal performance;
 - Adaptability: flexibility in handling change;
 - Innovation: being comfortable with novel ideas, approaches, and new information.

- **Motivation:** emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals, which can be divided in:
 - Achievement drive, or orientation: striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence;
 - Commitment: aligning with the goals of the group or organization;
 - Initiative: readiness to act on optimism;
 - Optimism: persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks.

1.2.1.2 Social Competencies

Social Competencies, also defined as Social Intelligence Competencies by Boyatzis, are:

- **Empathy:** awareness of others' feelings, needs and concerns, which can be divided in:
 - Understanding others: sensing others' feelings and perspectives, and taking an active interest in their concerns;
 - Developing others: sensing others' development needs and bolstering their abilities;
 - Service orientation: anticipating, recognizing and meeting customers' needs;
 - Leveraging diversity: cultivating opportunities through different kinds of people;
 - Political awareness, or organizational awareness: reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships.

- **Social Skills**, or Relationship Management: adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others, which can be divided in:
 - Influence: wielding effective tactics for persuasion;
 - Communication: listening openly and sending convincing messages;
 - Conflict Management: negotiating and resolving disagreements;
 - Leadership: inspiring and guiding individuals and groups;
 - Change Catalyst; initiating or managing change;
 - Building Bonds: nurturing instrumental relationships;
 - Collaboration and Cooperation: working with others towards shared goals;
 - Team Capabilities: creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals.
 - Coaching and Mentoring: sensing others' development needs and bolstering their abilities, as Boyatzis describes.

1.2.2 The Brain's Three Operating Systems

When analysing competencies and the emotional factors, it's fundamental to also understand the three Operating Systems of the brain: the Emotional Operating System,

the Social Operating System and the Rational Operating System. Leathes (2017) describes how Oxygen and Glucose are resources that are limited in the brain, receiving a maximum of 20% of the body's total amount, which has to then efficiently use and allocate them, and has an impact on our behaviours. Leathes makes the comparison of computers and their need for electricity, then at the same time for a hardware, which would be the brain, and softwares, which have been classified as three operating systems that run in parallel, although the third one has been described to be often limited by the first and second ones. The three operating systems are: the emotional operating system ("O/S 1"), the social operating system ("O/S 2") and the rational operating system ("O/S 3"). These above mentioned operating systems have been described to behave differently based on the degree of stress of a negotiation or when the stakes are high, resulting in a restriction or expansion of the range of visualised solutions.

1.2.2.1 The Emotional Operating System ("O/S 1")

A key purpose of emotions has been analysed to be allowing individuals to do a very rapid relevance detection, as a "Triage" would do in a hospital. Leathes in fact states that before being able to think consciously, it's this operating system that decides where to allocate oxygen and glucose in the brain, and prepares for the various situations, which could be of either fear or reward. Furthermore, it's not something we're aware of, which explains some of our reactions to unconscious stimuli, but it can be consciously managed and self-regulated if aware of one's emotions. An example would be a negotiation in which a party is taken by surprise by the other who goes on the offensive; the Emotional Operating System would create an instantaneous emotional reaction, making the party respond in certain ways and it's not possible to not have an emotional response to certain stimuli, and the main responses have been the "Away mode", which is when individuals avoid risks and dangers, and the "Towards mode", which is when individuals are attracted towards rewards and satisfaction. This process takes place in the Amygdalea, which is the limbic system and is made of two small almond-shaped areas in the center of our brain with almost instantaneous connections to the rest of the brain.

1.2.2.2 The Social Operating System (“O/S 2”)

The Social Operating System, like the Emotional one, is another rapid and preconscious triage that also takes place in the Amygdala, but if in the previous operating system there were two modes which were the “Away mode” and “Towards mode”, in “O/S 2” two fundamental social behaviour patterns are found: “Pro-social” and “Anti-social” behaviour. In this operating system, as Leathes describes, the brain subconsciously diagnoses if an individual is in an “in-group” or an “out-of-group” environment, and his/her status within the group or the given situation. And this explains how discriminations based on first impressions and stereotypes often occur. Furthermore, triggering one of the above mentioned modes would have an impact on the level of understanding of each other’s feelings and empathy which would be high if the “in-group” mode is triggered and low or absent in the case of the “out-of-group” mode. This happens because individuals tend to mirror emotions, picking them up intuitively and resonating with others, but, although it is possible to minimize subconscious reactions, whichever mode activates in this operating system, affects the third operating system, the Rational one.

1.2.2.3 The Rational Operating System (“O/S 3”)

Our brains are always trying to “connect the dots”, even without us realising it, but they have their limitations, filling gaps when felt needed and consequently enhancing, modifying or expanding perceptions also beyond recognition compared to the initial event. (Leathes, 2017) In this Operating System two polarities can be found whose intersection would be identified as an optimal area: a rigid one with a pre-set pattern of cognitive thinking, which is easier to access, and a dynamic one with creative patterns of rational thinking that are more difficult to access and require deeper thought.

1.2.2.4 Neuroscience and Soft Skills

Furthermore, Neuroscience, and in particular Neuroimaging, has been described to consider information and make decisions, allowing access to the brain’s mechanisms and becoming object of attention in the scientific field. In fact, high expectations are placed on the new technologies which are said to result in “important practical advances in the way we interact with each other and the way we make decisions”, and be impactful for

negotiators and mediators, as well as for all decision-makers. (Birke, 2010). In particular, the functional Magnetic Resonance Imager (fMRI) can create near-moving pictures that allow studying the location, intensity, and duration of brain activity under conditions similar to those found during negotiations and mediations, using powerful magnets which react when the levels of oxygenated and deoxygenated haemoglobin in the brain differs. The data collected helps to understand in a more effective way how people behave and make choices. In fact, in recent years growing interest in studying consumers' emotional and cognitive response to marketing stimuli through the advanced neuroimaging techniques, resulted, for example in "consumer neuroscience", which falls into the Neuroeconomics field. At first, pupillary dilation and electrodermal response measures were used, then followed eye-tracking and heart rate measurement, and finally advanced imaging techniques, and in particular functional magnetic resonance imaging, which allowed the observation of the specific components of the brain's functional architecture activated in response to marketing stimuli. In particular through fMRI the regional changes in the level of blood oxygenation in the brain produced by neural activity, are detected and visualized. Many are the regions of the human brain and different responses result from different stimuli (e.g. rewards, inequity, etc.). (Solnais, et al., 2013). Moreover, as will be explained further on, the ability to be empathic in negotiation and persuasion processes is very important and through the technological advances, "Mirror Neurons" have, for example, been studied to react in a sympathetic way to others' emotions, making the viewer feel the emotions expressed by the other; and, as Birke (2010) writes, being empathy very attractive for whoever needs to empathize with others, related therapies have also been developed, and research is ongoing. In the next chapter the main learning approaches will be described; however, studies have shown how, for example, observational learning, which is learning based on the observation of other people's behaviours, taking them as models, facilitates learning. In fact, it can be seen how one's brain reacts to certain images and scenes, and how when the target performed meaningful actions, the left hemisphere was engaged, whereas when the target performed meaningless actions, the right occipito-parietal pathway was engaged. (Nadler, et al., 2003). Furthermore, planning and action generation regions have been found to activate when people need to imitate a behaviour they've recognized and memorized through the activation of encoding structures. (Decety, et al., 1997). So, when learning Negotiation and Persuasion skills through the observation of a model's behaviours with the final goal of subsequent imitation, the information acquired by observation is processed by people's

brains in a meaningful and coherent way to reach one's goal. (Nadler, et al., 2003). So, behavioural studies based on Neuroscience principles and tools are in fact increasing.

1.2.3 The impact of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the “ability to perceive, integrate, understand, and manage emotions”, which influences one's appraisal of a stressful task and has an impact on its performance. Research has, in fact, analysed how EI is important for contexts involving stressful situations, such as, for example, at school or at work. (Lyons and Schneider, 2005). Furthermore, in today's fast developing economy, competition tends to grow and individuals, as well as organizations, strive for better performance. So, when selecting candidates or when deciding who not to cut at work, organizations choose who is willing to go beyond one's own role in order to improve performance. However, when this happens, the workload inevitably increases and so does the work pressure, often consequently resulting in job burnout, which will then cause job performance to decline and lead to a bigger negative impact and an organization's poor performance. So, in this context, organizations should reduce employees burnout and hire those who not only have Academic skills but also Emotional Intelligence (EI) in order to improve performance. Although the link between EI and performance is still being studied, EI has been found to play a “regulatory role between psychological capital and organizational citizenship behaviour”, which can predict job performance and job burnout, as “Emotion not only affects the way people think and act but also signals about judgement and information processing”. (Gong, et al., 2019).

The consequences of emotions can be, as Foo, et al. (2004) write, seen, for example, in negotiation processes that could be filled with emotions, which can shape our feelings towards the negotiation itself and the outcomes. Based on the social functional perspective, which examines personal characteristics in terms of ability to adapt and enhance social contact, Morris and Keltner (1999) argue that each individual's Emotional Intelligence in an interaction of two or more parties, leads to different outcomes in negotiation, both objective and subjective, and that in order to create value and find the areas of mutual interest, communication and understanding of each other is fundamental.

Understanding communication cues, and maintaining composure and a positive attitude oriented to solve problems during a difficult negotiation process, are variables that help create joint value. (Naquin and Paulson, 2003). However, the process of inventing options and understanding the other's interests might be long, and it's important not to jump into fast conclusions or use premature judgement, but instead take time to carefully explore the options. Thus, as Foo et al., state, "negotiators who are high in emotional intelligence are expected to have a more rewarding experience that leads to the largest "pie" for both members to share", although it is argued that negotiators desire to enlarge the pie and get the larger share for themselves; but another aspect which has been discussed is that a high EI negotiator can create a positive negotiating atmosphere which can lead to getting more concessions from the other party. Furthermore, anyone who wishes to communicate a message needs the ability to influence others' emotional state, which can strongly result in positive outcomes. For example, as negotiators, previously mentioned are often faced with tough emotional situations, leaders as well need to acknowledge others' emotional state, attempt to evoke emotions, and then seek to manage them. (Hong, 2016). These examples are focused on Negotiation and Persuasion, the two soft skills object of analysis; but the same applies to anyone involved in social interactions, as studies have indicated that Emotional Intelligence is associated with performance and Goleman (1998) defined EI as "the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships". In summary, "EI is a key factor in an individual's ability to be socially effective". (Hong, 2016).

1.2.4 Competency-based HRM Processes

"Manpower demand increases year by year. Simultaneously the unemployment rate also rises." - writes Selvam (2017). In fact, many are the educationally qualified graduates who aren't employed, or who have difficulties being employed, because of their lack or shortage of "Employability Skills", which have been defined to be a set of skills and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the Community and the Economy. Persuasion skills as the ability to convince others to take appropriate action, and Negotiation skills as the ability to reach mutually satisfactory agreements, have been identified as two "Employability Skills". (Wigan & Leigh College; University

of Kent). As will be described in this research, soft skills in general, and in particular Negotiation and Persuasion skills, have become increasingly important in personal everyday life, as well as for job and organizational performance. Furthermore, these skills are also useful during an interview itself to be the chosen candidate or be able to have a salary increase or other benefits, and therefore should be developed. In fact, focusing on the needs of the hiring party, listening to their needs, interests and expectations, clarifying issues that aren't clear, arguing one's case with logic, focusing on the key issues, identifying a common ground and mutually satisfactory agreement solutions, managing emotions, and using appropriate negotiation and persuasion tactics, can help any employee at work, as well as any candidate for a job position. Furthermore, in any workplace, conflicting demands may arise and key skills will be the ability to reach mutually satisfactory agreements. As will be described, these skills are often linked to jobs related to sales and marketing, however, these are only the most obvious examples, as these two skills are frequently used in any role requiring an interaction with others, which could be making a sale, or reaching an agreement with one's team or managing others. For these reasons, organizations have implemented competency-based HRM (Human Resource Management) processes, and competency-based questions on these skills can be found on application forms and at interviews, where one will be required to give evidence of having developed these skills.

As previously described, personal and social competencies have been analysed to have a positive impact on job performance, and consequently on the organization's performance as well, and therefore are increasingly required for job positions. More and more organizations, in fact, adopt competency-based HRM processes, focusing on the flexible and dynamic deployment of employees' competencies, rather than on task-related and pre-defined sets of qualifications. While the traditional HRM process focused on designing organizations around job structures by employing job analysis techniques and identifying operational Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Other characteristics (KSAOs) which were identified to be essential requirements for successful performance in specific job positions, McClelland (1973), analysed how traditional tests and parameters of evaluation weren't able to foresee the quality in a person's performance at work nor the success in his life, and observed the competencies displayed by the best individuals which led to a superior job performance. A shift from a task-based to a competency-based

perspective has occurred in HRM processes, focusing on the competencies possessed by the best performers. The main differences between the traditional task-based perspective and the currently adopted competency-based approach used more often are that while the first focuses on what is accomplished, the latter focuses on how goals are achieved, on identifying competencies that will enable long-term organizational fit with evolving business conditions, and integrates behavioural traits in HRM models, rather than merely focusing on technical skills. (Soderquist, et al., 2010). So, as organizations develop Competency Models, by considering a job position and performance parameters, identifying poor, average and best performers and then analysing their competencies and creating a model which highlights those possessed by best performers, and search for specific competencies in candidates and employees, individuals should assess their skills and develop them in order to have a competitive edge in today's volatile, uncertain and complex environment.

1.2.5 Competency Development

Individuals that excel in different jobs can possess the same competencies and the competencies that are relevant for an individual can change in time based on his or her growth and career requirements. Furthermore, McClelland (1973) discovered that individuals don't have just one talent but have many strengths and in each dimension in order to be extraordinary: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills, reaching a tipping point that results in a high probability of performing well. Instead, a lack of these for a job, results in high turnover and costs for a company. Goleman (2007) states that only focusing on one's self is not sufficient but it's important to have the ability to read and understand others in order to create and maintain good relationships with others, ability known as "Social Intelligence". In fact, social relationships are an invaluable component of one's life, and given their importance it's essential to understand how to maintain and strengthen them, and in order to do so Social Intelligence is the major building block to focus on. (Belto, et. al., 2016). As Goleman writes, it's not easy given the cultural differences and the effort required to be socially involved but it benefits us at work and in our personal lives. What is important to know is that competencies, as previously mentioned, are not innate but can be developed,

therefore giving everybody the opportunity to acquire them. In fact, Carlotto (2015) states that a competency is a condition that is reached at the end of a personal development programme in which acquiring the related knowledge and ability is necessary but not sufficient, because, as previously described it's fundamental to know why, how and when to behave in a specific way, being flexible to the context.

1.3 Negotiation and Persuasion

“Like it or not, you are a negotiator.”

(Fisher and Ury, 2012)

“Negotiation is the art of persuasion.”

(Leathes, 2017)

As previously described, we have personal competencies and behavioural ones, and Negotiation and Persuasion are part of the latter category. These two competencies which are present in our everyday lives at various levels, are the focus of this thesis and will be throughout this research, considered as fundamental in one’s personal and work life, and closely interconnected. Carlotto (2015) writes about how a negotiation is not a choice but a necessity, and how this ability allows to find a solution to problems and reach one’s goals, overcoming difficulties, which also means being able to persuade the other party about the related benefits of a certain solution, obtaining a positive output and maintaining a good relationship. So, the main challenge in a negotiation process is to reach an agreement with a mutual satisfaction because the final goal is not gaining maximum individual benefits but instead, act towards the optimization of the quality of our relationships. (Carlotto, 2015). But in order to do so, it’s fundamental to first address these two competencies with a few definitions given in the years, understanding their main components, variables and challenges, and their relationship with other soft skills.

1.3.1 Negotiation: Definition

“In Business As in Life, You Don't Get What You Deserve,
You Get What You Negotiate.”

(Karrass, 1996)

Negotiation is a common daily life activity, as couples in fact negotiate the division of household chores or potential employees negotiate their salary, requiring both listening and communication skills, and being sometimes successful and sometimes not. But negotiation is not an easy task as it can be taxing both cognitively and emotionally. (De Dreu, Van Kleef, 2003). In fact, “The subject of negotiations is both timely and timeless”, states Acuff (2008). Timely because almost everything has become increasingly complicated, given the increasing cultural diversity, regulations, technologies and globalization; and timeless because “life is a series of endless negotiations”. In the last couple of decades negotiation has become widely recognized both as a topic of serious research and as an essential and frequently used set of skills, and can be defined as the “process in which two or more parties seek agreement on what each shall give to, and take from, the other(s)”, (Movius, 2008), or as the “process in which at least one individual tries to persuade another individual to change his or her ideas or behaviour and it often involves one person attempting to get another to sign a particular contract or make a particular decision”, (Saeed, 2008), or as the “process of communicating back and forth for the purpose of reaching a joint agreement about differing needs or ideas”, related to persuasion rather than crude power. (Acuff, 2008; Fisher and Ury, 2012). In fact, in the last decade, negotiation has grown dramatically as a field for academic and professional concern, with increasing published works, case studies, empirical research; and if there was almost no school ten years ago which offered negotiation courses, now they’re widely available and universal. Among these increasingly published works, the main and more renowned studies and principles to be successful in negotiations, have been developed by Fisher and Ury (2012), who advocated for new approaches, called as “principled negotiation”, “mutual gains approach” or “win-win negotiation”, which were designed to discover the other party’s underlying interests and invent options for a mutual gain. A principled negotiator has been described to be open to reasoned persuasion, whereas a positional bargainer is not. There are mainly two types of negotiation processes: distributive and integrative. The distributive approach is often considered when a division of a fixed amount of resources has to be done, or when parties focus on a short-term agreement and on maximising their share. Whereas, the integrative one focuses on creating value or expanding the pie. (Kiffin-Petersen, 2006), and Fisher and Ury (2012), argue that in integrative situations, a principled, or interest-based, negotiation also

produces optimal outcomes, based on the 5 steps method which will be described in this chapter. Nevertheless, in reality, purely distributive or purely integrative negotiating situations are rare, whereas mixed ones, containing some elements from both, happen often. Both approaches start with having different points of view and the desire to have the most satisfying outcome as possible, but the process and the ways it's settled are quite different. (Kiffin-Petersen, 2006).

Furthermore, increasing studies have also described how different people possess distinct "styles" of negotiation that will allow to predict how they generally approach negotiations (Movius, 2008), and how a fundamental negotiation competence is understanding one's style and its limitations. (Shell, 2018). In summary, negotiations are daily activities and means to getting what desired from others (Fisher and Ury, 2012), and are related to the ability of being persuasive (Acuff, 2008), making the competencies of negotiation and persuasion both fundamental in life and interconnected. But knowing the main definitions and that, thus, negotiation is the process in which at least two partners with different needs and viewpoints need to reach an agreement on matters of mutual interest, isn't enough in order to deeply understand the topic, because the main related variables and challenges should be addressed.

A relevant negotiation challenge is proved to be culture in international negotiations, as Saeed (2008) explains, because it involves different laws and regulations, standards and business practices but above all cultural differences, reason for which it's considered "one of the single most important global business skills today". For this reason, he explains that it's important to suppress ethnocentric tendencies in international negotiations. But as people from different cultures may not share the same ways of thinking, feeling and behaving, the definition and connotation of the term "Negotiation" can significantly vary from one culture to another. Saeed, for example, differentiates Americans, who view negotiations as an opportunity to resolve contentious issues, and Japanese, Chinese, and Mexicans, who instead view negotiations as a vehicle to establish a relationship and states that all global negotiations are cross-cultural, containing all of the complexity of domestic negotiation, plus the added dimension of cultural diversity. Globalization has in fact been an impactful phenomenon, introducing many challenges, characterized by increasing risk,

uncertainty and cultural differences, which have posed additional difficulties in developing strategic solutions and created a demand for adequate negotiation models, which take into account these potential variables. (Peleckis, 2016). So, because cross-cultural negotiations require a lot of the global manager's time, it becomes one of the most imperative skills for global managers to possess.

Any negotiation has its challenges, which could be related to the difficulty of understanding one's goals or the other party's interests, finding the common ground, overcoming cultural issues and differences, etc. but it's important to learn about these challenges and take preventive measures. The ten strategies, individuated by Acuff (2008), to be effective in negotiations throughout the world are the following:

1. Plan your negotiation.
2. Adopt a win-win, interest-based approach.
3. Maintain high aspirations.
4. Use language that is simple and accessible.
5. Ask lots of questions, then listen with your eyes and ears.
6. Build solid relationships.
7. Maintain personal integrity.
8. Conserve concessions.
9. Make patience an obsession.
10. Be culturally literate and adapt negotiating strategies to the host country environment.

In summary, negotiation can be described as a creative activity in which the parties try to discover valuable information on each other's needs and interests in order to reach a common agreement, and that can take place at various levels, that would be among individuals, groups, and states. (Hemmer, et al., 2006). Moreover, influenced both by

internal and external factors. But, in any Negotiation there are three main components (Sae, 2008):

- The Process;
- The Parties;
- The Agreement, or outcome of the negotiation.

These components make a negotiation complexed as two parties may have different objectives, and also values, backgrounds, opinions, etc., making there be two types of negotiations which are: intracultural and intercultural, based on the similarity in culture and fields of experience among negotiating parties. So, communication and intercultural communication skills are fundamental, as are non-verbal and indirect communication cues. However, the single most important factor predicting the success or failure of a negotiation is the Process and requires the management of the negotiation's overall strategy, which can also vary across cultures. (Sae, 2008). Strategy in order to be effective must reflect the situational characteristics and personal backgrounds of the negotiators involved, and balance the position, procedure, timing and roles of the negotiating partners. (Adler, et al., 1998).

1.3.1.1 The Negotiation Approaches

Sae (2008) described how there are steps involved in a Negotiation process, defining the following basic phases:

1. Planning: identifying the desirable objectives, considering the areas of common ground between the parties, setting limits, dividing long term and short term and thinking about the sequence in which to discuss the various issues, although Sae reports that many studies have also described how successful negotiators have been found to be flexible and long term oriented.
2. Interpersonal Relationship Building: getting to know the other party.
3. Persuasion: regarded by Sae as the most important step of the process, which is based on the knowledge of the other party and on the ability to identify areas of similarity and differences and to create new options, while working towards a solution.
4. Agreement: hammering out a final agreement.

Interest-based negotiations have been found to be critical and practical (Acuff, 2008), and moreover achievable in two ways:

1. Meet the needs of TOS (The Other Side): understand WIIFT (What's In It For Them), keeping in mind that by helping others, we can often help ourselves.
2. Focus on interests and not positions: while positions are almost always irresolvable (e.g. "Our position is that we don't really need your product", which is a dead end), interests help access the real needs of TOS (The Other Side), (e.g. "Let's see what we can do to make this deal good for you and good for us", which opens a conversation).

But, Fisher and Ury (2012) consider a negotiation as much more than getting a "yes", they instead consider it as an improvement in a relationship and an agreement that fairly satisfies both parties and is long lasting. In fact, they argue that a "positional bargaining" with a win-lose situation is not a valid method to reach an agreement because it is inefficient, neglecting the other party's interests and concentrated on one's self, and it encourages stubbornness and harmfulness to the other party. For these reasons, in order to have a win-win agreement, Fisher and Ury present a method to better reach an agreement and solve a conflict. This method is divided into 5 steps:

1. Separate the People from the Problem:

Emotions and one's ego might reduce objectivity and the opportunity to reach a suitable agreement. So, it's important to not focus on people and the related emotions but on the problem to solve, considering the other party as a valuable partner. Fisher and Ury suggest trying to put one's self in the shoes of the other party, be optimistic, not blame the other party for the problem, propose appealing solutions, understand the source of one's emotions and allow the other party to express theirs', actively listen, use "I" statements, and work together with the other party as partners.

2. Focus on Interests, Not Positions:

When problems are looked at from an interests point of view, finding a solution becomes easier. Whereas focusing on positions enhances stubbornness of the sides and reduces the attention towards the other party's interests, not allowing a

partnership in finding a mutually benefitting solution. So, searching for the underlying interests and related reasons is an important phase in the negotiation process.

3. Invent Options for Mutual Gain:

Making a premature decision without considering alternatives, trying to narrow options in order to find a single solution, looking at the problem with a win-lose perspective and thinking it's the other party's responsibility to come up with a solution are the four main obstacles to creative solutions that have been identified by Fisher and Ury (2012). In order to solve these obstacles, a few suggestions have been proposed, such as separating the option generation process from the judging process, broaden the potential options without searching for only one solution, search for mutual gains and find ways to make decisions easier. As Fisher and Ury explain, focusing on shared interests and making appealing proposals, while looking for items that are of low cost for ourselves but of high value to the other party, helps make the sides more agreeable and have a better outcome.

4. Insist in using Objective Criteria:

Negotiations based on objective criteria on which all sides agree, independently from their interests and their ego, helps reduce opposition and sparks that might destroy relationships. So, it's important to keep an open mind, knowing that the other party could be who we negotiate with today and tomorrow our close business partner.

In summary, a Negotiation, as previously described, is a process, which sees two parties (negotiators) working together towards a common goal and exchanging valuable benefits. Each party will give some benefits of less importance for one's self to the other party and receive some important ones, which can be tangible or intangible. But, a negotiation competency is also defined as the ability to manage conflicts, ensuring a mutual satisfaction in one's needs, without the risk of damaging relationships, and Carlotto (2015) describes a win-win negotiation as a six-phase process:

1. Identifying and defining the problem;
2. Finding all possible solutions;
3. Evaluating the various solutions;
4. Choosing the best solution;
5. Implementing the decision;
6. Verifying if it's the right decision or if changes are needed.

1.3.1.2 Negotiation Skills and Business

“The success of any business is directly affected by the performance of the employees within the organization, whether or not those employees are dealing directly with customers”. In order for businesses to have a better performance, employee’s performance should be understood and managed, and conflicts reduced as much as possible. (Osunsan, 2020). Conflicts aren’t usually rare and create unpleasant tensions, so negotiation skills help solve them. Furthermore, if job performance can be described as achieving one’s goals, negotiation skills help be more confident and calm in front of differences. The most common performance measures relate to effectiveness, efficiency, cost, quality, timeliness, innovation and productivity. (Osunsan, 2020), whereas, Negotiation performance is measured by two criteria: results and effects on relationships, and a successful outcome is reached when we achieve our objectives. (Ionescu, 2020). “In today’s business era, it is given that to be effective, salespeople need to embrace the art of negotiation”. (Michael Leimbach). Nevertheless, according to Business Queensland, negotiation skills in business are important in both informal day-to-day interactions and formal transactions such as negotiating conditions of sale, lease, service delivery, and other legal contracts. Moreover, good negotiators contribute to their organization’s success, helping build better relationships, find quality and lasting solutions, and solve conflicts. Finally, it’s never too early to develop negotiation skills, as they’re considered as essential for children no matter how technology changes. In fact, it’s a skill that can help students succeed in their current lives, school context, and future careers. By developing negotiation skills, children will acquire more confidence, learn how to be less selfish and more empathic to others’ needs, learn how to solve a problem finding a mutual gain solution in friendship. So, the sooner your students learn how to negotiate, the more time they will have to practice and improve this skill. “Negotiation is very important for better bonding between individuals and leading a happy life”, and “The

nice thing about trying stuff out as a kid is that the stakes aren't as high as they'd be for an adult. So, you can learn the lesson in a safe and less dramatic way". (Dodge, 2019). So, Negotiation skills are an important interpersonal skill that should be developed since childhood.

1.3.2 Persuasion: Definition

“Persuasion skills exert a far greater influence over others’ behaviours than formal power structure do.”

(Cialdini, 2007)

Persuasion has been defined as “the act of influencing the minds of others by arguments or reasons, by appeals to both feeling and intellect”, leading another person to a certain choice or action. (Voss, 2005), changing their mind and eventually their behaviour. (Burkley, Anderson, 2008). But, as Gardner (2006) suggests, the phenomenon of changing minds is one of the least examined and understood of familiar human experience, and defines it as a “situation where individuals or groups abandon the way in which they have customarily thought about an issue of importance and henceforth conceive of it in a new way”; and he moreover writes about how leaders are people who change minds. In fact, in the years, it has been written how leaders in order to succeed need to master the Art of Persuasion (Cialdini, 2001), and how leadership has been defined as Influence (Maxwell, 2013), making the ability to influence and persuade others, bringing about desired changes, an important managerial skill, in order to achieve work goals and drive a business forward (Perloff, 2003; Fisher and Gonzalez, 2013). Finally, a successful persuasion has been described to be “a negotiation that results in concrete impacts on the behaviour of other people or organizations”, confirming how the two concepts have in the years been considered as closely related. (Watkins, 2001).

Before proceeding further on, it's important to define the terms of Persuasion and Influence, which although commonly used as synonyms and undifferentiated in this thesis, have different meanings. Whereas, Influence has often been described as “the capacity (of persons or things) to be a compelling force on or to have an effect, changing how someone or something develops, behaves or thinks”, Persuasion, on the other hand, has been defined as “the act of persuade, the skill to influence other people, situations or realities”. In summary, one is the goal and one is the way, which would not make these two terms interchangeable. (Pizarro, 2018).

Fisher and Siegel (1987) describe the skill of persuasion as either one of the many skills a successful negotiator needs to have or as an “undifferentiated combination of many essential traits and subskills”. Finally, people have been considered to be social beings that need persuasion as a tool to create alliances, although the initial condition for persuasion has been described to be resistance. (Knowles and Linn, 2004). In fact, without initial resistance there wouldn't be any need in engaging in a persuasion activity and this relationship can be compared to the coexistence of friction and motion. “I don't like it./I don't believe it./I won't do it” might be the initial response but resistance and persuasion have been described to be opposing and yet integral parts of a persuasive interaction.

Persuasion in human experiences can be recollected to long ago, but it's fundamental to differentiate between persuasion and manipulation; in fact, the latter can be thought of as the serpent in the Genesis that manipulates Eva to eat the forbidden fruit, which is not persuasion but manipulation and use of false unethical information. In fact, if manipulation involves coercion and forcing people to act against their own will or not in their interest, persuasion, on the other hand, is about convincing people that your best interests and their best interests are aligned, getting people to do what is in their interest but what benefits also the persuader. (Nazar, 2013; Pizarro, 2018). Furthermore, an important difference is given by the people's feelings and results obtained, because where0 manipulation is considered to be a forceful and dishonest act, persuasion is a gentle process that guides people towards a common goal, that takes into consideration everyone's interests, well-being and feelings. So, Persuasion is not manipulation.

Aristotle described three modes of persuasion: “Ethos” as the personal character of the speaker, “Pathos” as the putting the audience into a certain frame of mind, and “Logos” as the words of the speech itself. So persuasion can be achieved if the speaker is perceived as credible (“Ethos”), if the speech stirs up the emotions of the audience (“Pathos”) and if proved proof and suitable persuasive arguments are used (“Logos”). Three types of proof can be found in Aristotle’s Rhetorical Theory which are an “Ethical Proof” based on Ethos, an “Emotional Proof” based on Pathos, and a “Logical Proof” based on Logos. And in Cicero’s “De Oratore”, three means of persuasion are described in the “Art of Oratory” which are proving one’s arguments to be true, winning the audience’s favour and inducing the audience to feel the emotions related to the case. And Leathes (2017) defines Negotiation as the “Art of Persuasion”, referring to the complex web of unexpressed and latent forces that are present in any dialogue and that persuaders need to understand, and moreover refers to Aristotle’s Rhetorica which, as previously described, states how Ethos is needed to appeal to audience’s character, Pathos is needed to appeal to its mind-set and emotions, and Logos is needed to appeal to its reasoning. But previous theories have also described how stronger arguments are more persuasive than weaker ones, as are vivid messages that appeal to emotions, and how sometimes messages that are generated by the listener himself, and not just listened to, are more effective, and moreover how deals or messages can be more persuasive if sweetened by lowering costs or adding incentives that can also not be monetary. (Knowles and Linn, 2004). So, the use of strong arguments and/or perceived credible sources have been perceived in the past to be the most effective approaches; however more recent research has shown how the arguments that are used are not the only factor making a difference, being the “how” and “when” the arguments are presented to result in an effective persuasion. (Burkley and Anderson, 2008).

Many have been the strategies and principles proposed in the years, and the strategies found in this thesis can be used both in negotiation and persuasion processes. In fact, as described throughout this research, negotiation and persuasion are closely related and as for a successful persuasion it’s important to understand the other party, and follow the actions described in the previous paragraph, taking into consideration the above

mentioned challenges, when making an offer in a negotiation, persuasion tactics are needed, being negotiation considered as the Art of Persuasion. (Leathes, 2017). Two main strategies are “Foot-in-the-door” and “Door-in-the-face”. The first one, referring to how an audience would be more likely to accept the ultimate thesis if the earlier premises leading up to it, was phrased in a way that induces compliance in the reader; the latter, referring to the strategy of beginning a persuasive message with a more contentious proposition that the influenced party is likely to reject, which results in an inclination to accept the second request which is a little smaller. Depending on the context, these two strategies can be successful, but a critical variable to consider would always be the level of involvement of the target audience, which allows a more personal connection between the audience and the content of the persuasive message, through personal experience, beliefs or values. (Stanchi, 2006). Other important contributions have been brought by Cialdini (2001) who described the following actions: increase source credibility, provide consensus information, emphasize scarcity, engage a norm of reciprocity and emphasize consistency and commitment. In fact, the most well-known principles of influence and persuasion are Authority, Honesty and Likability, but other four principles should be taken into consideration: Reciprocity, Scarcity, Consistency and Consensus. (Pizarro, 2018). Reciprocity, meaning that when something is received a sense of obligation to give something back forms. Scarcity, meaning that people are more interested in what they can have for less. Consistency, meaning that something is achieved after an initial small commitment, which opens the doors to a bigger compromise. And, finally, Consensus, which is based on the feeling of insecurity that makes people look at the behaviours and actions of other to determine their own.

Moreover, but it won't be further analysed, Friestad and Wright (1994) presented the Persuasion Knowledge Model in which the way individual's persuasion knowledge influences responses to persuasion attempts is analysed. In this model the people to whom the persuasion attempt is directed are called “targets”, “agents” are the responsible party of the persuasion attempt, and “attempt” is used to describe the target's perceptions of the reasons and ways the agent has designed and delivered the message. In summary, the Persuasion Knowledge Model describes people's personal knowledge about both the goals and tactics of persuasion agents, and how people use this knowledge to cope with the many persuasive attempts. (Boerman, et al., 2018). But in a negotiation or persuasion

process, a pillar in the strategy of "principled negotiation", proposed by Fisher and Ury (2012), is also being open to correction and persuasion from the other party; in fact, by being open to the other's suggestions, it becomes possible to convince the other side to keep an open mind as well. And, in the end, it's important to be aware of the fact that all the technics used on others, can also be used by the other sides. (Burkley and Anderson, 2008). So, understanding what persuasion is and how it works is useful for people because they can both be the senders of persuasive messages and the receivers. (Benoit and Benoit. 2008). In fact, when persuading others, a knowledge of how persuasion works increases the likelihood of the messages being successful; likewise, it's equally important to know that persuasion can also be reciprocal.

1.3.2.1 The Persuasion Approaches

Negotiation has been described as a daily activity closely interrelated with Persuasion. In fact, in a presentation, argument or negotiation, the key to getting people on one's side is being successfully persuasive, and in order to do so it's important to target a specific audience and tailor one's argument to suit them, learning about their interests, wants and needs, and also choosing the best way to deliver the message. (Cialdini, 2001). Feser (2016) identified two types of approaches to Persuasion: the hard influence approach, composed of requesting, legitimating, and building coalitions, and the soft influenced, composed of rational persuasion, socializing, exchanging, personal appeals, consultation, and inspirational appeals, creating the model of the "Nine Influence Tactics", which varies from focusing more on one's self to focusing more on others. (Figure 1.2 – The Nine Influence Tactics).

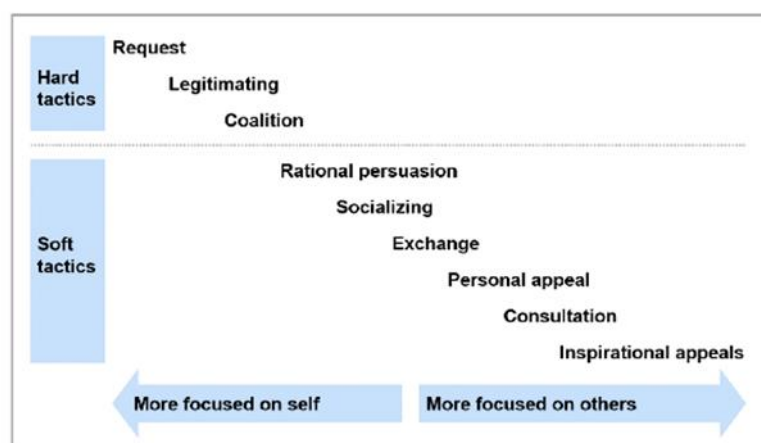


Figure 1.2 - Feser, 2016. The Nine Influence Tactics.

Hard Influence Tactics:

- Requesting: making demands to get others to take action and gaining their commitment through a direct statement. It also includes checking and reminders for the people to act and is considered as the simplest influence approach.
- Legitimizing: using authority or credentials to explain and influence, also referring to management directives, laws, rules, supportive corporate authorities, or recognized experts are legitimating. A statement, request or command, basically includes legitimation or rationalization.
- Coalition: using other people's help and support as a way to persuade people to act in a certain way, while creating a network of supporters to extend one's persuasive power which results in a built consensus, a group position or an "us-versus-them" situation.

Soft Influence Tactics:

- Rational Persuasion: using logical and rational arguments, or evidence, to explain, support or justify a position, showing the feasibility or importance of the object of persuasion.
- Socializing: using praise and flattery before or during an attempt to get others to carry out a request or support a proposal, behaving in a warm and cordial manner to influence others to act and building a relationship.
- Personal Appeals: asking based on friendship, loyalty, trust, or a past relationship, assuming some sort of relationship between the parties.
- Exchanging: giving something of value to the people, being led in return for getting something that is desired, and being based on the concept of reciprocity and the sense of future obligation, indebtedness and equivalence. This approach assumes the persuader understands what is valuable and important to the people being influenced.
- Consultation: asking others to suggest improvements or help plan a proposed activity or change that wants or requires their support.

- Inspirational Appeals: appealing to people's values and ideals or seek to arouse their emotions to gain commitment for a request or proposal, focusing on what lies deep in other people's mind-sets.

Both hard and soft influence tactics have shown effectiveness but soft tactics have been found to be more effective in the following situations:

- Dynamic Environment, in which decisions need to be taken across an organization and soft tactics are able to create commitment and energy throughout the organization.
- Complexity, in which extra effort, initiative, and persistence are required.
- Ambiguity, in which given the unclear situation or limited information available, soft tactics empower people to make decisions at lower levels of the organization.

Finally, whichever the strategy adopted there are the Three P's of Positive Persuasion (Burg, 2013) to consider: Politeness, Patience, and Persistence.

1.3.2.2 Persuasion skills and Business

"Persuasion skills are an important tool for employees in every industry". (Indeed, 2021). In fact, the ability to influence others, presenting effective arguments, evoking their emotions and prompting them to act in a certain way is a valuable asset that can be beneficial in a range of different workplaces. Furthermore, both oral and written persuasion skills are valued by employers because they can impact many aspects of job performance. The skills can in fact help convince others to change their point of view, agree to a commitment, purchase a product or a service, or take a course of action. (Doyle, 2020). Persuasion skills are extremely important for sales and marketing professionals whose job is to motivate customers to invest in their organization's products and services, remembering that there's a clear line between ethical persuasion and manipulation, and persuasion isn't using force on the counterpart, creating unnecessary pressure, but is instead changing people's beliefs and mind-sets. In this case persuasion performance is measured by the number of clients they were able to acquire. (Management Study Guide). Nevertheless, when thinking of persuasion, the first thought is this skill applied to sales jobs, which is the most obvious form of persuasion. However, it's used in many other

positions and fields as well, such as whenever, for example, managers need to persuade employees to do unpleasant but necessary tasks, or when lawyers argue before juries, IT firms convince clients to invest in better networking equipment, and department heads put together presentations to convince their superiors to increase their budgets. As mentioned, persuasion is an essential skill in business to boost sales and gain trust, but it's also important to realize that it has a significant value in one's professional career. In fact, five reasons explain this positive impact. Firstly, if one can persuade others in business to act or also just to listen to what one has to say, giving a second opinion, decisions can be influenced, even when they've already been made. Secondly, it can guarantee progress in one's career by being able to grab a superior's attention and secure success in the upcoming future. Thirdly, persuasion is a skill that allows one's voice to be heard, and in professional fields not being able to have people listen to one's opinions isn't optimal. One's persuasion skills can then also help be recognized by one's team, resulting in being involved in projects and meetings, both at work and outside of one's job-related context. Finally, these skills result in enhancing one's power as well, in making people listen, as the power to influence the final decision is in the persuader's hands. (Workingna, 2020). So, persuasion is an essential skill that has to be developed for personal and at the same time organizational success.

1.4 Relation with other Competencies

Transversal competencies are the combination of behavioural competencies which refer to actions towards others, such as communication, motivation, leadership, negotiation, empathy and ability to manage other's emotions, and personal traits that refer to one's self, his/her confidence, optimism, flexibility, creativity, etc. Only experience can help become better and it's important to keep into consideration the specific context and be flexible and not anxious, and also be creative, be a good listener, be convincing, rational, open minded and patient. (Carlotto, 2015). In fact, different competencies are intertwined and in order to be effective at using one, it's important to have acquired a knowledge and ability in using the others as well. Moreover, as previously mentioned, there are personal and social competencies, both important and complementary. As soft skills are closely

intertwined with the ability to be a successful negotiator and persuader, some of them are dealt with below.

1.4.1. Communication

Communication is an essential competency, tool and aspect of all competencies. In fact, as he states, it's easy to understand how it would be difficult to successfully motivate others or negotiate something without a good communication ability. Communicating is making one's self understood and it's important at work as in our personal lives, because "living is communicating" and "life is communication" (Carlotto, 2015), and communication plays a critical role in implementation of all other soft skills. (Holmberg-Wright and Hribar, 2016). Lepely (2021) explains how Soft Skills also accelerate the use of communication, much more than technical skills. In Latin "communis" means something that belongs to everyone and the finality of communication is to let others know about something and involve them, creating an exchange of information, a reciprocity, and a series of benefits. But, even though Carlotto refers to communication as enriching for all parties, he also states that it could be manipulated and become an instrumental communication. In fact, communication is certainly adapted to the situation and desired outcome, in a Negotiation or Persuasion situation, but it should always be ethical in order not to create relationships merely based on one's interests but instead on truth and reciprocity. Furthermore, communication can be one-way, having the communicator send his/her message and receiving a causal-effect answer, or bidirectional, meaning that the initial sender of the message will receive a feedback from his/her receiver, influencing each other. Both types of communication are important and should be used in adequate circumstances, although, it's important to pay attention to the others, to their needs and their expectations. It is also important to know that also refraining from communicating is communicating something and will have an impact on the negotiation or persuasion process and a strategic role. Mehrabian (1967) studied that when there's inconsistency between one's words and para-verbal and non-verbal expressions, people trust the element that seems to reflect more accurately the communicator's true feelings, and in this case the success in transmitting a message related only for 7% to the words used and was instead related for 38% to the tone of voice and para-verbal factors and for 55% to non-verbal language. In fact, a word or silence, as any gesture and expression, has a meaning and there must be consistency in one's

behaviour. Finally, if in order to negotiate and persuade someone, good communication skills are needed, a communicator faces the challenge of having to create a message that will originate favourable responses, using in his/her message arguments that to some extent can influence the receiver. (Ajzen, 1992). So, it's important to acquire the skill of persuasive communication for successful persuasions and negotiations, because negotiation and communication are intertwined, being a negotiation not able to occur without a means of communication. (Putnam and Roloff, 1992).

1.4.2 Flexibility

Flexibility is the ability to adapt to the various different contexts and situations in which action is taken, knowing that people can change over time as well. While Furnham (2014) describes it as the ability to adapt and adjust one's feelings and thinking to new situations, Carlotto (2015) describes it as the ability to grasp new opportunities and manage unwanted or negative changes. Unfortunately, conversations and negotiations don't always go as planned; so it's important to have a flexible mind-set and have the willingness to quickly change course of action, in order not to stall or fail a negotiation. Being able to adapt, be open minded to novelty and available to collaborate with others who may have different points of view, is very important and in order to do so the ability to question ourselves is required, because who's in control isn't who has the most power, but who is the most flexible. A larger repertoire of behaviours results in more persuasiveness. (Nazar, 2013). Moreover, negotiation outcomes can be improved through the ability to be flexible. (Druckman and Mitchell, 1995). However, it's important to specify how being flexible doesn't necessarily mean abandoning one's goals, but is instead about changing the route and method used to reach one's goals. So, it's important to be able to understand the situation and rapidly adapt, finding alternative solutions, which is very useful in negotiation and persuasion actions.

1.4.3 Leadership

Leadership is often defined as the ability to translate vision into reality, have followers, or as a "process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal". (Kruse, 2013). But other important contributions have been "Leadership is influence." (Maxwell, 2013), "No leader can succeed without mastering

the Art of Persuasion.” (Cialdini, 2001), and “Leaders can make change happen only if they have a coherent strategy for persuasion” (Garvin and Roberto, 2005). In fact, Maxwell writes how true leadership can only come from influence and must be earned, and cannot be awarded or assigned, and furthermore about how a person’s title doesn’t make him/her a leader, because the proof of being a leader are the followers. Persuasion, often also called Influence, has long been recognized as an essential element of leadership (Feser, 2016) and Leadership has been defined as Influence (Maxwell, 2013). In fact, a common definition of Leadership has been “a process of social influence in which one person is able to enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task”, meaning how the action of influence becomes a social mechanism that a leader uses in order to enact her/his Leadership. (Feser, 2016). Moreover, Carlotto explains how who isn’t very confident will use a more dictatorial style in order to try concealing his/her weaknesses and how there’s who will also try avoiding conflicts even when needed, or who only analyses the technical part and not the relational one or postpones decisions, etc. And, according to Hersey, et al. (1979), flexibility is the ability to move from a leadership style to another, depending on the other party’s level of maturity and keeping in mind that an individual’s level of maturity can change over time, making it important to constantly update one’s style. Finally, if leaders should master the art of negotiation and persuasion, in order to resolve difference in opinions, the same applies vice-versa.

1.4.4 Self-Awareness

Self-Awareness is defined by Furnham (2014) as the ability to be aware of, and understand, one’s emotions, as a certain amount of self-esteem is reflected in one’s communication skills and body language. (Schulz, 2008). When writing about the impact of “locus of control”, Carlotto (2015), in fact, describes how behaviours are influenced by one’s self esteem, how individuals with an external locus of control are convinced that the success derives from external factors which are not related to one’s behaviour, resulting in little incentive to take action. However, Carlotto also analysed that who is self-confident will be able to have behaviour that corresponds to an internal locus of control, showing that there’s a strong link between self-esteem and locus of control, which results in a different attitude and behaviour. Furthermore, the person who’s confident will be able to clearly and peacefully express his/her emotions and opinions without snapping off and attacking the other party. So, in order to be confident one must know

himself/herself, which is useful when trying to strike a deal or persuade someone, because who has a sense of certainty and believes in what they do, will be able to persuade others and create a win-win situation. (Nazar, 2013). A negotiator, when preparing a negotiation, as it would be for a persuader, has both an “outer” and an “inner” work to do. “Outer” because she/he will have to do a more tangible and visible work, involving research and planning; whereas “Inner” because an important intangible and difficult to measure work is required, involving looking within one’s self and assessing one’s temperament, strengths, weaknesses, insecurities, fears and internal triggers, which allow negotiators to remain calm, confident and focused when the situation gets tough. (Wood, 2017). In fact, according to the UQ Executive Education Business School (2018), developing self-awareness and the ability to understand one’s own emotions and the impact they have on behaviour, can improve the ability to negotiate effectively, enhancing how leaders should develop their self-awareness. In fact, leaders have to often negotiate and persuade others and in order to do so effectively they must exhibit emotional self-control which can be achieved by knowing getting to know one’s self.

1.4.5 Optimism

“To be positive and look at the brighter side of life” is the definition given by Furnham (2014). There have been many arguments supporting the theory that being excessively optimistic would result in difficulties in satisfying the parties expectations and therefore in delays, given the difficulty of reaching an agreement. (Yildiz, 2010). But undoubtedly, excessiveness is never good and being optimistic can be key to not losing hope in a negotiation and persuasion process; however it needs to take into account the context and the degree to which there can be success in persisting. In fact, being a realist optimist is an important feature that allows to be aware of the encountered problems and to try to solve them exploiting at best the available resources. Carlotto (2015) defines optimists as more collaborative, tenacious towards their goals and able to recover more rapidly from failures, assuming their responsibilities, and moreover better at social relationships. So in order to be successful it’s important to be optimist but with a realistic approach that refrains from taking quick action without previous careful consideration. Thus, the best option is a balance of optimism and pessimism; in summary, a flexible optimism, which requires awareness. During a negotiation and persuasion process many problems may

arise which require being realistic but still optimistic about the problems and solutions in order to not give up but strive towards better solutions.

1.4.6 Result Orientation

Having a drive towards a goal is important as a motivational factor and as a means to accept risks. Carlotto (2015), in fact, studied that who has a weak result orientation will try to escape from responsibilities and avoid assuming risks even when reasonable with a responsibility. Furthermore, they'll respect norms more than results and be inconclusive and be an obstacle in finding a solution to others, trying to show the reasons that would impede the solution and working only with consolidated procedures. In summary, they'd do the minimum requested. However, negotiating and persuading aren't easy tasks and require a strong will and motivation to find and exploit innovative and creative solutions, while doing more than initially expected. So, it's important to set challenging but reachable goals that would motivate a negotiator and persuader, and at the same time, with flexibility, be able to create a route to reach those goals successfully and within the needed timeframe.

1.4.7 Stress Management

Furnham (2014) divides Stress Management into Stress Tolerance, which he describes as the ability to “effectively and constructively manage emotions”, and Impulse Control, as instead the ability to “effectively and constructively control emotions”; two important abilities when put into stressful and difficult situations. In fact, two parties may have different interests and other requirements, and the negotiation or persuasion action might not be going well, so maintaining one's emotions under control effectively and constructively is very useful for success and being able to both be optimist and creative. Furthermore, higher leverage results by staying calm, and people trust those who are in control of their emotions and can manage their emotions effectively. (Nazar, 2013). As described at the beginning of the thesis, human beings are filled with emotions that result in attitudes and behaviours; therefore, it's important to understand one's self and manage the impact of emotions.

1.4.8 Creativity and Resourcefulness

Creativity can be analysed from the way a problem is observed and a solution is found (Carlotto, 2015); in summary, it can be analysed by the use of different perspectives and by the use of two methods, which are the mental map, that encourages spontaneous ideas with key words, and the brainstorming approach, which encourages creativity through group discussions. Creativity will prove useful in the planning phase, coming up with possible arguments and solutions that might not have been considered by the other party, but also during a negotiation and persuasion process in order to overcome an obstacle. In fact, identifying the problem and finding innovative ways that satisfy both parties to solve it, are part of the negotiation and persuasion process, although the key ingredient remains “data” to successfully transform in useful information to generate potential solutions, which is acquired through research but also through effective communication and listening of the other party. Furthermore, resourcefulness is also important when practicing negotiation and persuasion and is related to the previously mentioned competencies, requiring the ability to develop new ideas which are then translated into concrete projects; and in order to do so, one cannot be lazy and passively wait for opportunities to appear (Carlotto, 2015), but has to search for them, rethinking strategies and not basing actions on mere repetition, requiring courage and will to pursue challenging but reachable goals.

1.4.9 Teamwork

Teamwork considers people collaborating with each other in order to achieve common business objectives, and the adoption of teams is increasing in almost every domain of human lives. But working in teams is complexed for the many challenges the members may face, given the diversity of culture, religion, past experiences, etc. (O'Neill T., Salas E., 2017). These differences can work both towards negative or positive outcomes, depending on the teamwork skills of the members. So, as divergent points of view emerge in a team, negotiation and persuasion skills are required, as the ability to communicate, listen, manage one's emotions and strive towards results, creating value for the whole team. But if what is just explained is true, negotiation and persuasion skills can also be more easily learnt by who has already developed the teamwork skills which encompasses many others.

1.4.10 The Role of Empathy

“If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from that person's angle as well as from your own.”

(Henry Ford)

“The Art of Persuasion requires Empathy”. (Stanchi, 2006). Empathy is a behavioural competency, basis of all the previously mentioned competencies, including negotiation and persuasion. Being empathic means being able to put one’s self in the other’s shoes, understanding his/her thoughts, perspectives and feelings. During an empathic communication a person omits his/her own interests in order to consider the other party’s, without prejudices. (Carlotto, 2015). People tend to focus on facts that confirm their perceptions, and negotiators and persuaders might see only one perspective, needing the ability to see the situation as the other side sees it. In fact, knowing both sides have different points of view is not enough to persuade someone, because an empathic understanding is required. It’s important to withhold judgement and try on their shoes. (Fisher and Ury, 2012). Empathy in fact allows to be tuned in with the other sides and understand the deeper meaning of the message that is being conveyed. Research has moreover shown how empathy and sincerity are the building blocks for successful persuasion, as empathy can be defined as “the ability to identify and understand the other person’s feelings, ideas and situation”. (Burg, 2013). Chopik, et al. (2017) who studied the cultural variation in Empathy and how it’s related to psychological characteristics and behaviours which are pro-social across cultures, defined empathy as the “the tendency to be psychologically in tune with others’ feelings and perspectives” and as impactful on a wide array of both intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes. Finally, negotiators that are successful are said to rely on Emotional Intelligence, mastering the ability to understand another persons' mind-set and feelings, and make them feel understood is called “Tactical Empathy”, which through trust-building influences the other side’s emotions and behaviours. (Voss, 2016).

1.4.10.1 Listening

“One of the best ways to persuade others is with your ears – by listening to them.”

(Dean Rusk, Former United States Secretary of State)

The ability to listen, as Carlotto writes, is fundamental for an effective communication because a good communicator is a good listener who dedicates a lot of time to listening in order to get to know the other party and adapt the message and tools to convey it. And Shulz (2008) shows how listening is part of the communication process in order to create and maintain an active dialogue. Listening may seem an easy task but it's not to underestimate. The former FBI agent Chriss Voss (2016) describes listening as the first phase and most effective concession of a negotiation process, starting by focusing on other people, understanding their emotions, and creating enough trust for a real conversation to begin, assuming people want to be understood. In fact the most effective persuasion technique has been described to be the ability to genuinely and intensively listen to the other party for the entire conversation, seeking to first understand the other side and then to be understood. This in order to maximize the effectiveness of any persuasion and negotiation process. (Greathouse, 2020). In fact, a negotiator often doesn't encounter a problem to be solved, but an idea or a different point of view to be heard and understood. (Zohar, 2015). And, an effective and active listener, who makes the other party feel understood and accepted, is open minded without prejudices, who doesn't put its own point of view above everything else, restricting the area of understanding, and makes the other party feel accepted. It's important to think that the other party might have valuable information to give and attention to his/her words and thoughts is required. Nevertheless, listening is not only about words but also about other signals an individual may show, as previously defined. In fact, if communication is global and includes facial expressions, gestures, etc., so is listening in order to effectively receive and understand the message and answer. Furthermore, it gives the opportunity to ask questions based on what is perceived and further understand the topic of discussion and the interests of the other party, acquiring new important information (De Dreu and Van Kleef, 2003), which is a fundamental aspect in both negotiation and persuasion and creates a relationship where both parties feel involved.

1.4.10.2 The impact of Perspective Taking

The ability of perspective taking has been considered to be critical in negotiations, as in many aspects of social life. In fact, understanding the other party is a valuable skill for success, which allows to anticipate the behaviours of others and moreover mimic others' nonverbal behaviours, which is believed to be helpful in negotiations. (Galinsky, et al., 2008). But a balance of attention to both self's and others' interests is fundamental in order to facilitate creative problem solving in negotiations, because focusing only on self-interests tends to lead to excessive aggression and obstinacy, whereas focusing only on other-interests tends to result in excessive concessions.

Furthermore, Pierce, et al. (2013) describe how the perspective taking ability can often be a glue that holds individuals together and make them cooperate, although if combined with competition it can also be a facilitator of unethical behaviour which results in manipulation. So, what has emerged is that the impact and effects of having a perspective taking ability can change dramatically depending on the relational context, which can, for example, be of cooperation or competition, potentially being a "glue" that links individuals or "gasoline" that fuels competitive and deceptive behaviours. Finally, in Pierce, et al. (2013) experiments, perspective taking hasn't been linked to a decrease of unethical behaviour in contexts that were cooperative, showing that it may be a foundation for cooperation, but moral behaviour is not increased by it.

1.4.10.3 The Motivational Process

In practice, the lack of success is often caused by a limited understanding of theories or by an inefficient use of valid motivational concepts. He in fact describes how the source of human energy is given by tensions and internal needs and how the behaviour's purpose is the result of the desire to reduce these above mentioned tensions, through the attempt of achieving certain goals which satisfy a need. And motivation can also be linked to a competent behaviour, having individuals behaving competently if they know how to act or if they're interested in the consequences of their actions. Furthermore, a recurrent interest and goal can drive, direct and select an individual's behaviour, and motivation becomes an important ingredient of a competence but which is difficult to evaluate, being

in the submerged part of the iceberg model. (Carlotto, 2015) Moreover, motivation and result-orientation are closely linked and also related to the abilities of self-management.

1.4.10.4 The impact of Power

De Dreu and Van Kleef (2003) analyse how power differences exist and how people that have less power tend to have lower aspirations, demanding less and making more concessions, compared to those with more power. In fact, they describe how not only strategic decisions in negotiations but also the process of information about others is influenced by power. Individuals with less power tend to be more motivated in developing a more accurate impression of those on whom they depend and try to please them. And Fousiani, et al., (2020) define the role of power in negotiations as “determinant”, describing how power is present in all negotiation settings, such as politics, work and social interactions, and how it’s the ability to “provide or withhold valued resources or administer punishments and as the ability to produce intended effects”. And research has shown how on the one hand, power can lead to more competitive behaviours in which power-holders demand more and concede less, but on the other hand, power-holders have also been found to be more collaborative towards the powerless, feeling personally responsible. So, whereas power-holders notice more opportunities than threats and are motivated by their own goals and reward attainment, low-power-holders activate an alarm system.

1.5 Conclusions

This introductory chapter proposed the main definitions of the skills of Negotiation and Persuasion, focus of this thesis, after introducing the increasingly studied topic regarding Soft Skills and their relevance in daily activities, Goleman’s Emotional Competence Structure, and how our brain subconsciously operates. It analysed the concept and the wide use of these two skills in everyday life, giving an overview of the main factors and challenges involved and presenting the main approaches and actions to take in order to successfully prepare and implement these processes. Finally, throughout this chapter, Negotiation and Persuasion have been considered as closely interconnected with each other, and their relationship with other relevant soft skills has been analysed, in particular

with Empathy. So, after having addressed the main concepts regarding Negotiation and Persuasion skills, and why they're considered useful and important to acquire, it's necessary now to understand how to develop them in order to effectively put them into practice.

Chapter II -Developing Negotiation and Persuasion Skills

2.1 Introduction

Competencies, as defined in the previous chapter, are a cluster of knowledge, skills and attitudes that can be trained and developed. (Parry, 1996). Soft Skills, have in fact been found to be both developable and transferable, making the more general skills more transferable and vice versa. In fact, while technical and job-specific hard skills have a low level of transferability and are acquired formally in a training context, and generic hard skills, which are applicable to more jobs, have moderate level of transferability, Soft Skills, that are non-job specific, have a high level of transferability and can be acquired informally. (Dall'Amico and Verona, 2015). However, how can individuals empower themselves and improve Persuasion and Negotiation skills? Many have been the books, articles and courses introduced in the market regarding the impact transversal skills have on our daily life, their definitions and tactics, but developing these skills, compared to technical ones, and measuring the degree of improvement is not easy, not being easily observable. A clear guidebook regarding the best methods to develop them, in particular Negotiation and Persuasion skills, hasn't been published but many authors have given some general guidelines, which will be presented in this chapter.

2.2 Teaching and Learning Methodologies

When talking about lifelong learning, the subject of soft skills has become of increasing interest because their development results in the enablement and enhancing of personal development, social participation and workplace success. (Gibb, 2014). However, before addressing them, an important clarification must be made: no "one-fits-all" training methodology exists. In fact, the closer the teaching and learning approaches are to the needs and goals of the target, the more successful they are. It's difficult to create a course that meets all participants' expectations, and it's easier when tailoring a course to certain needs and goals, but nevertheless, both present challenges. Schulz (2008) identified two

methods of learning and improving soft skills, describing how a first way is by enrolling for formal training and taking classes at the end of which a certificate is given that could turn handy for job applications. Whereas the second way is by acquiring them through self-training and the use of books and other available material. As Shultz describes the process of changing one's personal traits requires long-term practice, making the latter option result to be more useful. Moreover, given the new available technologies, web based training, or e-learning, is also possible, as well as learning through digital games, having the possibility to be more vividly involved in a 365° learning experience with VR (Virtual Reality), AR (Augmented Reality) and MR (Mixed Reality) technologies. Finally, behavioural competencies can be developed through different techniques; however, the elements, which have been identified as fundamental in one's development process, are the awareness of one's current level, the definition of one's desired level of possession of a specific skill, and the actual intent, which is needed to undertake the change. In fact, Boyatzis (2006) introduces "Intentional Change Theory" (ICT) as a "complex system", in which "change" is in an individual's actions, habits and competencies, and is "desired" to occur. Moreover, it's "sustainable" in time, and becomes a "desirable, sustainable change", though it could face a series of discontinuities, also called discoveries, which as a cycle produce sustainable change. These discoveries are: the ideal self and a personal vision, the real self and its comparison to the ideal "Self", resulting in an assessment of one's strengths and weaknesses, a learning agenda and plan, experimentation and practice with the new behaviour, thoughts, feelings, or perceptions, and trusting, or resonant relationships. The Intentional Change theory focuses on catching one's dreams, understanding who one wants to be, gaining awareness of one's current self, developing a learning agenda, while focusing on one's desired future, experimenting and practicing desired changes, and creating relationships that enable one to learn. In particular, before making an intentional change one has to discover who he/she wants to be ("Ideal Self") relating it to one's Personal Vision, as an emotional commitment is developed when one's Ideal Self's image is created and motivation increases when focusing on a desired goal. The second discovery is then realizing one's Real Self through acquired feedback from others, and comparing it to the previously discovered Ideal Self, having as an output of this second phase a personal balance sheet with one's strengths and weaknesses. Then, once one has identified his/her personal vision for the future and gained awareness of his/her real current self, a Plan on how to achieve one's vision should be developed, including the setting of one's standards of performance. The fourth

discovery relates to Practice and experimenting with new behaviours, reflecting on one's new experiences and experimenting further, especially in safe environments. Finally, an essential part of our daily lives is interacting with others and building relationships, which are the contexts in which one can see the progress of one's desired change and receive both support and feedback. In summary, "People change in desired ways but not without intentional efforts" (Boyatzis, 2006), as changes are slow without intentional efforts and result in unintentional consequences that can be worse and diminish the human spirit. So this, five stage model helps achieve and sustain desired change.

Basic teaching methodologies have been found to be the use of examples and case studies, which present students with the principles of a domain taught through discussions of rich concrete examples that embody key points, which can serve as models or analogies for future situations and be transferred to novel situations. (Gentner, et al., 2003). In fact, because they are concrete, they are more engaging and easily understood, compared to an abstract concept or theory. Furthermore, analogies have been found to promote attention to commonalities, and drawing an analogy between two examples leads to a structural alignment, which highlights the common elements. (Gentner, et al., 2003). Moreover, through this teaching method, students are believed to develop problem-solving skills, which are useful in the implementation of negotiation and persuasion processes. Furthermore, other teaching methods described to be effective, have been watching videos on negotiation and persuasion, correlating them to explanations or the evaluation scales adopted for the skill's assessments, understanding what is effective and what is ineffective, and one's areas of improvement. (Fisher and Siegel, 1987). In fact, Observational Learning has been identified to be a promising teaching technique, having found out that different kinds of knowledge are encoded and stored in different ways in our memory. (Kirkpatrick and Kayser, 2016). Furthermore, the information gathered from experience and/or observation of others' experiences, become learning experiences only if there's reflection upon them, also relating theoretical concepts and applications. (Kechagias, 2011). If in order to learn how to ride a bicycle or how to swim, reading a book is not sufficient, the same applies when learning how to negotiate and persuade which requires the recognition and understanding of complex sequences of interrelated behaviours. Placing students as active participants in well-created simulated conditions that convey a sense of reality in both the losses and gains, and the stakes, has been studied

to be another effective teaching method. Students would have to solve problems and be evaluated on performance, and there would be a self-written critique of their own performance as well as of their classmates' performance. In fact, self-critiques are useful to learn from experience and together with the feedback provided by others can be useful to determine what should be improved. Moreover, creating a condition of competition and ranking among students of the course, giving points for certain actions, would also increase attention and motivation, and especially allow students to compare their actions to the behaviours adopted by others. In this way students would be able to evaluate and learn from their own behaviours as well as those of others. (Fisher and Siegel, 1987). Short lectures on strategies and frameworks prior simulations most probably result in the students applying to the simulations what learnt, and a post-simulation debriefing can be useful to critically reflect on the put into practice and outcome. Furthermore, self-reflection, as the ability to reflect on, analyse, evaluate, and learn from one's performance, is useful when analysing one's gaps and/or strengths, and learning is often the outcome of information gathered from experience, integrating new knowledge to the previous one. This approach is also defined as Constructivism, the theory in which learners don't only passively assimilate information but learn through experience, social interactions and "authentic" tasks, even if simulated. (Cooperstein and Koccevar-Weidinger, 2004). So, soft skills are important to enhance employability, personal fulfillment and social participation, but there's no single best development approach, being dependant on the context in which the teaching/learning is taking place, on the target and on the specific goals in the programme. Moreover, when there is a clear target and there are clear goals, many are the teaching alternatives, which could be more or less autonomous or practical, etc., but all with pros and cons. For example, university students have been found to respond positively to "Experiential Education", which is based on learning through experience and observation of others' experiences, and to "Social Cognitive Learning", based on role modelling, observation and imitation, and basis to mentoring and coaching approaches. (Kechagias, 2011). In order to be able to evaluate one's self or others and learn, a grading system can be used and taping simulations is a method to observe, analyse and criticize one's behaviours better. In fact, watching videos, as previously described, is an instructive approach to learn and recognize different behaviours, and if it's a registered tape of one's self it can help to learn more about one's skills and behaviours. (Fisher and Siegel, 1987). Finally, frequently socialising with friends, colleagues and other members

of society focusing on soft skills enhancement, is a pleasant and experiential way of self-training. (Schulz, 2008).

Schulz (2008) supports the idea that education institutions at all levels should shift to a more student centred learning methodology, embedding soft skills into the teaching of hard skills, meaning participants learning a hard skill would unconsciously also practice a range of soft skills. However, the first step to improving soft skills is to increase the awareness of their importance and the consequences of not possessing them. In order to do so, people should be encouraged to read books, attend classes, socialize and broaden their horizon. Whereas a more formal approach would be directly incorporating subjects regarding soft skills as curricular activities, as the School and University years are believed to be more impactful in the development of soft skills, and educators are available to help remedy shortages in this aspect. In fact, good soft skills development practices have been described to be the outcome of the provision of a large variety of experiences and learning strategies, including the following approaches: promotion of their importance, development mechanisms for communicating the scope of generic skills, use of authentic experiences, use of team-based and integrated approaches, and project learning, problem solving learning through case studies and discussion, and reflective learning. (Kechagias, 2011). Journaling is an increasingly adopted tool for teaching and learning, as its specific nature might vary depending on the Academic setting, being unstructured, allowing students to reflect on information that they identified from an experience or a Course, or also being very structured with specific topics and objectives students should analyse. This activity's main aim is to promote critical thinking by integrating information from Courses to real-life experiences, and reflecting on their pros and cons in order to improve. (Fritson, 2008). Finally, as written in the first chapter, soft skills are important to enhance and complement one's hard skills; so including soft skills training into hard skills teachings will result in an efficient way of improving both, with the positive side effect of lessons becoming more attractive. (Schulz, 2008). Furthermore, some social skills have been found to be enhanced by cooperation, and among these there are communication, negotiation and problem solving. Cooperative learning, in fact, has been analysed to be able to stimulate a deeper approach to learning and has therefore become a teaching tool, making all students consider individual work as part of a whole, for which everyone is essential. Moreover, transversal skills relate to

knowledge and capabilities that all graduates “must have achieved before entering the labour market”. (Larraz, et al., 2017).

Nevertheless, soft skills can also be trained at work, not only at school or university. In fact, mentoring and coaching sessions can be activated, working together to understand goals, sets of skills and weaknesses and tailoring learning approaches that are specific and targeted. Moreover, live interactive workshops can also be organized with role-play activities of simulated concrete scenarios. (Colman, 2020). Moreover, “there’s no better teacher than experience” (Mansaray, 2020), and some experiences are better to have in risk-free environments, and role-play scenarios give the opportunity to two or more people to act a part in a simulation of a concrete situation. In fact, role-play activities and scenarios help empathise with other concerned parties and are used when teaching soft skills, and can become useful learning approaches, which focus on integrating experiences with the skills to be developed, promote reflection, and facilitate self-assessment. However, effective training should take into account two characteristics: fidelity and complexity. Fidelity as the similarity of a training situation to a real case present or future scenario for the students, and the higher it is the more superior the transfer of learning to one’s workplace, and simulations can be very realistic, whereas complexity is related to two factors: task interdependence and cognitive effort, ranging from high to low degrees. So, the higher these two characteristics are, the better the transfer of skills and the more experiential the activity. Instead, low fidelity results in a less relevant experience and less learning impact, and low complexity might not be challenging. (Kechagias, 2011). Other methodologies to acquire soft skills in a workplace have been studied to be peer-learning, in which colleagues share information, advice and feedback, and online learning with readymade or tailored courses and also the possibility to simulate conversations with other people. Peer-coaching activities involve two partners of equal status, who alternate roles between being the coach and being coached (“coachee”), with the focus on the personal and professional development of both individuals, through the integration of reflective open-ended and probing questions to increase the coachee’s self-understanding and facilitate their personal development. In fact, it’s unique value is the inherent mutuality and reciprocity of the process. (Eriksen, et al., 2020). Finally, AR (Augmented Reality) and VR (Virtual Reality) can be used in many fields, as well as to develop soft skills, effectively replicating real-life scenarios.

In summary, there are four effective teaching approaches: the didactic approach, in which a teacher presents through a lecture the needed theoretical knowledge to the students, the analogical approach, in which students apply what is learnt in a domain to another unknown context through comparison, the observational approach, in which others' behaviours are observed and become models, and the experiential approach, in which learning is based on experience. Furthermore, the continuous advancement in technological tools has an impact on the available teaching and learning possibilities, giving teachers the possibility to create simulated scenarios that are more real and vivid, as well as the possibility to follow online courses or use social platforms and forums, and giving students the possibility to experience a 365° learning experience. However, individuals can also learn by self-training and the use of books, videos, and self-registrations, which is considered to be more consistent with the idea that the process of soft skills learning is long-term. Nevertheless thorough preparation is always needed, because “By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail” – (Franklin B.).

2.3 Measuring Effective Training Methodologies

Effective evaluation measures are necessary in order to ensure the intended results are being achieved from the training; however, unlike hard skills, soft skills are not easy to measure and there are many variables (e.g. personal characteristics), which can influence the outcome. In fact, despite the growing academic research regarding the value of soft skills and the concept of Emotional Intelligence, businesses and governmental programmes continue to under invest in them, mistakenly regarding them as not teachable and avoiding them because they're hard to measure. When developing soft skills it is, in fact, difficult to measure their value and ratio of changed behaviour, being intangible results, and furthermore, the ROI (Return on Investment) from the development programs of soft skills is not immediately apparent and is difficult to quantify, while businesses want immediate impact and results. (Wright, 2016). So, soft skills are intangible, and if, for example, the ability of one being able to use a specific computer software or manufacture an object can easily be assessed by the quality of the work, the time required, and other variables, soft skills assessments should be tailored on the required behaviours

related to the skill one wants to develop. In fact, a competency, as defined in the previous chapter, is a set of related but different behaviours organized around an underlying construct, which we call the “intent”, making behaviours be manifestations of an intent, which, depending on the context, can result in the demonstration of different soft skills. (Boyatzis, 2007). So, behaviours can be analysed in order to be able to measure one’s soft skills, which consist of a bundle of behaviours.

The PDCA Cycle of continuous movement proposed by Pollock, et al. (2015), is a Development Cycle made up of a Planning Phase based on what one wishes to accomplish, a Doing Phase, and a Checking Phase which results in an Action Phase that requires making decisions to stop, scale back, revise, continue or expand. Moreover, although more difficult, but ROI (Return On Investment) can be also measured for soft skills through a cost-benefit assessment, when aligned to core business needs and an auditing activity is conducted continuously with clear objectives and KPI (Key Performance Indicators). Assessments allow people to know their current ability and know what is important and needs one to focus on. Furthermore, they are closely linked with self-awareness and self-regulation, which have been defined in the previous chapter. In fact, understanding one’s “self” has an important role for feedback and self-reflection, which, as widely described, is fundamental in order to grow. (McVarish and Milne, 2014).

Moreover, when measuring the effectiveness of a training programme, it’s important that the programme’s learning outcomes that can be assessed, are clearly outlined, and that validated assessment tools are used. Finally, to close the loop of analysis on the effectiveness of a programme, assessment results should be used to improve the program. (Ndoye, 2013). The data should be collected initially through an open-ended questionnaire, followed by more in-depth interviews, firstly investigating the key factors that students and participants to a course thought as a greater contribution to their learning, and then through individual or group follow-up meetings, clarifying the given answers and exploring for more details. Moreover, a digital platform where all previous assessments and activities are accessible, can be used to analyse one’s learning outcomes history. Finally and most importantly, learning programs should consider assessments not

in isolation but instead as related to the entire program structure, considering how different elements interact with and impact one another. (Ndoye, 2013).

However, how can a training be considered as effective? Evaluation has always been a fundamental part of any training programme and should be applied from the start to all the dimensions of the ADDIE model, acronym for Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation, five phases that constitute a dynamic and flexible guideline to creating effective training programmes and training tools. In the first phase of Analysis, a programme's goals, audience characteristics, desired outcome, delivery options, timeline, and any other basic factor should be addressed. In the Design phase, based on the aspects identified in the first phase, in particular the learning objectives of a course, there's the phase of planning the lessons' content, exercises and assessment tools, creating logical developing and evaluating methodologies, and prototyping them. The third phase regards Development, and is when everything previously planned is assembled and is tested and revised based on the received feedback. The Implementation phase then follows, in which the training on the various tools is provided to teacher and learners, ensuring everything is in place and functional, and finally there's the Evaluation phase which can be divided into formative and summative; the first applicable to each phase of the ADDIE process, and the latter consisting of opportunities to receive feedback from the participants or users. So, creating an optimal training programme isn't an easy and quick task, and funds are required, which is one of the reasons many companies when in crisis cut training budgets; however, if demonstrated that training delivers bottom-line results, that might not be the case. So, the three main reasons to evaluating a training programme (Kirkpatrick J. and Wendy Kayser, 2016) are to:

1. Improve the programme;
2. Maximize the transfer of learning to subsequent organizational results;
3. Demonstrate the value of training.

Before proceeding, a couple of definitions should be given. "Effective training" has been nominated frequently, however no clear definition has been given until now, although needed. Effective training means a "well-received training that provides relevant knowledge and skills to the participants and the confidence to apply them in the job".

Whereas Training Effectiveness means “training and follow-up leading to improved job performance that positively contributes to key organizational results”. So, data collection of effective training and training effectiveness can add credibility to a programme and show its value.

2.3.1 Kirkpatrick’s Model

Many studies on measurements are often conducted in a laboratory, using simulated scenarios to measure pre- and post-interventions performance, and according to Kirkpatrick’s model for assessing training outcomes there are four different levels of measurements. (Kirkpatrick J. and Wendy Kayser, 2016).

- Level One: Reaction. Measures the reactions of the participants to training, including how enjoyable, challenging and useful it was. It’s in fact the “degree to which participants find the training favourable, engaging and relevant to their jobs”.
- Level Two: Learning. Measures the ability of the trainees to show their skills and knowledge by solving problems and answering questions after a period of training. It’s in fact the “degree to which participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence and commitment based on their participation in the training”.
- Level Three: Behaviour. It’s the “degree to which the participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job”.
- Level Four: Results. Measures the impact of the training. It’s in fact the “degree to which targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training and the support and the accountability package”.

These four levels can be considered in a reverse order too from level four to level one, during the planning phase of the programme, which enables keeping the focus on the most important aspect which is the training outcomes. Moreover, when analysing results, leading indicators, which are “short-term observations and measurements that suggest that critical behaviours are on track to create a positive impact on the desired results”, are needed. Consequently for level three, critical behaviours and required drivers which

reinforce, monitor, encourage and reward their performance, will reflect on level two which consists of knowledge (“the degree to which participants know certain information”), skill (“the degree to which participants know how to perform a certain task”), attitude (“the degree to which participants believe that it will be worthwhile to implement what is learned during training”), confidence (“the degree to which participants think they will be able to do what they learned during training”), and commitment (“the degree to which participants intend to apply the knowledge and skills learned during training”). Therefore, following these levels in the planning of training programmes, the participants’ reactions which include their satisfaction, engagement and relevance of acquired knowledge, should be considered. So, an analysis of the Return on Expectations, the degree to which expectations have been satisfied, and success factors, required drivers which contribute to performance results, should be done. Finally, during the planning phase it’s also important to design evaluation tools in order to collect data and be able to obtain the ultimate indicator of value, which is Return on Expectations, based on a chain of evidence made up of quantitative and qualitative data.

As far as data collection is concerned, for Level One (Reaction) a simple questionnaire regarding engagement, relevance and satisfaction should be filled up soon after the training. For Level Two (Learning) evaluation methods are pre- and post- knowledge tests, presentations, action planning, role play, simulations, surveys, interviews and focus groups. This phase includes the evaluation of acquired knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence and commitment. To include all these various aspects the data collection should be done immediately after the Course. Pre and Post tests, or assessments, using the Linkert Scale, provides a comparison between participants’ levels of proficiency before and after training, and also follow up evaluations can be done. For Level Three (Behaviour) it is important to clearly define specific observable and measurable critical behaviours which means behaviours that can be captured on camera, recognized and explained, also being able to count the number of times a particular behaviour occurs and its performance quality. Possible Methods used to monitor one’s training are interviews, observation, self-monitoring, KPIs (Key Performance Indicators), action plan monitoring and surveys. Whereas supporting tools to reinforce behaviours are follow-ups, review check lists, reminders and executive modelling, while tools to encourage behaviours are coaching and mentoring, and tools to reward them are recognition and monetary awards. This data should be measured before training as a baseline, and afterwards in order to see

any changes. Finally for Level Four (Results) as previously described, leading indicators are important and can provide both internal (e.g. quality, efficiency, personal satisfaction, etc.) and external (e.g. external impact, response, satisfaction etc.) personalized targets. These results can be measured over an interval of time and the key to obtaining this data is building relationships with people who can provide this information. Moreover, while monitoring performance and results, unexpected collateral benefits might be discovered. Kirkpatrick's Model is flexible and easily adaptable to evaluate any type of learning situation (e.g. classroom learning, e-learning, m-learning, etc.) simply by determining which levels are best and more appropriate for tools selection and evaluation.

In summary, the main evaluation methods for all four levels are surveys, questionnaires, individual or group interviews, whereas for the Levels Two (Learning), Three (Behaviour) and Four (Results) action plan monitoring and action learning can be implemented. Furthermore Level Two and Level Three can also include task reviews, observation of skills and behaviours, and Level Two also includes the Methods of Case Studies, knowledge tests and presentations whereas Level Four includes leading internal and external target indicators. Moreover, while analysing data to evaluate Return on Expectations for each Level and relative sub-dimension, we pose the question whether expectations have been met.

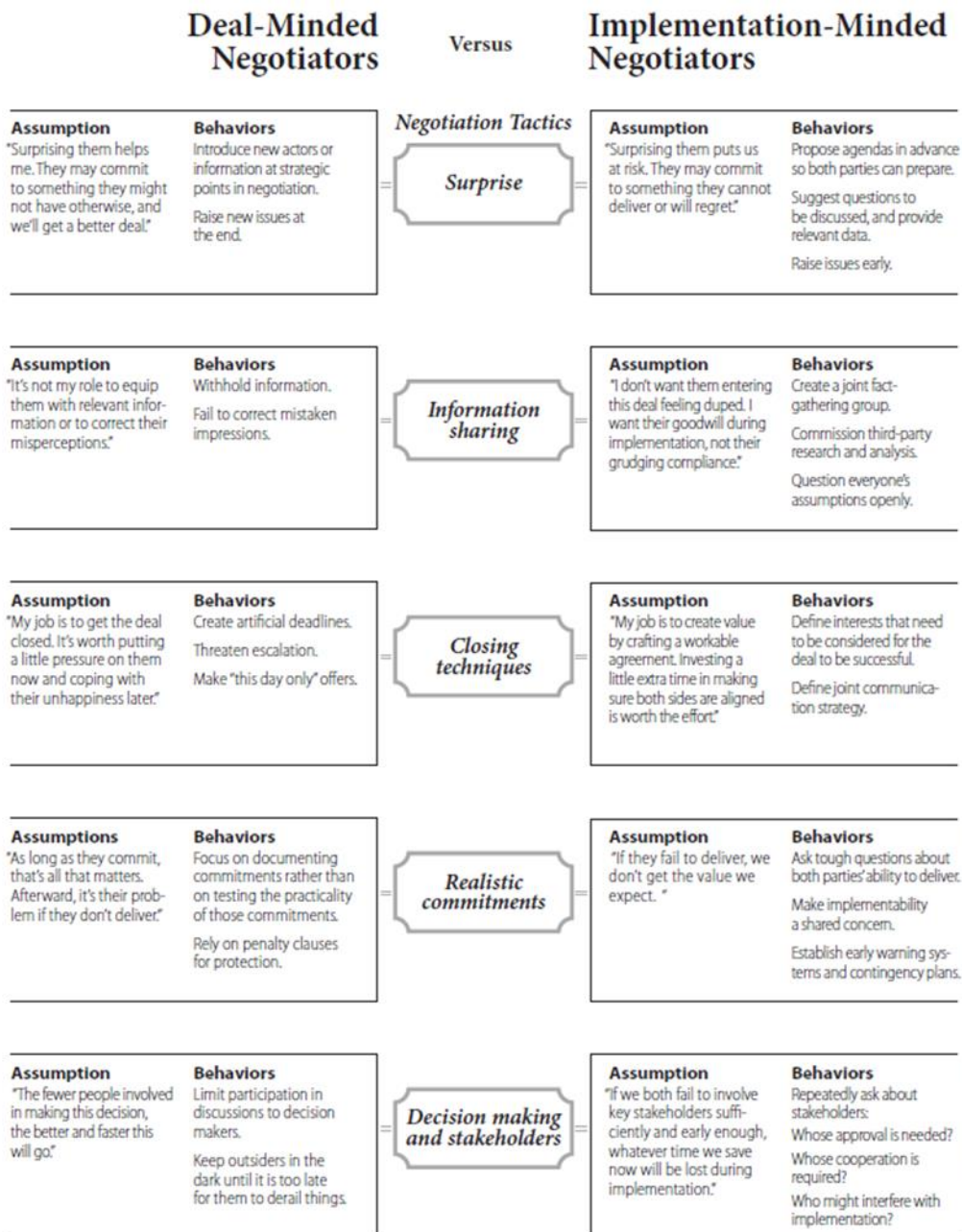
2.4 Negotiation Skills: Development Guidelines

“Let us never negotiate out of fear. But, let us never fear to negotiate.”

(Kennedy, 1961)

In the last decades, negotiation skills have been widely recognized and organizations have started investing on training, although little research has been conducted on its effectiveness. (Movius, 2008). Negotiation, in fact, as mentioned in the previous chapter,

has grown in importance, with a wide range of academic research and available courses, but as mentioned, few have been the published and available studies on development methodologies and their effectiveness. In fact, suggestions have been made but no clear practical guide can be found. Among these suggestions, are the observations of negotiators who tend to focus too much on closing the deal and squeezing the best terms out of the other side, without dedicating much time to implementation. Furthermore, expert negotiators have been found to spend twice as much time asking questions, talking about their feelings and checking if they were understood as average ones. (Movius, 2008). A mind-set that considers implementation and, instead of focusing on closing a deal, sets the stage for a long-term relationship, has been considered to be needed. (Ertel, 2004). In fact, before finalizing the deal, a few questions should be addressed: Is the deal working? What are the success metrics? What has gone wrong so far? How can it be put back on track or which are signals for problems? What capabilities and skills are needed to accomplish the deal's objective? However, preparing one's self is not enough, because in order to be able to find the best possible solution for both parties, the other party should prepare too and helping can result in a better final outcome. Finally, when negotiating, what's most important is not getting the other side to agree but the means and costs required for the implementation of the process, as the real challenge doesn't lie in "hammering out little victories on the way to signing on the dotted line" but it instead lies in designing a deal that works in practice. (Ertel, 2004). Follows a summary of the main differences between Deal-Minded Negotiators and Implementation-Minded Negotiators, which shows how the latter type of negotiators prefer working together with the counterpart, addressing potential issues, sharing information, using more time in order to create value, sharing the implementation, and involving stakeholders before the final steps of implementation. (Figure 2.1 - Deal-Minded Negotiators vs Implementation-Minded Negotiation).



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Figure 2.1 - Ertel, 2004. Deal-Minded Negotiators vs Implementation-Minded Negotiation).

Soft Skills, as previously described can be developed and Movius (2008) writes how in order to assess the effectiveness of a skill's training, one must first define what the term encompasses. He writes about negotiation training and describes how there are two related questions to address. The first regarding the concepts and skills which are commonly taught in negotiation training, and the second regarding the way of

transmitting these concepts and skills to training participants. He then describes a tailored training for which there's an initial consulting session with the clients in order to understand the kinds of negotiations they had and will have and be able to select and/or create exercises and cases that are realistic. Otherwise, in contrast with a tailored training method, there's a standard approach which delivers a fixed ("off-the-shelf") set of slides, simulations and cases that are explained in ways that create a central or critical set of ideas. Movius (2008) describes how there are many tools and modes for teaching negotiation, such as lectures, Power Point slides, case studies, readings, simulations, self-assessment tools, videos, and role-play demonstrations. These methods in fact help acquire the knowledge of the skill through theoretical lectures and observation but also put what learnt into practice. Furthermore, a previously described, negotiation is an important skill both for work as in personal life and developing these skills should be incorporated in business students' curricula, giving them the possibility through realistic experiential exercises, which allow to develop skills in planning, developing, and delivering, and the various methodologies that will be described in this chapter, in order to acquire basic knowledge, boost interest, and practice. (Wesner and Smith, 2019). So, the most effective training methods are: didactic learning, learning via information revelation, analogical learning, and observational learning; but relating them to negotiation, observational learning and analogical learning have been regarded to be more impactful. Moreover, a combination of the above mentioned four approaches with simulations and exercises, making it become an experiential learning, results in better methods. (Nadler, et al., 2003).

2.4.1 Phase: Planning

As mentioned, preparation is an important part of one's self-development and making a plan is also considered to be one of the main negotiation strategies (Acuff, 2008). Writing a plan has always been an important preparation phase for any goal, that gives order to one's thoughts and helps anticipate objections and create a strategy, but for three reasons has also had resistance. In fact, Acuff (2008) describes how people think of it as a potential attachment of responsibility, "Someone might actually hold me responsible for this plan", as a reduction of flexibility, "Once I write it down, I can't change it", or as difficult to express, "I know what I want to say, but I just can't say it". These three thought might create resistance in wanting to put effort in creating a plan, however it often

happens that one's ideas are not as clear as they seem in one's mind and writing them now helps to give clarity. Moreover, planning means doing research and being able to make informed decisions. However, planning a Negotiation, according to Acuff (2008) can be divided into four steps to apply both to one's self and the other side (TOS):

1. Identify all the issues;
2. Prioritize the issues;
3. Establish a settlement range;
4. Develop strategies and tactics.

Moreover one's preparation also includes practicing beforehand by, for example, practicing a few answers, requests and/or reasons in front of a mirror, which helps to be more confident in real situations. (Demers, 2015). Furthermore, Saeed (2008) describes how there are six steps to follow in order to develop effective negotiation skills:

1. Opponent's research and acquisition of information regarding his/her interests and goals in order to understand and predict his/her behaviours and responses, and design solutions;
2. Begin with a positive overture;
3. Address problems not personalities;
4. Pay little attention to initial offers, treating an initial offer as merely a point of departure, usually being extreme;
5. Emphasize win-win and integrative solutions, if conditions are supportive;
6. Be open to accepting third party assistance.

However, there are seven crucial things to master before taking part in a negotiation: (Demers, 2015)

1. Background Information: doing research beforehand, gaining knowledge and finding evidence, in order to make arguments more reasonable and have a better position.
2. A Goal: deciding on something to settle on which will give a direction to the course of a negotiation.

3. A Plan: preparing a plan which includes potential hypothetical scenarios and contingency plans in order to reduce the element of surprise that impacts on emotions and consequently on behaviours that may be impulsive.
4. Confidence: having confidence results in more negotiating power, being listened more seriously by the other party and receiving more attractive offers. It is acquired through time and practice but it can also be feigned, by adopting a certain posture, dressing appropriately and being clear and direct.
5. Self-Interest: seeking the best possible deal for one's self, regardless of the other party. However, many other authors have described how a more win-win approach results in trust and long-term relationships.
6. Practice: practice is said to make perfect and Demers (2015) applies this saying to the ability to negotiate, meaning that the more one negotiates the better one will get, which can also apply on a smaller scale to practice activities, such as preparing plans or practicing in front of a mirror. However without exaggerating in one's practice and becoming unnatural.
7. Objectivity: using an objective perspective throughout a negotiation process is important in order to be able to determine the true value of the negotiation, the costs and benefits.

So, Demers (2015) states that the more one actively negotiates, focusing on these above described elements, the better one will get. In fact, in order to be effective in a negotiation one must be prepared, setting a goal and knowing what one wants, understanding the range of possible outcomes, from one's objective and ideal position, to one's limit and worst outcome, and one's best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA). In order to do so, it's fundamental to research the other party who also wants to succeed in the negotiation, also estimating their desired outcomes and coming up with potential workable solutions for both sides. Furthermore, a negotiation process, as described, can be tough and emotions might easily step in, such as anxiety, fear, anger, etc., requiring one to know themselves; however, confidence in a negotiation can be improved by planning ahead and addressing underlying tendencies. Three methods described in Harvard Law School daily blog (2021) are:

1. Negotiate roles in advance: ensuring which role each person will be playing in the negotiation.

2. Broaden your perspective: looking beyond the current negotiation and considering the other party's needs.
3. Audit your blind spots: seeing feedback regarding one's behaviour during negotiations and putting effort in order to improve.

According to the "Practical Guide to Negotiating in the Military" published by the Air Force Negotiation Academic Division of Air University, practical methods to plan a negotiation are completing a research beforehand addressing one's own and the other party's Position, including aspirations and reservation points, Prioritized Interests, BATNAs, and Agenda, and moreover, develop options for mutual gain, research the ZOPA, and select the best option. In particular, a Position is what is desired for one's understandable reasons, which don't result in stalling or non proceeding in the negotiation process, and the in Interest would be an underlying reason behind a position, which should be addressed critically with the "W" questions, "who, what, when, where," and especially "why" questions. Moreover, an Aspiration point is the "best each party hopes to get out of a negotiated agreement", whereas a Reservation point is one's "bottom line" in negotiation, or least favourable option one can offer or accept. Finally, as previously described BATNA is the Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement, and ZOPA is the Zone Of Possible Agreement. Realistic role-play exercises help acquire knowledge and experience, having students plan, develop and implement their plan, analysing beforehand, the participants, situation, and reason of the negotiation; analyse what the issues are for one's self and the other party, and what one's BATNA, Target point, Reservation point and goals are for one's self and the other, understanding the answers to the "Why?" questions. Then finally plan how to deal with potential obstacles. (Wesner and Smith, 2019)

Many are the tools to teach negotiation, such as lectures, Power Point slides, case studies, theoretical readings, simulations with general and/or confidential role instructions, self-assessment tools, scripted videos, and scripted or unscripted role-play demonstrations, with a learning through experience approach as well, which has been found to be a method that leads to the ability to capture potential joint gains. In particular, the "Analogical Reasoning" approach, which includes the use of case studies, increases problem-solving

skills when multiple cases are used to compare principles, whereas “Observational Learning” has also been found to be a powerful learning approach. (Movius, 2008). Instead, little research examines whether students’ knowledge and skill levels in negotiating can be significantly improved during a typical course. In fact, many programmes focus on assessing the acquisition of knowledge, rather than skill development, and alternative assessment tools need to be developed and used, such as self-reflective learning journals, assessment centre exercises, simulations, etc. (Kiffin-Petersen, 2006). Experiential learning and simulations are important tools in order to learn soft skills. Kolb’s experiential learning model is a four-stage cyclical process which includes concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. (Kolb, 1984). However, Kolb’s learning process is not complete until it has passed through the whole cycle of experience, reflection, concepts, doing and new experience. (Kechagias, 2011). Furthermore, experiential learning includes keeping a self-reflective learning journal and taping and analysing both one’s and others’ behaviours in negotiation exercises and self-assessments in order to evaluate strengths and weaknesses, and assist in self-development. Experiential learning together with observational and analogical learning have been found to improve negotiation performance. (Nadler, et al., 2003). Moreover, modelling is also a useful learning method; in fact, watching videos with skilled negotiators in various situations and analysing their actions, enhances observational and analogical learning. (Kiffin-Petersen, 2006).

2.4.2 Measuring Negotiation Skills Development

Fisher and Siegel (1987) designed standards to measure negotiation skills and relate them to the negotiation outcomes and what taught to students. They analysed four parts: preparation, opening phase, strategy, and agreement.

- Preparation: analysing one’s interests and goals as well as the other party’s, which could be both tangible and intangible. For this phase a scale should analyse the understanding of one’s own interests and the other party’s, creating a strategy.
- Opening Phase: articulating better one’s goals and discovering something more about the other party, which can affect one’s strategy. For this phase the amount

of time and interest in asking questions and listening to the other party should be analysed.

- **Strategy:** concentrating more on one's interests, or on a win-win approach, or using a "hard" or "soft" approach, etc. For this phase a scale should be organized around competitive, cooperative, and integrative strategies, based on the adherence to positions or interests, information flow which could be shared or not, communication patterns (communication of solutions, needs and issues, or not), and relationship.
- **Agreement:** for this phase the scale should evaluate the written or oral settlement agreement, reflecting how well the agreement reflects one's goals and how clear it is.

The Daily blog of the Harvard Law School describes how in order to track improvements in one's negotiation skills, monitoring before, during and after training and putting into practice several times what has been learnt, should be done. Moreover it describes how useful it is to review how well prepared one is, evaluating how much time has been spent on analysing one's own interests, and at the same time the other side's ones, how one thinks of clarifying their authority to make commitments, and if one identified options for mutual gain to use at the appropriate moment. Whereas, when assessing a negotiation itself, one should analyse how well one has listened to the other side's concerns, how nimble one was to revise and adjust one's initial plan, based on the current situation, what kind of relationship has been built, and how effective one was at creating value. Finally, at the end of the negotiation, one should analyse how well the implantation of the agreement is going. All these aspects can, as previously described, be assessed and evaluated through surveys, questionnaires, individual and group interviews, action plan monitoring, behaviour observation and target indicators (Kirkpatrick J. and Wendy Kayser, 2016), and through the critical analysis of one's recordings and reflective learning journal. (Kiffin-Petersen, 2006).

2.4.2.1 Tero International, Inc. Negotiation Skill Self-Assessment

Furthermore, skills self-assessments before and after training, are useful tools to analyse one's improvement in an interval of time. (Movius, 2008). Many are the self-assessment questionnaires, based on one's behaviours, on negotiation skills and styles that can be found online, and many might be the unpublished ones, universities, companies, and private organizations might have developed for their own courses. However, they all have some similarities (e.g. questions regarding if one analyses one's own and the other side's interests, if one is able to find options for mutual gain, if one is able to manage one's emotions, if one is able to take the other side's perspective, etc.). However, for this thesis one particular self-assessment has been used, which is a 25 item questionnaire provided by Tero International, Inc., a premier interpersonal skills research and corporate training company, founded in 1993. It's a self-assessment with copyright of 2014, which has been used, as it will be explained in the following chapter, to assess the negotiation skill development of the Ca' Foscari University Master's degree students participating in the "Competenze in Pillole" of Negotiation, a short and intensive programme to develop the knowledge about what negotiation is, when and why it's used, and main tactics, including, as will be later described, also many practical activities. In particular, this self-assessment tool presents 25 statements, also called items, which measure which behaviours one relies on more in negotiations on a scale of 0-5, where 0 = never, 1 = rarely, 2 = sometimes, 3 = occasionally, 4 = frequently, and 5 = always. So, the higher one's score is in each area, the greater one's tendency is to exhibit those behaviours. Furthermore, this model shows five approaches, or behaviours, having five statements per dimension spread among the total 25. Finally, one's scores are read in the following way:

- A score of 5—10 indicates a slight reliance on this behaviour in negotiations;
- A score of 11—19 indicates a moderate reliance on this behaviour in negotiations;
- A score of 20—25 indicates a strong reliance on this behaviour in negotiations.

Following are the 25 statements of the Negotiation Skill Self-Assessment:

1. If the other party's position seems very important to him or her, I may sacrifice my own position.

2. I address problems and concerns directly without blame or judgement.
3. I try to win by convincing the other party of the logic and benefits of my position.
4. I tell the other person my ideas for and ask for his or hers in return.
5. I try to find a compromise solution.
6. I try to postpone discussions until I have had some time to think.
7. I see achievement as more important than relational issues.
8. I use body language that might be perceived as condescending or arrogant.
9. Confronting someone about a problem is very uncomfortable for me.
10. I give up some points in exchange for others.
11. I propose a middle ground.
12. I am likely to take a comment back or try to soften it if I realize that it hurt someone's feelings.
13. I think it is all right to ask for what I want or to explain how I feel.
14. I find conflict stressful and will avoid it any way I can.
15. I have been described as impatient, controlling, insensitive or emotionally detached.
16. If asked to do something I don't agree with or don't want to do, I'll do it but deliberately won't do it as well as I could have.
17. I let my body language communicate my feelings rather than telling people directly how I feel.
18. I remain calm and confident when faced with aggression or criticism.
19. I may overextend myself trying to meet everyone's needs.
20. I try to find fair combination of gains and losses for both of us.
21. I look for and acknowledge common ground.
22. I have a hard time being clear about what I want and need for fear of appearing demanding or selfish.

23. I can overlook valuable ideas in favour of action.
24. I may not be open to hear other points of view.
25. I avoid taking positions that would create controversy.

The five dimensions, which this assessment tool identifies, are: Avoidance, Aggression, Accommodation, Compromise, Collaboration. (Figure 2.2 - Negotiation Self-Assessment's Scoring).

- Avoidance is an approach that results in delaying a negotiation and in the worst scenario have a Lose/Lose outcome. Who usually behaves by avoiding negotiations ignores problems, their own needs, the needs of the other party, and the relational dynamics present; however, it can be an appropriate approach if the issue is unimportant and can be dropped without harbouring ill feelings, if the potential damage from conflict would outweigh the benefits of voicing one's thoughts, if one has no power to change the situation, if one needs to calm down, if one needs time to gather more information and have a better understanding of the situation. The items of the scale related to this behavioural approach are: 6, 14, 16, 17, and 25.
- Aggression is an approach also called as competitive, in which negotiators focus exclusively on their own objectives, focusing on winning, even if at the expense of others, and only considering short-term outcomes. So, it might result in a "I Win/You Lose" outcome, however it jeopardizes any long-term relationships. It's usually used when there's a need for a quick decisive action and there's no time for lengthy negotiations, one has the task of enforcing unpopular conditions for others but there's no openness to feedback, one's certain something isn't negotiable, or when one's protecting himself/herself against other aggressive people who view attempts to collaborate as a sign of weakness. The items of the scale related to this behavioural approach are: 3, 7, 8, 15, and 24.
- Accommodation is an approach in which negotiators tend to focus too much on relational dynamics, giving up their own needs and interests in favour of others,

and risking a “You Win/I Lose” outcome. It could be used when one realizes one’s mistake and is willing to concede to the other side, when one doesn’t really need to win this round, when one’s losing anyway and wants to cut your losses, or when one dislikes conflict and wants to restore harmony. The items of the scale related to this behavioural approach are: 1, 9, 12, 19, and 22.

- Compromise is the approach in which negotiators search for middle ground rather than pursuing potential solutions that often are found in common interests, getting some of what one want and some of what one doesn’t want; so, it results in an outcome which is a bit less than a WIN/WIN situation, and could be considered as our usual “default”. It’s a strategy that is chosen when an issue is only moderately important and one’s willing to go partway, when there’s a need for a temporary agreement, when one’s efforts in adopting a WIN/WIN strategy have failed and one’s willing to compromise to Plan B, and when one doesn’t want to make the creative effort of finding WIN/WIN options that completely satisfy both side’s needs. The items of the scale related to this behavioural approach are: 5, 10, 11, 20, and 23.
- Collaboration is the WIN/WIN approach in which negotiators stand up for their own interests, needs and values, while at the same time honouring the interests, needs and values of others. Both sides work together in order to ensure that the value they extract meets their own goals and represents a satisfactory outcome for others; however, it requires a greater investment of time and energy, making it important for a negotiator to weigh ones goals in advance before beginning a collaborative approach, but the more one engages in the behaviours related to this strategy, the easier and more effortless they become. It’s usually used when one is anxious to maintain your good working relationship with the other side, when one wants to learn more from a situation, when a solution that that everyone will be happy with is needed, one wants to give the other side a sense of increased empowerment, when one wants to model a good negotiation and conflict resolution to others, and when one needs an other side’s input and point of view. The items of the scale related to this behavioural approach are: 2, 4, 13, 18, and 21.

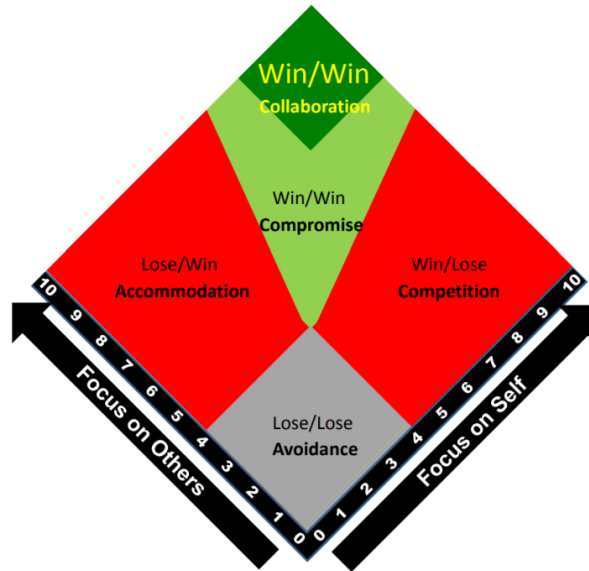


Figure 2.2 - Tero International, Inc., 2014. Negotiation Self-Assessment's Scoring.

2.5 Persuasion Skills: Development Guidelines

“Don’t raise your voice, improve your argument.”

(Desmond Tutu)

As widely described, Persuasion skills have become necessary, but how can they be acquired? Cialdini (2001) describes how persuasion works in predictable ways by appealing to human drivers and needs, making persuasion be composed of easy principles that can be taught, learned, and applied. In fact, Cialdini summarizes six fundamental principles of Persuasion, which have been briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, and that although analysed separately for more clarity, should be applied in combination to increase their impact.

- The Principle of Liking: uncovering similarities and offering praise is considered to be a generator of affection, based on the assumption that “people like those who like them”.

- The Principle of Reciprocity: giving in order to create a relationship and receive something, based on the assumption that “people repay in kind”.
- The Principle of Social Proof: using the power of one’s peers because, based on the assumption that “people follow the lead of similar others”, people are social creatures and as such they rely on others for cues on how to think, feel and act.
- The Principle of Consistency: making active and public commitments and following consistent patterns of behaviour and thought, based on the assumption that “people align with their clear commitments”.
- The Principle of Authority: exposing one’s own expertise, without thinking of it as self-evident, based on the assumption that “people tend to obey authority figures”.
- The Principle of Scarcity: highlighting unique benefits and exclusive information, based on the assumption that “people want more of what they can have less of”.

So, when approaching the topic of development methodologies for Persuasion, Pizarro (2018) presents the following suggestions: Be flexible, Build trust, Be honest, Learn to transfer energy, Communicate clearly, Be prepared, Be able to control your emotions, Be confident and persistent. As mentioned in the previous chapter, honesty and trust are important principles to consider, and flexibility is also a skill which is intertwined. In fact, it’s important to be flexible and aware that people have different perspectives and past experiences, considering their points of view as potentially enriching. It’s also important to build trust, not being able to persuade others if not perceived as trustworthy, and there’s a need for honesty, otherwise a persuasion would be ineffective, specifying it has to be pondered and respectful, not brutal and offensive. Furthermore, the ability to transfer energy, results in invigorating others and giving motivation, which also requires clear and simple communication, but at the same time preparation. Finally, as described in the previous chapter, emotions are an important factor to take into consideration both when negotiating and persuading, which makes it important to be able to manage and control them effectively, and by being confident in one’s arguments and persistent in demonstrating their value, it’s possible to be persuasive.

All the above mentioned principles, and many others, can be theoretical concepts which could be taught during a Persuasion skill course or read in a book, however as any soft skill, ongoing training is required. As previously described, the most common and successful teaching methods have been found to be through Experiential learning which allows participants to simulate real-case scenarios, interact with others in a risk-free environment, assess themselves' and others' behaviours and self-reflect upon them in order to grow. Moreover, Observational learning and Modelling are also very effective methods to evaluate actions and imitate them. However, self-awareness is fundamental and requires individuals to know their own selves; therefore, assessments should be done and critical thinking is required. The SOAR framework is a “dynamic, modern, and innovative approach for framing strategic thinking, assessing individual and team performance, building strategy, and creating strategic plans”, and it stands for Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results. (Figure 2.3 – The SOAR framework). It focuses on identifying strengths, building creativity in the form of opportunities, encouraging individuals and teams to share aspirations, and determining results that are both measurable and meaningful. A typical approach is the Swot analysis, which focuses on Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. A SWOT analysis improvement can be found in the TOWS framework, which is a matrix of Threats, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Strengths. It in fact analyses the combinations of internal and external variables in order to build consistent strategies. The intersection of Strengths with Opportunities results in a good fit of positive aspects of an internal and external environment, whereas Strengths together with Threats result in having to build on strengths in order to reduce the vulnerability from threats. Weaknesses and Opportunities result in an attempt to overcome weaknesses to pursue opportunities, and Weaknesses and Threats need defensive plans in order to reduce the susceptibility to external threats. If the traditional SWOT approach ends up focusing on the negative aspects, the SOAR framework focuses on the positive aspects in order to implement opportunities for growth, and is a flexible strategic thinking process to “complete a strategic assessment, create a strategy and/or strategic plan, and determine appropriate action”. (Stavros and Cole, 2013). This strategic framework has been further developed by perceiving it as Self-awareness, Opportunity awareness, Aspirations, and Results, considering self-awareness as a fundamental enabler for discovering one's unique identity. It's a model that can assist teachers and students, also personalizing experiences through a reflection process. (Reddan and Rauchle, 2017).

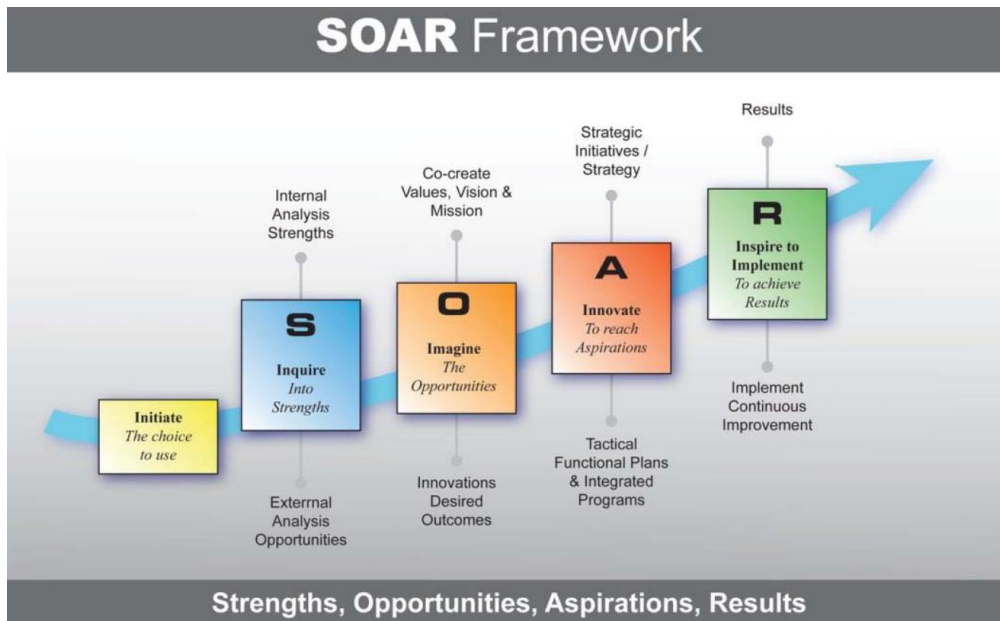


Figure 2.3 - Stavros and Cole, 2013. The SOAR framework.

A more recent definition of SOAR’s framework considers it a four phase process, made of Self, Outlook, Action, and Reflection. This is based on a cycle which includes the “Self” in every complex and relational situation, which creates a need for an intentional Outlook that allows the choice of one or a set of Actions which lead to certain outcomes for Reflection and therefore continuous growth. This framework helps manage one’s Self, while bringing awareness of one’s opportunities through Outlook and creating insights for Actions, and finally learning through Reflection on one’s outcomes. (Gambill, 2021). In fact, as previously described, reflection is essential both for a better outcome and one’s development, and is an ongoing process applicable to one’s self and to the various situations one’s dealing with.

Furthermore, professional trainers at Elevate Corporate Training (2019) present eight principles to improve persuasion skills, other than following Cialdini’s principles, stating that spectacular results in one’s persuasion skills can be the result of developing also a minimal familiarity in order to reach mutually satisfying outcomes. These principles are: Establish credibility, Come well prepared, Understand your group’s interests, Connect on an emotional level, Build relationships of trust and respect, Answer the “Why?” question, Ask the “If” question, and Embrace Carnegie’s Principle of Appeal to Higher Motives.

Furthermore, according to the Oxford College of Procurement and Supply, persuasion skills can be improved by being able to find common ground and show how a problem can be solved, by being ready to have an argument, by being persistent and doing research, by creating a more personal relationship, “mirroring” the other side, and being confident. So, in order to develop persuasion skills, one should, according to Carnegie’s principles (2005), improve the ability to listen to others’ points of view, avoid prejudices, control emotions, find areas of agreement, and make the other party feel important and involved. However, a well done preparation helps organize thoughts, making them clearer and more objective, although the ability to think critically is also fundamental. Moreover, it allows to be proactive, analysing one’s own and the others interests beforehand, and to anticipate possible objections, to already have questions prepared to understand better the other party, and to prepare various options and arguments supported by credible and authoritative sources and studies.

2.5.1 Phase: Planning

As described, a fundamental phase before starting any persuasion is Research and Planning, creating a realistic script on the argued point of view for a conversation, and supporting and convincing reasons should be prepared, bearing in mind that potential disagreements might arise. Then, preparing examples to support each main reason of the argument and individuating a couple of sentences that summarize the presented thoughts and cover the ideas the audience would take away, is useful. This thorough preparation will result in a better understanding of the issues, parties involved and their thoughts, and in more personal confidence, reducing the risk of not knowing the situation at hand and of not being able to manage one’s emotions. So, taking into consideration these above described preparatory activities, creating a Persuasion Map that includes the previous steps would be a helpful exercise. In fact, a Persuasion Map is an “interactive graphic organizer” that enables individuals who want to start a persuasion process, to map out their arguments. (Pizarro, 2018). The filling of this map begins with determining one’s goal or thesis, identifying three main reasons that support the argument and then three examples or facts that validate each reason, and finally planning effective conclusions that can effectively summarize the argument and positively remain in the mind of the audience.

Other practice tools are offered by The Critical Thinking Consortium, practical worksheets on Persuasion, requiring one to use examples to analyse what and why makes something persuasive, and by providing theoretical strategies and examples suggests thinking of one's own. For example, how to appeal to one's emotions (e.g. storytelling and provoking empathy), what kind of comparisons to make (e.g. analogies to make one's self more easily understood), how to provide authority and social proof (e.g. proving one's own authority and/or providing reliable facts and information), how to provide a glimpse of the future, how and which repetitions to use, what type of sentence structure to use (e.g. short or long, interrogatory or exclamatory), etc. Moreover, Observational Learning is also very useful and from another's persuasive process many aspects can be critically analysed, in particular if a model is taken. According to ReadWriteThink.org, the presence or absence of the following strategies and how they've been used should be analysed: Claims made, Big Names mentioned, Logos (logic and facts to support an argument), Pathos (appealing to the audience's emotions), Ethos (building trust and credibility), Kairos (building a sense of urgency), and Research (use of studies and information to make the argument seem more convincing). Furthermore, The Critical Thinking Consortium provides a planning worksheet firstly addressing the purpose of the persuasion (the "Why?"), the desired outcome (the "What?"), and the targeted audience (the "Who?"), and secondly the possible words and sentences which could be used, using the above mentioned focus points (e.g. comparisons, social proof, etc.), evaluating their importance in the specific situation. However, messages in order to be persuasive need to be tailored to the situation, creating a very short speech (e.g. elevator pitch) or a longer one using more storytelling, repetitions, and even pauses, but what should be done preparing any message is to address the following five questions, according to the My Power People consulting enterprise:

- Who is the audience of my message?
- What might appeal to their direct self-interest?
- What do you want your audience to think or understand about your issue?
- How do you want them to feel about what you have said?
- What do you want your listener to do after they hear your message?

Then, after preparing a message, it should be practiced and feedback should be collected in order to improve it. As previously described, practice is important and The Critical Thinking Consortium suggests working with a partner, simulating one's plan, recording it to analyse later, letting others prepare a plan for the same purpose, and considering suggestions from one's peers. Finally, as a student's self-assessment on a soft skill, it suggests indicating a competency one wants to improve, indicating why and when it's useful, and keeping a dated journal, filled with one's perception on how competent one was, describing what one is able to do and what needs to work on, and with a goal setting section in which the actions taken to improve are described. Over time, through critical evaluation and self-reflection, improvement should be seen.

2.5.2 Measuring Persuasion Skills Development

Measuring the ability to be persuasive has been described to be exceedingly difficult, not being easy to quantify, and being something persuasive for someone and neutral for others. (Stanchi, 2006). It's important to be able to measure the effectiveness of a persuasion process, although difficult to measure the actual persuasiveness. Three main reasons are the following; firstly, more time and effort is required, in particular from the studies' participants who might have to continuously fill journals without leaving any information out. Secondly, confounding factors make it difficult, which could be both internal and external. Thirdly, there might be ethical issues involved. For these reasons, perceived persuasiveness, which includes multiple factors, is often used as approximation, and as a first step in measuring actual persuasiveness. So, a reliable and appropriate scale that incorporates multiple factors as sub-scales, with each sub-scale consisting of multiple items, should be used, although still not developed, leaving many researches to use their own measures, even if not validated. (Thomas. Et al., 2019). Moreover, evaluations should not be subjective with unclear standards, which makes it difficult to learn how to improve, but credible and consistent. (Fisher and Siegel, 1987). So, an evaluation scale should assess one's persuasive behaviours and the previously described actions to adopt in order to do an effective persuasion (e.g preparing one's self by analysing the audience, searching common grounds, thinking about coherent and credible arguments and potential objections, etc.). In fact, these aspects can be analysed

through Kirkpatrick's evaluation model (Kirkpatrick J. and Wendy Kayser, 2016), simulations through the critical analysis of one's recordings, and everyday experiences through a reflective learning journal. (Kiffin-Petersen, 2006).

2.5.2.1 Mills' Persuasion Skill Self-Assessment

Pre- and post-training self-assessments allow to compare one's ability in an interval of time, and, if there has been training, to see how much one's improved. When searching online, many are the persuasion skill self-assessment tests which can be found; however, common to all are questions related to how much one prepares before action, how much one listens the other party, how much one tailors the adopted tools and message to the audience, etc.). For this study, the self-assessment tool that has been adopted is Harry Mills' (2004), the CEO of The Aha! Advantage consulting, previously known as the Mills Group. Moreover, he was also appointed as the Harvard ManageMentor in persuasion, which delivers management advice and tools to 6.5 million managers across the globe. This self-assessment includes 25 statements to which give an evaluation on the scale of 1-5 in which 1="Not true", and 5="Very true".

Following are the 25 statements of the Persuasion Skill Self-Assessment:

1. I appropriately establish my qualifications before I try to persuade.
2. When persuading, I offer proof of how people have been able to trust me in the past.
3. I analyze listeners' words and behavior to assess their decision-making style and receptivity.
4. When persuading, I describe the benefits and unique aspects of my idea.
5. I use metaphors, analogies, and stories in my presentations to highlight my key points.
6. I consciously limit the number of points I make in my presentations to no more than five.
7. I support my arguments with highly credible evidence.

8. When I cite facts, data, or statistics, I package the information for clarity and memorability.
9. I encourage feedback from my listeners to activate audience self-persuasion.
10. I use disturbing, leading, and rhetorical questions to encourage audience self-persuasion.
11. I actively listen to my audience and reflect the content and emotions behind their statements.
12. I analyze my audience before persuading, to determine my strategy.
13. I tailor my persuasion strategy, material, and approach for different audiences.
14. I vary my choice of media according to the message I want to communicate.
15. I consciously help others in an effort to build trust and credibility, knowing that this could result in a relationship where others want to help me later.
16. I try to encourage people to make their commitments to my ideas publicly or on paper.
17. I consciously tap the power that comes from titles or positions of authority that I hold.
18. When I possess exclusive information, I emphasize its scarcity value to those I'm persuading.
19. When I promote something, I stress that it's standard practice or part of a popular trend.
20. I associate myself with products, people, or companies that my audience admires.
21. I emphasize the similarities I share with people I want to persuade.
22. When I encounter resistance to my idea, I use paraphrasing and questioning to understand the source of the resistance and to communicate my understanding of the resisters' concerns.
23. I try to establish positive relationships and feelings with people I want to persuade.
24. When I anticipate encountering resistance to my ideas, I raise and understand opponents' arguments before presenting my own views.
25. I use affirmative, assertive speech and win-win language while persuading.

As far as the scoring is concerned:

- 104–125 = Exceptional: talented persuader with a solid understanding of the art and science behind persuasion.
- 78–103 = Superior: highly effective persuader in many areas but would benefit from refining some of your skills.
- 51–77 = Adequate: basic knowledge and practice of persuasion.
- 25–50 = Deficient: there's a need to work broadly on persuasion skills to begin changing or reinforcing others' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours.

2.6 Conclusions

As Negotiation and Persuasion skills have been found to be important to develop, effective teaching methodologies and tools are needed, as it is the balance between preparation and flexible process. Training programmes can be standard or tailored to the target's needs, however, clear goals and clear assessment tools are required. Furthermore, the didactic, analogical, observational, and experiential approaches are the most effective ones. The first based on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge through classes. The second based on learning through the application of knowledge acquired in one context to another one. The third, observational learning, based on taking other's behaviours as models; and finally the experiential approach based on learning through first-hand experience. On the other hand, soft-skills can also be developed through a self-learning approach, which has been considered to be more effective due to the long-term learning process required to develop soft skills. However, these two learning approaches aren't mutually exclusive and complement one another. Furthermore, we're currently facing continuous advancement in the technological field, which has provided more learning tools. In fact, people can not only follow e-learning courses thanks to the invention of internet, computers, and online communities, but have the possibility to learn at 365° degrees by using AI (Augmented Reality), VR (Virtual Reality), and MR (Mixed Reality), immersing one's self in a vivid simulated scenario. So, as far as Negotiation and Persuasion skills are concerned, the main methods to acquire knowledge regarding them and their strategic principles to focus on when preparing, are didactic lessons, use of

PowerPoint presentations, videos, and books. Whereas, tools to put into practice what is learnt and experience it first-hand are preparation worksheets, analysing the main aspects one must consider before approaching a negotiation or persuasion process, simulations, which can also be recorded to critically analyse in a second moment, and self-reflective learning journals. Finally, another method to develop these two skills is through coaching and mentoring, and sessions with one's peers to share different experiences, points of view on one's plans and actions, and advice.

However, measuring a soft skill and the extent to which one has improved in an interval of time is more difficult than measuring one's hard skills, not being tangible; but, as behaviours have been considered to be manifestations of an intent and, depending on the context, evidence of different soft skills, behaviours can be assessed when analysing one's soft skills, reason for which most assessment tests propose a series of statements to evaluate on potential behaviours that one can assume. When analysing the measuring aspect for training, both teaching programmes and participants' skills can be assessed, and the most renowned model is Kirkpatrick's four levels (Reaction, Learning, Behaviour, and Results). Moreover, evaluations should be done from the planning phase of a course to the end of the course, in order to receive feedback and be able to improve; whereas, learners too should assess their skills before and after a training interval of time, to see the effectiveness of the course and their personal progress. Finally, the most common training evaluation methods have been analysed to be surveys, questionnaires, individual and group interviews, action plan monitoring, behaviour observation, target indicators, and critical analysis of one's recordings and reflective learning journal. In particular, the two self-assessments used for this study are the "Tero International, Inc. Self-Assessment" for Negotiation skills and "Mills' Self-Assessment" for Persuasion skills, each composed of 25 statements to be evaluated, items which will be more closely analysed in the next chapter that will focus on analysing the effectiveness of the learning methodologies proposed to the students participating at the "Competenze in Pillole" of Negotiation and Persuasion taught by professors of the Ca' Foscari University Competency Centre.

Chapter III - Experimental Study

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters the main concepts regarding what Negotiation and Persuasion skills are, why they're useful both for one's job and personal life, and how to train and measure them, were described. This chapter will instead focus on the analysis of the training methodologies applied by the Ca' Foscari University Competency Centre during the "Competenze in Pillole" of Negotiation and Persuasion, in order to evaluate their impact on the students' development of these skills.

3.1.1 Ca' Foscari Competency Centre

The Ca' Foscari University of Venice in the 1990s started researching the field of transversal skills, as the first Italian Institution to do so, and in 2012 the Ca' Foscari Competency Centre (CFCC) was founded. In the field of behavioural competencies' assessment and development, it focuses on the research, training and consulting activities, having as its mission the improvement of performance and employability through the development of a competency portfolio. It is internationally recognized for research and implementation of competency-based methodologies, and it systematically collaborates with international scholars of these research topics. As previously described, these skills have become increasingly sought after by organizations that want to gain an advantageous edge in today's competitive and volatile environment, as well as students entering the labour market to help boost their careers. So, the Ca' Foscari Competency Centre offers a wide range of opportunities both for students and organizations.

For Master's Degree students a set of courses, intensive seminars and laboratories are offered, also in collaboration with the Ca' Foscari Career Service, as opportunities for students to strengthen these competencies and increase their employability.

- PerFORMARE EmotivaMENTE encompasses three educational programmes:
 1. Emotional Competencies and Individual Development: a course aiming at the understanding of one's strengths, areas of improvement, definition of one's career goals and identification of ways to achieve them, defining an individual development plan, which is useful to enter the Labour Market.
 2. Competency Lab: a laboratory aiming at increasing participants' awareness of behavioural competencies required today and identifying one's strengths and areas of improvement, in order to achieve one's professional goals and improve one's competitiveness in the Labour Market.
 3. Pills of Competencies ("Competenze in Pillole"): a cycle of Seminars aiming at developing specific soft skills, understanding their importance, gaining awareness of how much they demonstrate these competencies, understanding their relationship with effective behaviours and implementing development strategies. The Behavioural Competencies chosen in the last couple of years for the various Seminars are: Empathy (aimed at developing affective, cognitive empathy and empathic concern), Adaptability (aimed at developing flexibility towards change), Team Working (aimed at developing the ability to work effectively in a team), Communication (aimed at developing the ability to convey a message), Achievement Orientation (aimed at developing personal and professional goals), Stress Management and Self Control (aimed at developing the ability to manage and transform the effects of stress), Negotiation (aimed at developing the ability to reach win-win agreements), and Persuasion (aimed at developing the ability to obtain others' consent). The participation at one of the two above mentioned programmes gives access to the Pills of Competency, which is an initiative conducted by CFCC in collaboration with UMANA, an Employment Agency.

- Leadership: courses aiming at providing students with the necessary knowledge for analysing and understanding the leadership process from an organizational perspective and having the ability to interpret those behaviours associated to an effective leadership in the business context.

Other educational activities in collaboration with the Ca' Foscari Career Service:

- PensaFuturo: a didactic module aimed at identifying one's professional aspirations and gain awareness on one's desired future job, in order to develop a coherent career path, through a series of self-reflective activities to understand one's ideal self and personal vision.
- Emotional Leadership Lab for Excellence (ELLE): a laboratory aimed at developing and spreading the value of Inclusive Leadership, by better understanding the concepts of Leadership and Inclusiveness, and the skills that fuel Inclusive Leadership, developing emotional awareness and confidence, recognizing organizational practices that can help promote it, and designing a development path for Inclusive Leadership.

Whereas for Companies and professionals the CFCC offers the following opportunities:

1. Career Lab: aiming at developing Emotional and Social skills for professional success.
2. Development, Analysis and Assessment of individual competencies: aiming at developing a set of skills (Resonant Leadership, Social Skills, Self-Control, Flexibility, Achievement Orientation, Will Power, Stress Management, Social Awareness, Innovating through Behavioural Competencies, Team Working, Public Speaking and Persuasion).
3. Customized Support to Human Resource Departments for the design and implementation of Competency based HR Management processes, enabling supervision of the behavioural skills considered relevant for the achievement of the Company's strategic objectives in the medium-long term.

3.1.1.1 Learning Methodologies

The Learning Methodologies applied by the CFCC are: Interactive in-Class Meetings and on-line activities, experiential techniques such as simulations, team discussions, peer

coaching sessions and self-reflective activities. For professionals and Companies learning modules are more personalized with the possibility of having individual coaching sessions as well. All programmes are based on Boyatzis' (2006) Intentional Change Theory, previously described as more effective and long-lasting. So, the Competency Centre combines the main learning methodologies such as the didactic, analogical and observational approaches, through theoretical lessons, use of videos and examples with group discussions in order to enrich the student with the needed related knowledge, which is the base to start from. Then experiential approaches are implemented such as realistic simulations and role-plays, in order to gain practical experience in a risk free environment, and a self-reflective learning approach through keeping a personal behavioural journal. These approaches, as other assessment tools, will be further analysed in this chapter for Negotiation and Persuasion, the two soft skills object of the analysis of this study.

3.2 “Competenze in Pillole”: Negotiation and Persuasion

This research focuses on two of the soft skills included in the “Competenze in Pillole” (Pills of Competencies) seminars offered by the Ca' Foscari Competency Centre (CFCC) during the Academic Year 2020/2021: Negotiation and Persuasion, open to Master's Degree students who have followed the “Emotional Competencies and Individual Development” Course or the “Competency Lab”. These are seven hours two-day interactive in-class meetings delivered in two afternoons by Ca' Foscari University professors that are part of the CFCC, with the support of a series of out-of-class activities, in order to gain knowledge about the importance of certain specific skills and their impact on one's performance, gain awareness about how much one possesses these skills, understand how these skills relate to effective behaviours, and adopt strategies to develop these skills. This chapter will firstly analyse the teaching and learning methodologies that were common to the two skills, and secondly focus on each of them and the analysis of the results of the applied assessment tools.

3.2.1 General Training Methodologies

Both seminars (Negotiation and Persuasion) were scheduled for the month of April 2021, and due to the current Covid-19 Pandemic could not take place in presence but only through Zoom online sessions. However, for both Pillars of Competencies the following training and assessment methodologies were used:

3.2.1.1 Self-Assessment

For each skill an initial online self-assessment questionnaire was proposed to the participants in order to assess their current level of possession of the specific skill related to the Seminar before training. The specific scales for each skill is found in the previous chapter, but will be further analysed in the appropriate section. However, together with the Negotiation or Persuasion skill self-assessment, an Empathy skill assessment has been conducted. As described in the first chapter, the two skills object of analysis of this research are closely interrelated to many other soft skills (e.g. communication, adaptability, stress management, etc), and in particular with Empathy which is strongly required in order to effectively understand the other parties and be in tune with them, creating a better relationship. The same self-assessment, composed by the Empathy scale and the Negotiation/Persuasion scale, was used before the Seminars started and a month after each finished, leaving an interval of one and a half months between the initial and final skills assessment.

3.2.1.1.1 Empathy Self-Assessment

The Empathy self-assessment test used is the “Interpersonal Reactivity Index” developed by Davis (1980), a widely used measure of individual differences in empathy. It’s a 28-items questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “Does not describe me well” to 5 = “Describes me very well”, having four seven-item subscales, each of which analyses a specific aspect of the global concept of “Empathy”, which Davis defines as “reactions of one individual to the observed experiences of another”. These four subscales are the following:

- Fantasy subscale: measures one's tendencies to transpose imaginatively into the feelings and actions of fictitious characters in books, movies, and plays. In the questionnaire that follows the 7 items of these subscale are: 1, 5, 7, 12, 16, 23, and 26;
- Empathic Concern subscale: measures the "other-oriented" feelings of sympathy, concern, and compassion, representing the emotional component of empathy. In the questionnaire that follows the 7 items of these subscale are: 2, 4, 9, 14, 18, 20, and 22.
- Personal Distress: measures one's personal feelings of anxiety and discomfort that result from observing another's negative experience. In the questionnaire that follows the 7 items of this subscale are: 6, 10, 13, 17, 19, 24, and 27.
- Perspective Taking: measures one's tendency to spontaneously adopt the psychological point of view of others, representing a cognitive component of empathy. In the questionnaire that follows the 7 items of this subscale are: 3, 8, 11, 15, 21, 25 and 28.

Following are the 28 statements of the Empathy Skill Self-Assessment:

1. I daydream and fantasize, with some regularity, about things that might happen to me.
2. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.
3. I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other guy's" point of view. (-)
4. Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems. (-)
5. I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel.
6. In emergency situations, I feel apprehensive and ill-at-ease.
7. I am usually objective when I watch a movie or play, and I don't often get completely caught up in it. (-)
8. I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.
9. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.
10. I sometimes feel helpless when I am in the middle of a very emotional situation.

11. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.
12. Becoming extremely involved in a good book or movie is somewhat rare for me. (-)
13. When I see someone get hurt, I tend to remain calm. (-)
14. Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal. (-)
15. If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments. (-)
16. After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters.
17. Being in a tense emotional situation scares me.
18. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them. (-)
19. I am usually pretty effective in dealing with emergencies. (-)
20. I am often quite touched by things that I see happen.
21. I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.
22. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.
23. When I watch a good movie, I can very easily put myself in the place of a leading character.
24. I tend to lose control during emergencies.
25. When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his shoes" for a while.
26. When I am reading an interesting story or novel, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me.
27. When I see someone who badly needs help in an emergency, I go to pieces.
28. Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.

The 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “Does not describe me well” to 5 = “Describes me very well”, uses a reverse-score for the above items having “(-)” at the end of the statement, which are item 3, 4, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19.

For this research, in order to keep the attention of the students answering both the Empathy questionnaire and the skill’s questionnaire related to the Seminar they were following, only two Empathy subscales, considered as more representative of their relation to Negotiation and Persuasion skills, were used: Empathic Concern and Perspective Taking, which integrate an emotional component of concern (Empathic Concern) and a cognitive component of being able to adopt another’s point of view (Perspective Taking).

3.2.1.1.2 Development Plan Questionnaire

At the end of the final self-assessment, proposed a month after the end of each Seminar, a series of questions regarding the use and effectiveness of the Journaling, Peer-Coaching and Development Plan activities, were asked to the participants relating them to the specific skill of the just attended Seminar:

- How often did you fill out your Journal for this skill after attending the seminar?
 - Never;
 - Once a day;
 - More times during a week;
 - Once a week;
 - Once every two weeks;
 - Once a month
 - Less frequently than once a month;
 - Other:

- How many forms have you filled out of your diary after attending this skills seminar? (in number)

- Indicate the positive aspects and benefits you've perceived by doing the journaling activity in your development process?

- Indicate the difficulties you've encountered in practicing the Journaling activity for this skill.

- Referring to the Journaling activity indicate in a 7-point scale how much you agree with the following statements, where 1="I totally disagree", and 7="I totally agree".

- It helped me to gain awareness of my progress in time in my development plan of this skill.
- It helped me to identify behaviours that brought me to have positive outcomes in the development of this skill.
- It helped me to reflect on the behaviours used that are little or not at all effective to develop this skill.
- It helped me to reflect on how to modify my behaviours in order to obtain positive outcomes in the following development experience.

- How often did you organise peer-coaching sessions for this skill after attending the seminar?

- Never;
- Once a week;
- Once every two weeks;
- Once a month
- Once every two months;
- Other:

- How many peer-coaching sessions have you organised since attending this skills Seminar? (in number)

- Indicate the positive aspects and benefits you've perceived by doing the peer-coaching activity in your development process?

- Indicate the difficulties you've encountered in practicing the peer-coaching activity for this skill.

- Referring to the peer-coaching activity indicate in a 7-point scale how much you agree with the following statements, where 1="I totally disagree", and 7="I totally agree".

- The dialogue with my coach helped me to gain awareness of my progress in time in my development plan of this skill.
- The dialogue with my coach helped me to identify behaviours that brought me to have positive outcomes in the development of this skill.
- The dialogue with my coach helped me to reflect on the behaviours used that are little or not at all effective to develop this skill.
- The dialogue with my coach helped me to reflect on how to modify my behaviours in order to obtain positive outcomes in the following development experience.
- Being a coach to my peer helped me to explore new ways to develop this skill which I hadn't considered or experimented in my personal development experience.
- Being a coach to my peer helped me to formulate questions that I too then used to reflect on my personal development experience of this skill.

- Describe the positive aspects and benefits you've encountered in the designing and out into practice of Development Plan for this skill.

- Describe the difficulties you've encountered in the designing and out into practice of Development Plan for this skill.



- Referring to the Development Plan activity indicate in a 7-point scale how much you agree with the following statements, where 1="I totally disagree", and 7="I totally agree".
 - Designing the plan helped me reflect on the techniques/behaviours that are more effective to experiment, in the specific context.
 - Designing the plan helped me improve my confidence in my abilities.
 - Designing the plan helped me persuade my counterpart.
 - I'm altogether satisfied about how I put into practice my development plan.

3.2.1.2 Interactive in-class meetings

During the introductory part of the first meeting a brief group discussion to reflect on why students chose to attend, their expectations, the problems they've encountered related to these skills, and their current understanding of the Negotiation or Persuasion concept, depending on the Seminar, was done. Supporting digital tools were also used to let everyone create a visual post about how he/she perceived that one skill, with text, images and videos. As previously described, it's important to reflect on the motivation that drives someone to do something, in this case to follow the seminars, and having a group discussion allows participants to add thoughts and reflections that others might agree upon or might not yet have realized the importance for them as well. It then also allowed the professors teaching the Course to understand the main initial expectations and level of knowledge to make the programme as interesting and effective as possible.

The in-class seminars were then structured to let participants know that these skills can be developed, and to start from developing students' knowledge upon the studied skills, starting from the main definitions given in the years, highlighting the main concepts on which to reflect upon, describing behaviours that can be easily confused as those skills,

and describing how they're important and useful in everyday-life and their rankings among the various employment skills. In fact, it's important for participants to have a clear idea on the concepts and the borders. As previously described in regard to Persuasion, it's important to differ it from Manipulation, as it's important to differ compromise or aggression from Negotiation skills. Videos and practical examples were also used to better explain the theoretical concepts of what is a good practice and what instead is a bad practice, allowing participants to have a clear example of a model to imitate and not imitate, as observational and analogical approaches integrated to the traditional didactic approach, have been found to be more effective, because more easily understood, remembered, and taken as an example in future contexts. Furthermore, after videos or exercises group discussions were always present in order to create a reflective and interactive context, instead of a passive one, focusing on the main theoretical concepts explained and on identifying specific behaviours, understanding their impact on the process of Negotiation or Persuasion present in the video, and a final recap of the professor. Students were then also invited to identify someone they knew who they thought had good negotiation or persuasion skills towards them, and analyse their behaviours and the reactions they themselves had, as not the more active part but the passive one, in order to analyse both what the other party did or said which was more effective and what it means to be in the shoes of who is, for example, persuaded.

As the main concepts were analysed, a brief attention was also put on the neurophysiological aspect in order to understand how messages are perceived by others, and how people try to find links between what they hear and their "Self", try to understand the other's point of view from their words and expressions, interpret a situation, comparing it with previous ones, and finally evaluate the potential outcomes of accepting what one's counterpart suggests, analysing their arguments but also bearing in mind the significance of one's own emotions and impact. In fact, described in the introductory chapters, there are three operating systems in the human brain which react differently to certain stimuli, and emotions are always involved, reason to develop one's skills to manage them effectively and at the same time understand how sub-conscious reactions can affect one's decisions and behaviours.

Moreover, during the in-class sessions, although everything happened through zoom, today's technology allowed to form small groups, or pairs, during the Seminars to allow the participants to confront themselves with their peers, through realistic simulations and role-play scenarios, which will be further presented in the specific skill sections, which gave participants the opportunity to practice their skills and the learnt strategies in a risk-free environment, as well as peer-coaching sessions, which allowed participants to reflect with their peers on past experiences and exchange advice. At the end of these activities a short survey, analysing one's own behaviours and the others', was always conducted, and the results of the first meeting, which will be in this chapter presented together with the ones of the second meeting, were summarized and presented, by explaining what went better and worse, at the beginning of the following session.

Finally, what was taught throughout both Seminars was the value of being prepared before starting a Negotiation or Persuasion process, which includes, doing research and planning. For this aspect homework was given to be done in between the meetings that were organized with a week's interval. These activities will shortly be described in the next paragraph which will present the out-of-class activities, and further described in the section of each skill.

3.2.1.3 Out-of-class activities

In between the two meetings of each seminar, and also after the second session, reflective activities to do at home in order to develop one's skills were proposed. The first two activities aim at experimenting and practicing a skill, whereas the third and fourth aim at reflecting on ones development experience. The last one aims at understanding the Return of Expectations of the participants, the degree of satisfaction, the topics regarded as most useful, and their thoughts for improvement.

1. Filling out a Training Form: analysing one's goal, context, counterpart or audience, and new behaviours required, knowing that at first they might be unnatural.
2. Designing a Development Plan: analysing potential strategies to use and actions to take to be effective in the negotiation or persuasion process, knowing that

repetition helps memorize and improve the new behaviours required and that at first seem unnatural.

3. **Keeping a Self-Reflective Journal:** writing a diary and reflecting upon one's experiences in putting a skill into practice had during the day, by registering the date and describing the context in which one put the skill into practice, the actions adopted to practice the skill, perceived positive and negative outcomes, positive and negative aspects others perceived and let know, and final reflections about how one felt in that specific situation, the difficulties encountered, what could have been done differently, and how one would behave if the same situation happens in the future.
4. **Having Peer-Coaching Sessions:** analysing one's experiences and thoughts together with a peer, by exchanging roles and being both a coach and a "coachee". A form used to fill out the date of the session, how long one was a "coachee" for, the main topics that were discussed, the obtained benefits and the coach's questions that helped one reflect more.
5. **Filling out the Satisfaction Questionnaire:** analysing how satisfied participants were with the activities done in class through a 7-point scale, if they satisfied one's expectations, made participants feel active and involved, were clear and effective, created awareness of the skill, and helped practice the skill and start a self-development process; and as open short questions what were the topics that were most useful and the aspects to improve.

3.2.2 Specific Training Methodologies

As previously mentioned, self-assessments, simulations, short surveys, and filling out training forms and development plans for each skills, were, together with all the others that were mentioned above, activities proposed during these seminars to the participants, but have to be analysed separately due to their specificity to their related skill.

3.2.2.1 Negotiation

For the seminar on Negotiation, which two meetings took part on the 6th and 13th of April 2021, other than the above mentioned, didactic, observational, self-reflective general methodologies, specific experiential simulations, surveys, self-assessments and training forms were used.

3.2.2.1.1 Self-Assessment

As previously described, both before and a month after the end of the Seminar, students had to fill out a self-assessment questionnaire, which had an initial part related to Empathy, using the above described two subscales of Empathic Concern and Perspective Taking, and the “Tero International, Inc. Negotiation Skill Self-Assessment”, a 25-item questionnaire, described in the previous chapter. At the end of the Seminar on the Negotiation skill, together with the Empathy and Negotiation self-assessments, were the above reported series of questions on the use and effectiveness of the Journaling, Peer-Coaching, and Development Plan activities for training one’s Negotiation skills.

3.2.2.1.2 Simulation 1

The first Negotiation simulation took part during the first meeting, after having explained the main theoretical concepts regarding this skill, potential strategies and practiced understanding a couple of examples through videos and group discussions. Participants were divided in groups of two and had to choose who wanted to have role A and role B, without knowing other specific details. Once chosen the role, each participant accessed their file which included the information of that role and could not read the information about the other party. A set time of 20 minutes was given and participants had to start negotiating.

In this first simulation the type of negotiation was a buying and selling type, in which one was the buyer of a Venetian boat and the other the seller. Both had basic information about the context, the initial price offered, their budget and the amount they couldn’t afford to raise to buy it or lower to sell it. Furthermore, the short report also included a set of optional products and services that the buyer could choose from and the information

for the buyer that they had two parking places, one of which could be rented at a negotiable price, and the seller knew he/she needed a new parking spot. Participants were then asked to start from a greeting, knowing that there could be both an agreement or not.

At the end of the simulation a short survey was conducted on the reached agreement, their motivation, one's own behaviours, the other's behaviours, perceived obstacles and problems during the negotiation process, how they were solved, and the overall satisfaction. However, based on the collected data, an important aspect to focus on came up, having students of the same pair with different answers filled out about the reached agreement, meaning it wasn't formalized well, which also helped students to realize how important it is to not close the deal quickly. Moreover, the first simulation showed how the other party's RV (Reservation Value) and interests weren't analysed too much, and these results, together with a summary of encountered difficulties (e.g. rapidity in one's reactions, organizing one's thoughts, listening to the other party, etc.), as well as the positive aspects encountered in one's counterpart (e.g. flexibility, respect, confidence, etc.) were presented at the beginning of the following meeting for a group self reflection and analysis.

3.2.2.1.3 Training Form

Participants needed to fill out their training form during the week that separated the two meetings, thinking about a request or an offer for which one wanted to reach an agreement with one's counterpart, describing the request/offer/idea and identifying who the counterpart is. Then, based on the context, preparing one's self by identifying one's own interests, BATNA, and Exit point, and the other party's interests, BATNA, level of priority for this request/offer, if there was something one's counterpart couldn't do and, if so, what these limits depended on. Finally, identifying possible solutions to enlarging the pie, based on one's own and the counterpart's interests, understanding if they are reconcilable and which elements can be taken into consideration to enlarge the pie and create value for both sides.

3.2.2.1.4 Simulation 2

The second simulation for the Negotiation skill took place during the second meeting and placed students in pairs with 30 minutes to negotiate in their new role of HR manager or candidate for a job. This time the simulation was about having an HR manager in need of hiring a marketing specialist and a candidate in need of finding a job; however there were two types of HR managers and two types of Candidates. As for the previous simulation, participants were requested to choose their role “A” or “B” without further information, then open their file, read their profile information and start the negotiation process.

As far as the HR manager profiles were concerned, the company would be in both cases meeting someone they were very interested in, knowing in one case the price range offered for another very qualified candidate and the average salary range for that job position, and in the other case knowing other candidates have been interviewed, although none caught the interest of the HR manager, and only knowing the average salary for that job position. Furthermore, a series of additional needs were included in the manager’s profile (e.g. the need for the candidate to have a car and work full-time, and the knowledge that there is a current difficulty in providing formation and career perspectives). On the other hand, the candidates were given the knowledge of the salary range for their job position, and were in one case told they had other interviews that didn’t go well, and in the other case that they had another interview which had a good salary. Finally, also for the candidate’s role, there were some other options they had to negotiate (e.g. wishing for formation, career, flexible hours and a company car). As for the first simulation, participants were told to start by wishing each other at the beginning, knowing they could reach an agreement, as well as not reach it, and to profit from the experience, making it as realistic as possible.

At the end of the simulation a short survey was conducted on the reached agreement, their motivation, one’s own behaviours, the other’s behaviours, perceived obstacles and problems during the negotiation process, how they were solved, and the overall satisfaction. The assessment questions were similar to the one’s at the end of the first simulation, making them comparable. What emerged is that the previous problem of pairs not answering in the same way as far as the final agreement was concerned was greatly reduced, evidence of how useful the prior presentations of this problematic factor had

been. Moreover, students evaluated both themselves and their partner for the simulation as better listeners, better researchers of common ground and mutually satisfactory agreements, and better managers of emotions, compared to the previous results.

3.2.2.1.5 Development Plan

During the week that followed the second meeting, participants were invited to fill out their Development Plan, analysing their role in the situation of the simulation done in class or another situation they find themselves negotiating something, identifying concrete actions to put into practice for the following various steps:

1. Understanding one's counterpart interests and needs, searching for information through potential actions to take before the negotiation process itself, while preparing, and during the negotiation.
2. Verifying and managing one's own and the other's alternative, by the identification of specific actions to put into practice in this context to make one's own alternative better, and the counterpart's worse, both during the preparation phase and the negotiation process.
3. Practicing particular tactics during the Negotiation process, identifying potential tactics one can use and for what scope, and describing concrete possible actions and phrases one can use in this context, and what to do if reaching an agreement is more challenging.

3.2.2.2 Persuasion

For the seminar on Persuasion, which two meetings took part on the 20th and 27th of April 2021, other than the above mentioned, didactic, observational, self-reflective general methodologies, specific experiential simulations, surveys, self-assessments and training forms were used.

3.2.2.2.1 Self-Assessment

As previously described, both before and a month after the end of the seminar, students had to fill out a self-assessment questionnaire, which had an initial part related to Empathy, using the above described two subscales of Empathic Concern and Perspective

Taking, and the “Mills’ Persuasion Skill Self-Assessment”, a 25-item questionnaire, described in the previous chapter. At the end of the Seminar on the Persuasion skill, together with the Empathy and Persuasion self-assessments, were the above reported series of questions on the use and effectiveness of the Journaling, Peer-Coaching, and Development Plan activities for training one’s Persuasion skills.

3.2.2.2.2 Simulation

During the first meeting of the Persuasion pill, after having explained the concept of what Persuasion is, why it’s useful and important in everyday life, and its main related strategies, participants were invited to think about something they didn’t like doing, and were then divided into pairs, having 30 minutes to let the other know what they had thought of as something annoying to do, think about possible questions to ask to better understand the target’s reasons, general likes and dislikes, and other potential factors that could then be used in one’s arguments. Then think about a possible persuasive speech and possible objections that could arise, and debrief about the arguments that would have been used and ask for the other’s objections, to confront them with ones previously identified.

At the end of this activity a short survey was conducted and the results on the effective use of understanding the other’s interests, emphasis of benefits, use of concrete evidence, anticipation of objections, adopted strategies, and the main difficulties that arose, positive aspects and other aspects to improve, were then analysed together, at the beginning of the following meeting.

3.2.2.2.2.1 Simulation Feedback

At the end of the simulation a short survey was conducted on how much certain behaviours were put into practice on a 5 point scale where 1=“Not at all” and 5=“Very much”.

- How motivated, from 1 to 5, did you feel when persuading your partner?
- Evaluate how much you think you have been able to put effectively into action the following behaviours:

- I was able to ask effective questions to my partner in order to understand his/her perspective on what he/she didn't like doing.
 - I was able to research and identify my partner's main interests.
 - I was able to propose arguments that were able to emphasize the benefits my partner could have if he/she did the activity he/she didn't like.
 - I was able to use in my arguments concrete evidence in order to increase the perception on the degree these expected benefits would happen.
 - I was able to anticipate my partner's potential objections.
 - I believe I was able to modify my partner's perspective regarding the activity he/she thought as annoying, making it be more enjoyable.
- Describe your reflections on your persuasion skills, indicating the difficulties you've encountered, how they were dealt with, and the strategies you adopted and that you thought were effective:

- Evaluate how much you think your partner was able to put effectively into action the following behaviours:
 - He/She asked me effective questions to identify my interests and my perspective regarding the activity I don't like doing.
 - He/She proposed convincing arguments, emphasising the benefits of doing the activity that I don't like doing.
 - He/She was able to bring concrete evidence to make me perceive these benefits of doing the activity I don't like as more probable to occur.
 - He/She was able to anticipate my objections in his/her arguments.
 - He/She was able to modify my perspective regarding the activity I don't like, making me perceive it as more enjoyable.
- Describe your reflections on your partner's persuasion skills, indicating the aspects that struck you more in his/her questions and arguments::

3.2.2.2.3 Training Form

Between the first and second meeting of the persuasion skills Seminar, the participants were invited to fill out a personal training form which encompassed the following aspects, such as thinking about a request or offer one wanted to propose to a second party to obtain its consent considering the benefits one would gain from one's own point of view. Then focusing on gaining awareness of the other party's perspective, by identifying who it is, and his/her point of view (benefits he/she could obtain, losses he/she could avoid and the degree of his/her ability to listen to the proposal). Finally identifying which consequences to emphasize more in one's argumentations in order to facilitate a positive attitude, identifying which concrete evidence to use in order to increase the other party's perception that the expected positive outcomes will come about and possible objections and rebuttal.

3.2.2.2.4 Peer-Coaching

During the second meeting, students were divided into pairs for a session of Peer-Coaching, at the end of which a short survey was conducted on a 5-point scale, where 1="Not at all" and 5="Very much".

- How much did you feel motivated in suggesting persuasive tactics to your partner?
- Evaluate how much you think you have been able to put effectively into action the following behaviours:
 - I listened carefully and with interest to what my partner was saying, asking questions to better understand my partner's interlocutor and situation.
 - I suggested to my partner a few tactics that I think could be effective in his/her situation, explaining why.
 - My partner made me perceive he/she would follow my advice and put into practice the persuasion tactics I suggested to persuade his/her interlocutor.
- Evaluate how much you think your partner was able to put effectively into action the following behaviours:

- My partner listened to the situation I described with interest, and asked me questions to better understand my interlocutor and context.
 - My partner suggested a few persuasion tactics he/she thought would be effective in my situation.
 - I'll surely put into practice the suggestions he/she gave me to persuade my interlocutor.
- Describe your reflections regarding the confrontation with your partner to research effective persuasive tactics:

3.2.2.2.5 Development Plan

At the end of the Seminar of Persuasion skills the participants were invited to fill up a development plan reflecting on a situation and concrete actions to build one's credibility describing the typology of one's interlocutor (e.g. how receptive he/she is and his/her way of making decisions). Then structuring one's persuasive speech by developing arguments, thinking of the potential tactics to use, anticipating and preparing for objections and thinking of ways to emotionally connect to one's target. Finally considering non verbal and para-verbal communication that is coherent with one's verbal communication, and effective tactics to encourage one's audience to take the desired actions, by also managing social factors.

3.3 Quasi-Experimental Design

This research focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of the above mentioned training approaches and development tools used during the ("Pills of Competencies") of the skills of Negotiation and Persuasion by the Ca' Foscari Competency Centre from April to June 2021.

It adopts a quasi-experimental research design method, which is often used to evaluate the effects of specific interventions, providing, in this case, legitimate answers to fundamental questions, regarding the status of the students participating at the Seminars and their improvement after following the Seminars, and the comparison of the status of the research sample that has received training compared to the control sample that didn't. In fact, if the training has been effective, the results of the assessments when the Course is completed should be good, meaningful improvement should also be found comparing very similar pre- and post- training assessments, and positive differences should be evident by comparing the Experimental Sample with the Control one. Whether the results indicate improvement, or not, there could be other reasons influencing the outcome; however, this study will objectively report the results obtained from the collected data. Given the small research samples and the shortage of studies on this topic, this research can provide an initial screening of the possible effectiveness of the adopted interventions, and, if the results are positive, the intervention may be effective and worth further investigation. By adopting a quasi-experimental design, no random assignment occurs, as it would for experimental designs, however, it has been proved that nonrandomized experiments can yield accurate answers and can have a high degree of internal validity. (Thyer, 2012). The design has also been constructed to meet the situational needs by having considered the purpose, setting, and available resources, as a single ideal standard for designs in applied environments doesn't exist. Although this type of design by not being randomized might limit the ability to conclude a causal association between an intervention and an outcome, different biases might occur, such as, for example, the maturation bias, historical bias, Hawthorne effect, it is also sufficiently versatile as to be useful in the evaluation of any intervention, less expensive, requiring fewer resources compared with randomized trials, and appropriate when randomization is deemed unethical. Furthermore, quasi-experimental studies evaluate the real-world effectiveness of an intervention rather than efficacy of an intervention implemented by research staff under research conditions, and can therefore also be more generalizable and have better external validity than randomized controlled trials (RCTs). They can screen out ineffective treatments and identify potentially effective ones, test theories and produce generalizable knowledge and pilot data, involving control groups. (Thyer, 2012; Schweizer et al., 2016). Additionally, as previously mentioned, quasi-experimental

designs are capable of answering some very important questions, comparing treated groups to others who received no treatment, and “may be usefully employed to empirically ascertain if those improvements occurred or not, and in some cases, to permit tentative causal inferences as to the effects of treatment”. (Thyer, 2012).

3.3.1 Method

The adopted methodology for this research consists in the collection of data, both quantitative and qualitative, having an Experimental Research Sample for each skill together with a Control Sample in order to obtain more reliable results and also to compare the training impact of the experimental sample with a control group which has not attended these or any other Course related to these skills. Furthermore, in order to ensure a certain degree of uniformity and comparison among the results, the data collection has been done through standardized document structures analysing the above described aspects. Participants were in fact asked to select one option only in the multiple choice questions and input actual qualitative data under provided headings. Moreover, the self-assessments used before the training sessions, were the same as the ones used at the end of the Seminars. The data collection was done in a fixed period for all participants, using a digital online software which didn't allow changes to previously selected answers for the initial and final self-assessments and word, or pdf, compiled documents received by e-mail before the deadline for the activity, and could therefore also not be modified in a later date. In particular, the data was collected in the following timeframes:

- Negotiation Research Sample:
 - Pre-training self-assessment: 5-6 April 2021
 - Post-training self-assessment: 24 May – 2 June 2021

- Persuasion Research Sample:
 - Pre-training self-assessment: 18 – 20 April 2021
 - Post-training self-assessment: 10 June – 24 June 2021

- Control Research Sample:
 - Pre-training self-assessment: 12 – 25 May 2021
 - Post-training self-assessment: 19 – 29 July 2021

The data collected from the self-assessments was elaborated using the RStudio software and statistical programming language R.

3.3.1.1 Participants

The participants of the Experimental Research Sample, were Ca' Foscari University Master's Degree students from various Faculties, who had already followed at least one Introductory Course, gaining an awareness of what behavioural competencies really are, why they are useful, and which of them are more appropriate to achieve their own personal goals. In particular:

- The experimental sample for the Negotiation skills was composed of 22 students.
- The experimental sample for the Persuasion skills was composed of 24 students.

Based on the general profile of the two Experimental Research Samples (age, degree, and work experience) a Control Research Sample was selected to be as uniform as possible with the experimental research sample. In particular, in order to create a Control sample which was most similar to the Experimental sample, in the initial self-assessment a set of questions on their personal profile were asked, assessing their age, gender, status (e.g. Master's Degree student), last obtained degree (e.g. Bachelor's Degree), field of study, internship experience of at least 3 months coherent with one's career goals, and total number of months working experience coherent with one's future goals and not coherent with them. The respondents for the Control sample were furthermore asked if they had previously participated in any soft skill's programme, and if so which one, and their perceived knowledge on soft skills. From all the received answers, a Control sample that was similar for the profile qualities of age, status, work experience, and size with the Experimental Research sample participating at the Negotiation and Persuasion skill Seminar, was created. For all the Research samples the date of birth ranged from 1994 to 1999, so the recent graduates were included in the Control sample as the Experimental sample also included graduating students, all with almost no working experience. As far as the field of study and gender are concerned, the two samples vary slightly, having a few more students from Scientific Faculties and male respondents in the Control sample,

compared to the analysed participants at the Seminars. Finally, the Experimental sample is entirely composed of Ca' Foscari University students, whereas the Control sample is composed both by Ca' Foscari students as well as students from other Italian Universities.

In particular:

- The control sample for the Negotiation skills was composed of 22 students including new graduates.
- The control sample for the Persuasion skills was composed of 24 students including new graduates.

3.3.1.2 Negotiation Tasks and Measures

The activities considered for this Research regarding the Negotiation Skill for the Experimental Research sample were the initial and final self-assessment on Empathy (using Davis' subscales of Empathic Concern and Perspective Taking) and on Negotiation (using the Tero International, Inc. scale), both previously described. The data collected from these self-assessments was purely quantitative.

Other activities considered in this Research with regard to the Experimental Negotiation Sample are the short semi-quantitative and semi-qualitative surveys conducted at the end of the two above described Negotiation stimulations, and qualitative data resulting from the analysis of the participants' answers to the standardized modules of the Training Form, the Development Plan, Peer-Coaching and Journaling activities.

Whereas the only data collected and analysed in connection to the Negotiation skill for the Control Sample was the self-assessment of Negotiation using the same scale used for the Experimental Sample.

3.3.1.3 Persuasion Tasks and Measures

The activities considered in this Research regarding the Persuasion Skill for the Experimental Research sample were the initial and final self-assessment on Empathy (using Davis' subscales of Empathic Concern and Perspective Taking) and on Persuasion (using Mills' Scale), both previously described. The data collected from these self-assessments was purely quantitative.

Other activities considered in this Research with regard to the Experimental Persuasion Sample are the short semi-quantitative and semi-qualitative surveys conducted at the end of the above described Persuasion stimulation and Peer-Coaching activity, and qualitative data resulting from the analysis of the participants' answers to the standardized modules of the Training Form, the Development Plan, Peer-Coaching and Journaling activities.

Whereas the only data collected and analysed in connection to the Persuasion skill for the Control Sample was the self-assessment of Persuasion using the same scale used for the Experimental Sample.

3.3.2 Results

The Results obtained from the analysis of the previously described activities together with the above mentioned data collection tools will follow below under the heading of the specific skill they relate to. In particular the results of the quantitative data collected from the self-assessments will be presented in tables showing the mean value before and after the Training Session, their difference and the "W" Value and the P-value, using the Wilcoxon non-parametric statistical hypothesis Test, having small samples and data which is not normally distributed. The Results considered as significant will be the ones having a P-Value which is less than 0.05, and will be identifiable with "*" at the end of the row. In particular, for each skill's self-assessment the results of the Experimental Sample will be compared to the ones of the Control Sample, considering each scale both as a whole and as single items, analysed individually. Moreover, other than analysing the

results of all the participants of each Seminar, sub-samples from the Experimental Sample of each skill will be analysed comparing students who have participated at only one of the two programmes and those who participated at both. Finally, in regard to the Empathy data collected, the results will be presented as a whole focusing only on the most significant changes, and analysing its correlation to each skill.

The Results obtained from the semi-quantitative and the semi-qualitative short surveys, and from the qualitative filled out modules, will then be analysed in a descriptive way, using explained graphs for the most quantitative and comparable data.

3.3.2.1 Negotiation

The comparison of the results of the Negotiation self-assessments before and after the training session, by the experimental sample, showed how the 22 participants increased Collaboration behaviours, while slightly increasing aggression and compromise behaviours, whereas accommodation behaviours slightly decreased. However, the results of the avoidance dimension show how this subscale as a whole did not vary much. (Table 3.1)

	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	Mean_t1-t0	W	P_value
Avoidance	2.8636	2.9182	0.0545	245	0.9530
Aggression	2.4773	2.8273	0.3500	177.5	0.1309
Accommodation	3.5273	3.4273	-0.1000	279.5	0.3826
Compromise	3.5818	3.7636	0.1818	201	0.3394
Collaboration	3.2545	3.6636	0.4091	145	0.0224*

(Table 3.1 – Negotiation Results for Dimension)

As far as the single items of the Negotiation self-assessment scale are concerned, the results will be presented by the 5 dimensions, considering the items in order for dimension from the 25-item questionnaire described in the previous chapter.

As far as the items regarding the Avoidance subscale are concerned, the 1st item in the table below (Table 3.2), which corresponds to the 6th item in the questionnaire as a whole, previously presented, shows a nearly significant increase of participants' behaviours in postponing a discussion until they have had time to think. This table also shows how participants slightly reduced avoiding controversial situations. However, altogether, participants in general didn't reduce their avoidance behaviours.

Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
1 I try to postpone discussions until I have had some time to think.	2.8636	3.4545	0.5909	166	0.0536
2 I find conflict stressful and will avoid it any way I can.	3.1905	3.2727	0.0823	230	0.9900
3 If asked to do something I don't agree with or don't want to do, I'll do it but deliberately won't do it as well as I could have.	2.4545	2.4545	0.0000	244.5	0.9609
4 I let my body language communicate my feelings rather than telling people directly how I feel.	2.5909	2.4545	-0.1364	260	0.6640
5 I avoid taking positions that would create controversy.	3.1818	2.9545	-0.2273	277.5	0.3925

(Table 3.2 – Negotiation Results: Dimension of Avoidance)

As far as the items regarding the Aggression subscale are concerned, a very significant change appears for the 1st item of this subscale, which would be the 3rd in the questionnaire as a whole. In fact, the table below (Table 3.3) shows how participants after the training sessions started to adopt behaviours of trying to win by convincing the other

party of the logic and benefits of their position. Furthermore, a slight increase in participants' attention to achievement compared to relational issues is also shown.

Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
1 I try to win by convincing the other party of the logic and benefits of my position.	3.4545	4.1818	0.7273	142	0.0110*
2 I see achievement as more important than relational issues.	2.7273	3.0909	0.3636	206.5	0.3976
3 I use body language that might be perceived as condescending or arrogant.	2.2500	2.5909	0.3409	199	0.5932
4 I have been described as impatient, controlling, insensitive or emotionally detached.	1.9091	1.9545	0.0455	237	0.9096
5 I may not be open to hear other points of view.	2.0000	2.3182	0.3182	217.5	0.5494

(Table 3.3 – Negotiation Results: Dimension of Aggression)

As far as the items regarding the Accommodation subscale are concerned a significant result in the following table (Table 3.4) can be seen for the 3rd item regarding the possibility of taking back or softening a comment which might have hurt the counterpart's feelings, for which participants have reduced this behaviour significantly.

Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
1	3.4762	3.5000	0.0238	239	0.8400

If the other party's position seems very important to him or her, I may sacrifice my own position.					
2 Confronting someone about a problem is very uncomfortable for me.	2.4091	2.5909	0.1818	221.5	0.6258
3 I am likely to take a comment back or try to soften it if I realize that it hurt someone's feelings.	4.4762	4.0909	-0.3853	308.5	0.0382*
4 I may overextend myself trying to meet everyone's needs.	4.0000	3.8182	-0.1818	281	0.3310
5 I have a hard time being clear about what I want and need for fear of appearing demanding or selfish.	3.2727	3.1364	-0.1364	260	0.6730

(Table 3.4 – Negotiation Results: Dimension of Accommodation)

As far as the items regarding the Compromise subscale are concerned no significant change in behaviours has been found, as visible in the following table. (Table 3.5). However, participants, did increase behaviours regarding the proposition of a middle ground and the research for fair outcomes.

Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
1 I try to find a compromise solution.	4.2727	4.3636	0.0909	225	0.6610
2 I give up some points in exchange for others.	3.3182	3.4545	0.1364	236	0.8906

3 I propose a middle ground.	3.9524	4.1364	0.1840	205.5	0.4985
4 I try to find fair combination of gains and losses for both of us.	3.4545	3.7273	0.2727	210.5	0.4342
5 I can overlook valuable ideas in favour of action.	2.7895	3.1364	0.3469	185	0.4972

(Table 3.5 – Negotiation Results: Dimension of Compromise)

As far as the items regarding the Collaboration subscale are concerned a significant result can be found in the 2nd item of the following table (Table 3.6), as participants increased significantly their behaviours of presenting their ideas in order to hear the counterpart's ones as well. Moreover, nearly significant is the 4th item showing how the participants after the seminar on Negotiation skills, improved their confidence and ability to manage emotions. Finally, another aspect that has slightly improved in participants after training, has been the ability to address problems without blame or judgement, and the research of common ground.

Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
1 I address problems and concerns directly without blame or judgement.	2.7273	3.0455	0.3182	194	0.2437
2 I tell the other person my ideas for and ask for his or hers in return.	3.7619	4.3636	0.6017	119	0.0019*
3 I think it is all right to ask for what I want or to explain how I feel.	4.0476	4.1818	0.1342	211	0.6036
4	2.1818	2.8182	0.6364	169	0.0749

I remain calm and confident when faced with aggression or criticism.					
5	3.6500	3.9091	0.2591	191.5	0.4307
I look for and acknowledge common ground.					

(Table 3.6 – Negotiation Results: Dimension of Collaboration)

In summary, as shown in Table 3.1, although the results of other dimensions didn't vary much, the dimension of Collaboration has shown a significant increase of WIN-WIN behaviours after the training programme on Negotiation skills, resulting in a positive outcome.

3.3.2.1.1 Control Research Sample

The results of the data collected from the Control Sample relatively to the degree of variation of the sample's Negotiation behaviours in an interval of one and a half months, without training, are the following, divided in the five dimensions of the adopted self-assessment questionnaire. (Table 3.7). The table below shows how all five dimensions of the negotiation scale have shown small variations but have not significantly changed.

	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	Mean_t1-t0	W	P_value
Avoidance	3.0750	3.0917	0.0167	283	0.9174
Aggression	2.7181	2.6167	-0.1014	314	0.6042
Accommodation	3.4063	3.4500	0.0438	278	0.8357
Compromise	3.6354	3.5500	-0.0854	314	0.5965
Collaboration	3.5875	3.8750	0.2875	212	0.1135

(Table 3.7 – Negotiation Results of the Control Research Sample)

In Particular, the results of the single items of the five dimensions, in the following tables, do not show significant changes in the interval of time between the initial self-assessment and the final one, except for the 4th item of the Compromise subscale: "I try to find fair combination of gains and losses for both of us", which seems to have decreased over time without any training. (Table 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12).

Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
1	3.708	3.750	0.042	279	0.8505
2	3.625	3.458	-0.167	314	0.5877
3	2.167	2.208	0.042	274	0.7705
4	3.042	3.042	0	286	0.9656
5	2.833	3.000	0.167	260	0.5471

(Table 3.8 – Dimension of Avoidance – Control Sample)

Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
1	4.0833	3.8750	-0.2083	329	0.3844
2	3.2727	3.2917	0.0189	251	0.7756
3	2.0455	2.2500	0.2045	228	0.4035
4	2.0000	1.7083	-0.2917	323	0.4507
5	2.2083	1.9583	-0.2500	320	0.5031

(Table 3.9 – Dimension of Aggression – Control Sample)

Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
1	3.3913	3.3333	-0.0580	298	0.6272
2	2.8750	2.5417	-0.3333	339	0.2776
3	4.1667	4.1250	-0.0417	312	0.6115
4	3.7083	4.0000	0.2917	239	0.2836
5	2.8750	3.2500	0.3750	238	0.2900

(Table 3.10 - Dimension of Accommodation – Control Sample)

Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
1	4.3333	4.2917	-0.0417	302	0.7674
2	3.3478	3.1667	-0.1812	318	0.3414
3	3.7083	4.0000	0.2917	235	0.2430
4	3.8333	3	-0.3750	377	0.0460*
5	2.7619	2.8333	0.0714	242	0.8085

(Table 3.11 – Dimension of Compromise – Control Sample)

Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
1	3.2500	2.8750	-0.3750	337	0.2853
2	3.8696	4.0417	0.1721	260	0.7198
3	4.0870	4.1250	0.0380	275	0.9819
4	2.8750	2.5833	-0.2917	328	0.4058
5	3.8696	3.8750	0.0054	276	1

(Table 3.12 – Dimension of Collaboration – Control Sample)

In summary, the initial negotiation skills' results for the experimental sample were lower than the ones of the control sample, however the final self-assessment (Table 3.1) shows how the results of the experimental study improve significantly for the dimension of Collaboration, and how behaviours falling in the dimension of Avoidance, Aggression and Compromise slightly increase, whereas behaviours falling in the dimension of Accommodation slightly decrease. Instead, Table 3.7 shows how the control sample shows no significant change in any of the negotiation dimensions, but only a slight increase of the Avoidance, Accommodation and Collaboration behaviours, and a slight decrease instead in the dimensions of Aggression and Compromise. These results show how the Negotiation Seminar was effective in developing WIN-WIN behavioural approaches.

3.3.2.1.2 Negotiation and Empathy

Participants of the Pill of Negotiation have furthermore shown a slight decrease in the subscale of Empathic Concern, resulting in a slight lowering of the degree of Empathy. (Table 3.13)

	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
Empathic Concern	3.9545	3.7045	-0.2500	317.5	0.0767
Perspective Taking	3.8766	3.9091	0.0325	237.5	0.9246
Empathy (EC+PT)	3.9126	3.8147	-0.0979	285	0.3162

(Table 3.13 – Negotiation and Empathy)

In particular, only one item of the two Empathy subscales adopted showed significant change: the fourth item of the whole Davis' Empathy questionnaire, previously described: "Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems". In fact, as the table below shows, although there's an increase in this adopted behaviour, it's a statement that uses a reverse scale. The other three are the behaviours related to Empathy that have slightly changed after the Negotiation skill Seminar, resulting in participants' less concern towards others' misfortunes. There's however a slight improvement in behaviours of perspective taking when upset at someone, as item 25, part of the perspective taking subscale, extracted from the whole Davis scale for this research, shows. (Table 3.14)

Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
4. Sometimes I do not feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems. (-)	2.1364	2.9091	0.7727	160	0.0482*
14. Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal. (-)	2.2727	2.4091	0.1364	198	0.2737
18. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them. (-)	1.9091	2.4091	0.5000	182	0.1442
25. When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his shoes" for a while.	3.6818	4.0000	0.3182	189	0.1599

(Table 3.14 – Most significant Empathy items for the Negotiation Skills' participants)

In summary, participants of the Negotiation Skill Seminars seem to have slightly become less empathic after training. Furthermore, no significant correlation has been found between the initial degree of Empathy and participants' level of Negotiation skill ($Rho = -0.2023$; $P\text{-value} = 0.3677$), and neither between the final degree of Empathy and

participants' level of Negotiation skill at the end of the seminar (Rho= -0.2159; P-value= 0.3345).

3.3.2.1.3 Sub-Experimental Studies

As previously mentioned, other than the analysis of all the participants taking part to the Negotiation skill programme, two other main analysis have been conducted both for the skills of Negotiation and Persuasion, comparing the results of the students participating at only the Negotiation skills seminar with the results of the students participating at the seminars of both skills.

In particular, Table 3.15 shows the results of the 11 students, among the total 22 experimental sample for the Negotiation skills, participating at only the Negotiation seminar; whereas, Table 3.16 shows the results of the other 11 students who participated at both skills. Whereas Table 3.16 shows no significant variations, but only a uniform increase of behaviours in all dimensions, except for a decrease of accommodation approach; table 3.15 shows no variation at all with regard to the dimension of accommodation, a slightly more visible increment in the dimension of aggression, but it also shows a significant improvement in the dimension of collaboration. Table 3.17, 3.18, 3.19, 3.20, and 3.21, show the results of both Negotiation samples for each dimension's items.

	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	Mean_t1-t0	W	P_value
Avoidance	2.9818	3.0545	0.0727	69	0.6196
Aggression	2.3818	2.9636	0.5818	35	0.0916
Accommodation	3.5818	3.5818	0	66	0.7660
Compromise	3.4909	3.6545	0.1636	55	0.7167
Collaboration	3.1000	3.6545	0.5545	30	0.0474*

(Table 3.15 – Negotiation Results of the Participants of only the Negotiation Skill Seminar)

	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	Mean_t1-t0	W	P_value
Avoidance	2.7455	2.7818	0.0364	57	0.8172
Aggression	2.5727	2.6909	0.1182	52	0.5749
Accommodation	3.4727	3.2727	-0.2000	79	0.2440
Compromise	3.6727	3.8727	0.2000	47	0.3703
Collaboration	3.4091	3.6727	0.2636	42	0.2188

(Table 3.16 – Negotiation Results of the Participants of both Seminars)

Avoidance	Negotiation Results of the Participants of only the Negotiation Skill Seminar					Negotiation Results of the Participants of both Seminars					
	Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
	1	2.9091	3.7273	0.8182	40	0.1474	2.8182	3.1818	0.3636	44	0.2303
	2	3.6000	3.6364	0.0364	55	1	2.8182	2.9091	0.0909	60	0.9731
	3	2.6364	2.2727	-0.3636	71	0.5199	2.2727	2.6364	0.3636	50	0.4793
	4	2.4545	2.4545	0.0000	61	1	2.7273	2.4545	-0.2727	70	0.5267
	5	3.2727	3.1818	-0.0909	67	0.7081	3.0909	2.7273	-0.3636	72	0.4704

(Table 3.17 – Dimension of Avoidance - Comparison single items – Sub-Samples)

Aggression	Negotiation Results of the Participants of only the Negotiation Skill Seminar					Negotiation Results of the Participants of both Seminars					
	Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
	1	3.1818	4.0000	0.8182	34	0.0660	3.7273	4.3636	0.6364	34	0.0588
	2	2.7273	3.5455	0.8182	41	0.2010	2.7273	2.6364	-0.0909	62	0.9457
	3	2.0000	2.8182	0.8182	37	0.1023	2.5556	2.3636	-0.1919	59	0.5015
	4	1.8182	2.2727	0.4545	51	0.5245	2.0000	1.6364	-0.3636	69	0.5662
	5	2.1818	2.1818	0.0000	66	0.7270	1.8182	2.4545	0.6364	42	0.1960

(Table 3.18 – Dimension of Aggression - Comparison single items – Sub-Samples)

Accommodation	Negotiation Results of the Participants of only the Negotiation Skill Seminar					Negotiation Results of the Participants of both Seminars					
	Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
	1	3.4000	3.5455	0.1455	57	0.9069	3.5455	3.4545	-0.0909	63	0.9127
	2	2.5455	3.2727	0.7273	40	0.1779	2.2727	1.9091	-0.3636	70	0.5509
	3	4.5000	4.1818	-0.3182	73	0.1924	4.4545	4.0000	-0.4545	83	0.0980
	4	4.0000	3.6364	-0.3636	78	0.2396	4.0000	4.0000	0.0000	61	1
	5	3.4545	3.2727	-0.1818	66	0.7593	3.0909	3.0000	-0.0909	64	0.8642

(Table 3.19 – Dimension of Accommodation - Comparison single items – Sub-Samples)

Compromise	Negotiation Results of the Participants of only the Negotiation Skill Seminar					Negotiation Results of the Participants of both Seminars				
	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
1	4.1818	4.2727	0.0909	56	0.7350	4.3636	4.4545	0.0909	58	0.8528
2	3.1818	3.3636	0.1818	59	0.9169	3.4545	3.5455	0.0909	58	0.8568
3	3.9000	4.1818	0.2818	46	0.4991	4.0000	4.0909	0.0909	57	0.7798
4	3.1818	3.7273	0.5455	48	0.3916	3.7273	3.7273	0.0000	58	0.8535
5	2.8889	2.7273	-0.1616	57	0.5596	2.7000	3.5455	0.8455	35	0.1154

(Table 3.20 – Dimension of Compromise - Comparison single items – Sub-Samples)

Collaboration	Negotiation Results of the Participants of only the Negotiation Skill Seminar					Negotiation Results of the Participants of both Seminars				
	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
1	2.2727	2.8182	0.5455	43	0.2238	3.1818	3.2727	0.0909	51	0.5064
2	3.6000	4.2727	0.6727	30	0.0587	3.9091	4.4545	0.5455	30	0.0113*
3	4.2000	4.2727	0.0727	52	0.8495	3.9091	4.0909	0.1818	52	0.5141
4	2.1818	2.9091	0.7273	43	0.2440	2.1818	2.7273	0.5455	41	0.1900
5	3.4000	4.0000	0.6000	35	0.1343	3.9000	3.8182	-0.0818	62	0.6267

(Table 3.21 – Dimension of Collaboration - Comparison single items – Sub-Samples)

Furthermore, an additional study has been conducted for both the skills of Negotiation and Persuasion, dividing the Experimental Research Sample in smaller samples based on their field of studies; however, having a small initial sample and no homogeneity in the number of students attending each course, the results will be only briefly mentioned, as a potential future analysis to be conducted. For this analysis the only possible sub-categories were: 10 Students of Economics (Table 3.22), 9 Students of Languages (Table 3.23), and 3 Students of mixed faculties (Table 3.24).

	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	Mean_t1-t0	W	P_value
Avoidance	2.7000	2.9000	0.2000	43	0.6212
Aggression	2.4550	2.9800	0.5250	30	0.1285
Accommodation	3.4600	3.3600	-0.1000	54	0.7899
Compromise	3.6000	3.9400	0.3400	32	0.1710
Collaboration	3.3800	3.8200	0.4400	29	0.1100

(Table 3.22 – Negotiation Results – Students of Economics)

	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	Mean_t1-t0	W	P_value
Avoidance	3.2000	3.0000	-0.2000	50	0.4458
Aggression	2.4611	2.7333	0.2722	32	0.4506
Accommodation	3.8222	3.5556	-0.2667	56	0.1976
Compromise	3.6778	3.6667	-0.0111	41	1
Collaboration	2.9778	3.3556	0.3778	21	0.0777

(Table 3.23 – Negotiation Results – Students of Languages)

	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	Mean_t1-t0	W	P_value
Avoidance	2.4000	2.7333	0.3333	4	0.8248
Aggression	2.6000	2.6000	0	5	1
Accommodation	2.8667	3.2667	0.4000	4	1
Compromise	3.2333	3.4667	0.2333	4	1
Collaboration	3.6667	4.0667	0.4000	3	0.6579

(Table 3.24 – Negotiation Results – Students of Mixed Faculties)

Although the sample sizes are not sufficiently numerous, which reduces the possibility of finding statistical effects, as an introductory pioneer analysis, what can be is that whereas, the very small mixed sample shows either no change or a slight increase for each dimension. The students of Economics only seem to reduce the behaviours indicated in the items of the dimension of Accommodation, and slightly improve in the dimension of Collaboration, and the students of Languages show reduced behaviours in the dimensions of Avoidance, Accommodation and Compromise, and a nearly significant improvement in adopting Collaborative behaviours. An interesting future analysis would be connecting fields of studies to soft skills development programmes.

3.3.2.1.4 Qualitative and Semi-Qualitative Results

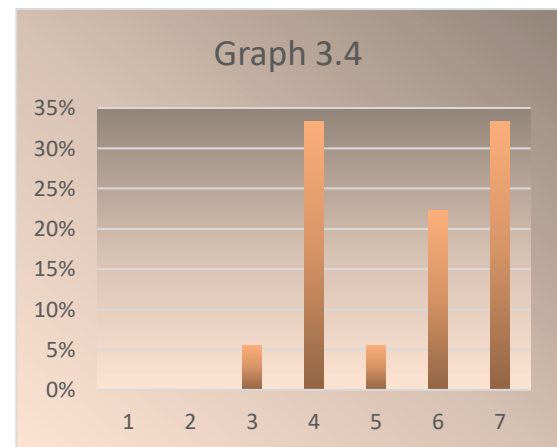
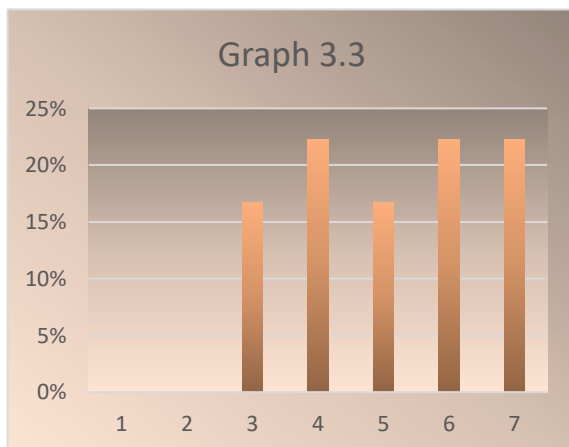
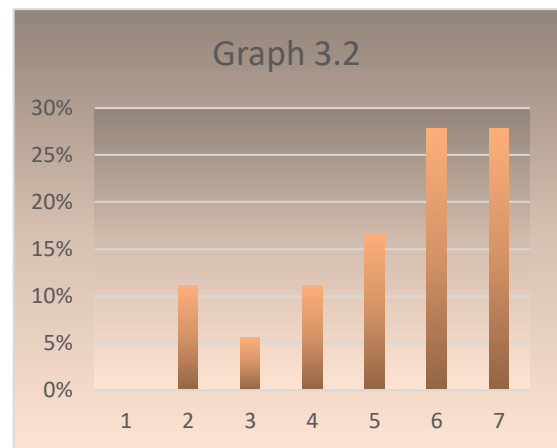
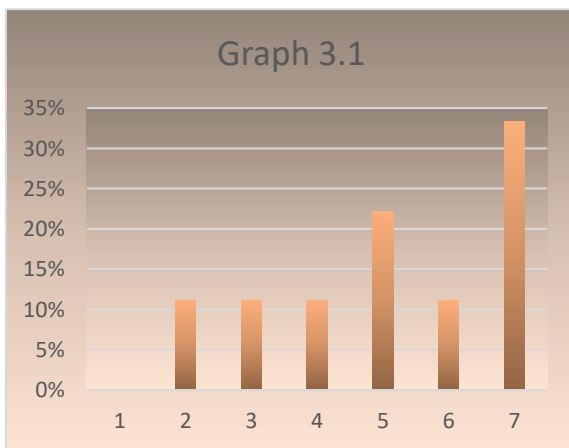
In addition to the quantitative data collected through the initial and final self-assessments, other qualitative and quantitative data on the various tools adopted during the Seminar of Negotiation, was collected from the Experimental Research Sample through the various standardized modules on the activities and through short questionnaires.

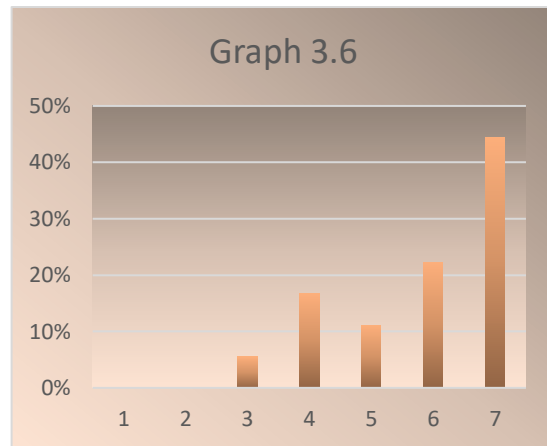
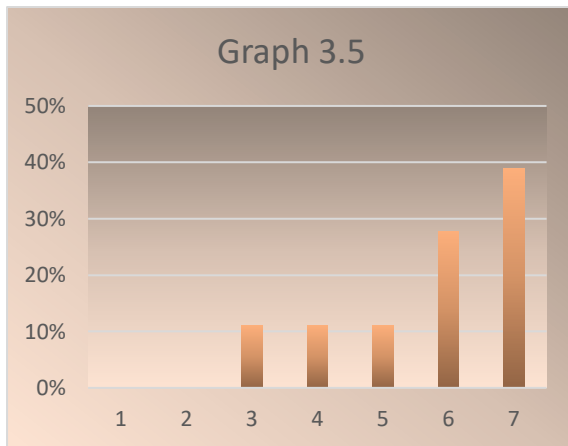
3.3.2.1.4.1 Peer-Coaching

As far as the Peer-Coaching activity is concerned, students filled out a standardized form regarding the topics they discussed, the benefits they perceived and the questions which made them reflect more. The main registered topics were those regarding when they negotiate, what differences they found between real negotiation and simulated ones, which are the other related soft skills that would be useful when negotiating (e.g. Empathy, Listening, Adaptability, and Self-Awareness), how to ask questions and decide whether to be more direct or discrete, which could be the most effective tactics, and “power” variables. They also exchanged thoughts on the activities of the Development Plan and Journaling, and considered real future situations, such as job interviews, to think of how to effectively put into practice what learnt. On the other hand, what students perceived that made them reflect more were the coach’s advice to create practice situations, start a negotiation with a flexible mind, understand one’s own weaknesses in order to improve, understand the counterpart’s needs and interests, accurately understand one’s own goal and reasons, not easily give away one’s Reservation Value and information, and the importance of the “Why?” question. While the potential obstacles identified by participants were the difficulty of opening up to someone new, listening carefully and giving appropriate advice without prejudices, and finding the time to organize the sessions; this activity’s main benefits encountered by the students participating at the Negotiation Skill Seminar, were having the opportunity to talk with one’s peer and exchange different points of view, also having the possibility to receive an external perspective on one’s actions taken and strategies adopted, and also exchange advice, compare experiences, assess strengths and weaknesses, and reflect together on possible paths to take to develop one’s skills. Finally, the results of a short 7-point scale survey (1=“I totally disagree”, and 7=“I totally agree”) on how much participants agreed with the following statements, are given below as graphs:

- The dialogue with my coach helped me to gain awareness of my progress in time in my development plan of this skill. (Graph 3.1)
- The dialogue with my coach helped me to identify behaviours that brought me to have positive outcomes in the development of this skill. (Graph 3.2)
- The dialogue with my coach helped me to reflect on the behaviours used that are little or not at all effective to develop this skill. (Graph 3.3)

- The dialogue with my coach helped me to reflect on how to modify my behaviours in order to obtain positive outcomes in the following development experience. (Graph 3.4)
- Being a coach to my peer helped me to explore new ways to develop this skill, which I hadn't considered or experimented in my personal development experience. (Graph 3.5)
- Being a coach to my peer helped me to formulate questions that I too then used to reflect on my personal development experience of this skill. (Graph 3.6)





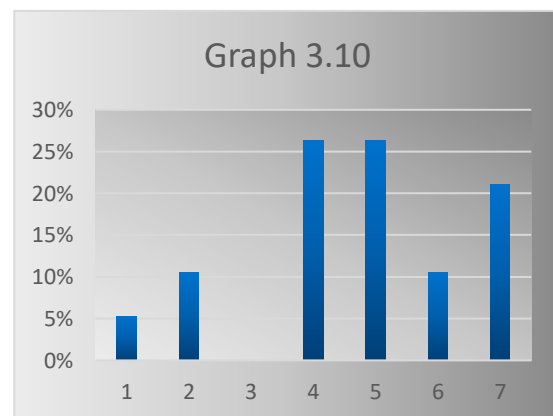
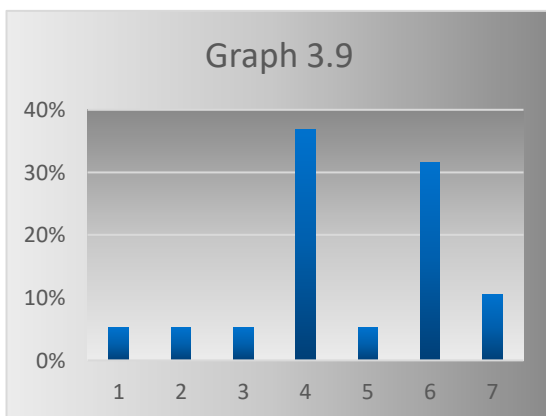
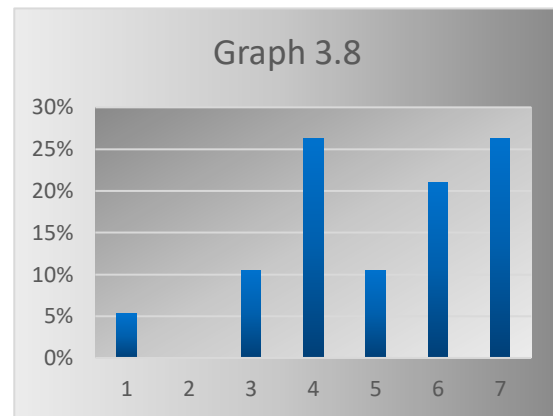
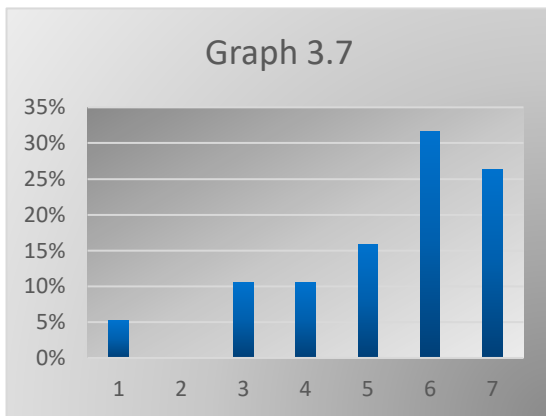
According to these results collected, the activity of Peer-Coaching wasn't negative, although the results vary depending on the statement. However, it appears that the participants of this Seminar found that being a coach to others was more helpful than being a coachee.

3.3.2.1.4.2 Development Plan

Students, as previously described, had the opportunity to practice preparing a development plan, analysing one's goals, BATNA, the counterpart's interests, as well as their own, ZOPA, actions to take and tactics to use. Participants thought of many different contexts, such as negotiating the destination of a holiday, one's housework activities, job position and benefits, the price of a pair of shoes, negotiating an idea for a team project, what to have for dinner, etc. The main difficulties encountered were the difficulty of not always being able to follow the plan, not really knowing when to take one or the other action, and making time to fill out the plan. Whereas, the main benefits they registered to have obtained are having had the opportunity to think of what they wanted to change and the tools at their disposal, setting clear goals, organizing one's self, developing one's self, and gaining awareness of the various aspects to consider when preparing for a negotiation process and more confidence. Referring to the Development Plan activity, participants indicated in a 7-point scale how much they agreed with the following statements, where 1="I totally disagree", and 7="I totally agree":

- Designing the plan helped me reflect on the techniques/behaviours that are more effective to experiment, in the specific context. (Graph 3.7)

- Designing the plan helped me to improve my confidence in my abilities. (Graph 3.8)
- Designing the plan helped me to persuade my counterpart. (Graph 3.9)
- I'm altogether satisfied about how I put into practice my development plan. (Graph 3.10)



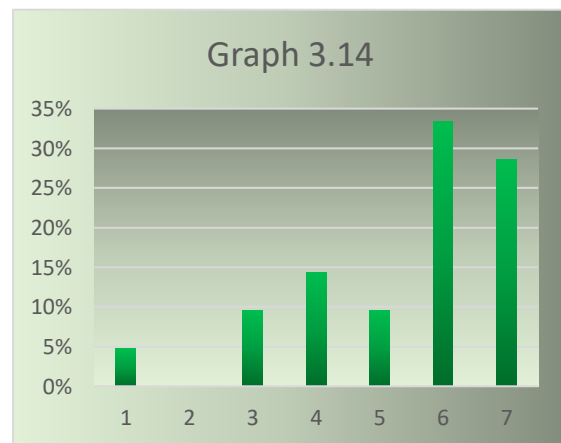
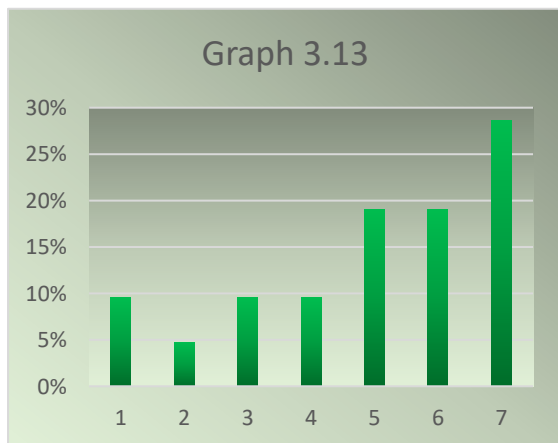
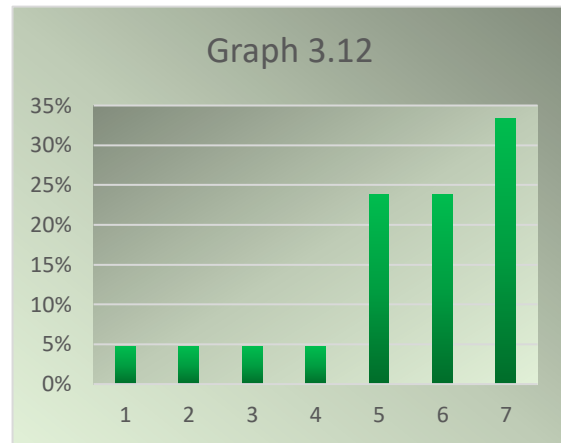
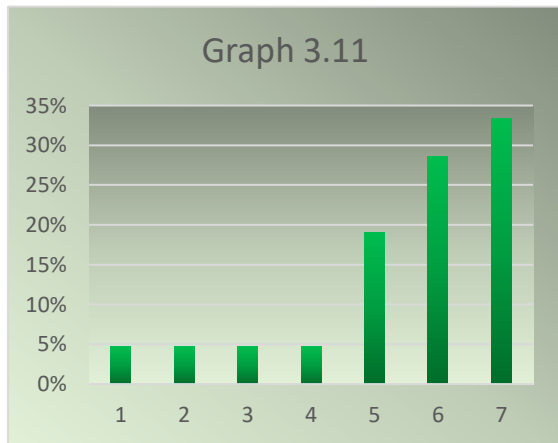
The results regarding how effective students perceived the activity of the Development Plan show a higher inclination towards its positive aspects. However, the most positive impact encountered for this activity, seems to be the reflective aspect.

3.3.2.1.4.3 Journaling

The activity of Journaling for the skill of Negotiation, put students in the condition of describing their daily negotiation activities, writing down the context, the actions that were put into practice, the perceived positive and negative items, the feedback received from others on one's actions, and final reflection on how one felt in that situation, difficulties encountered and how they were solved, what other actions could have been taken and how one would behave in the future if a similar situation occurred. The Journaling filled out forms reported a series of different situations one encountered or created, and how they prepared themselves, what actions they took and tactics they used, as well as how they felt while negotiating and adopting new behaviours. As far as this last aspect is concerned, many participants wrote down that they felt rigid and too emotional at first but how through reflecting upon the situation they encountered and how they responded to it, found alternative options to put into practice in the future and felt more confident. In fact, although keeping a journal is not such an easy task, as students identified problems in being constant, in needing the time to write a detailed section, and in understanding immediately what could have been done differently, the benefits registered by the students participating at the Seminar of this skill, were the possibility of gaining awareness of the reality of a situation, having a clear understanding of the positive and negative aspects in order to improve, being more empathic and aware of the possible tactics that can be adopted, using it as a page for one to vent on, using it as a reminder to only take actions that are functional, keeping trained and remembering the concepts learnt during the Seminar. It furthermore improved confidence, motivation and skills by keeping track of old situations, thinking about possible alternative actions, which could have been taken, even in a second moment, and of one's progress. This activity also included a 7-point scale short survey (ranging from 1="I totally disagree", and 7="I totally agree"), which results are presented below as visual graphs:

- It helped me to gain awareness of my progress in time in my development plan of this skill. (Graph 3.11)
- It helped me to identify behaviours that brought me to have positive outcomes in the development of this skill. (Graph 3.12)
- It helped me to reflect on the behaviours used that are little or not at all effective to develop this skill. (Graph 3.13)

- It helped me to reflect on how to modify my behaviours in order to obtain positive outcomes in the following development experience. (Graph 3.14)



Compared to the previous two activities, the Journaling activity has been rated as more helpful in developing one's Negotiation skills.

3.3.2.2 Persuasion

The comparison of the results of the Persuasion self-assessments before and after the training session, by the Experimental Sample, showed how the results of 24 participants, which have been analysed in an aggregated form, have shown a very significant

improvement in this skill after the training programme on the Persuasion skill. (Table 3.25).

	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	Mean_t1-t0	W	P_value
Persuasion	3.2477	3.7683	0.5206	126	0.0008*

(Table 3.25 – Persuasion Results)

As far as the single items of the 25-item Persuasion self-assessment scale are concerned, the results in the following table show in which aspects participants improved their skills more. As the general level of persuasion skills has significantly increased, so have many singular items. In particular, the 1st (establishing one’s qualifications), the 2nd (offering proof of being trustworthy), the 5th (use of metaphors, analogies, etc.), the 7th (use of credible data), the 12th (analysing one’s audience), the 13th (tailoring the strategy and tools used, based on the audience), the 17th (tapping on one’s authority), and the 20th (associating one’s self with what the audience admires). (Table 3.26).

Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
1. I appropriately establish my qualifications before I try to persuade.	2.6818	3.3750	0.6932	144.5	0.0057*
2. When persuading, I offer proof of how people have been able to trust me in the past.	3.2917	3.9583	0.6667	177.5	0.0159*
3. I analyze listeners’ words and behaviour to assess their decision-making style and receptivity	3.6667	4.1250	0.4583	211.5	0.0894
4. When persuading, I describe the benefits and unique aspects of my idea.	3.9167	4.2500	0.3333	236.5	0.2504
5.	3.1250	4.0417	0.9167	142.5	0.0016*

I use metaphors, analogies, and stories in my presentations to highlight my key points.					
6. I consciously limit the number of points I make in my presentations to no more than five.	3.0909	3.5833	0.4924	200	0.1455
7. I support my arguments with highly credible evidence.	3.6250	4.1667	0.5417	180	0.0173*
8. When I cite facts, data, or statistics, I package the information for clarity and memorability.	3.1667	3.7083	0.5417	204	0.0692
9. I encourage feedback from my listeners to activate audience self-persuasion.	3.0000	3.7083	0.7083	182	0.0619
10. I use disturbing, leading, and rhetorical questions to encourage audience self-persuasion.	3.3333	3.6250	0.2917	245	0.3633
11. I actively listen to my audience and reflect on the contents and emotions behind their statements.	3.9167	4.1250	0.2083	237.5	0.2625
12. I analyze my audience before persuading, to determine my strategy.	3.3333	4.0000	0.6667	176	0.0124*
13. I tailor my persuasion strategy, material, and approach for different audiences.	3.4167	4.0417	0.6250	192.5	0.0402*
14.	3.4583	3.7083	0.2500	246	0.3604

I vary my choice of media according to the message I want to communicate.					
15. I consciously help others in an effort to build trust and credibility, knowing that this could result in a relationship where others want to help me later.	3.0000	3.6250	0.6250	200.5	0.0643
16. I try to encourage people to make their commitments to my ideas publicly or on paper.	2.2500	2.6667	0.4167	222	0.1599
17 I consciously tap the power that comes from titles or positions of authority that I hold.	2.1667	3.2083	1.0417	134	0.0009*
18. When I possess exclusive information, I emphasize its scarcity value to those I'm persuading.	2.9565	3.4167	0.4601	211	0.1536
19. When I promote something, I stress that it's standard practice or part of a popular trend.	2.8571	3.1667	0.3095	215	0.3903
20. I associate myself with products, people, or companies that my audience admires.	2.3333	3.3333	1.0000	130.5	0.0044*
21. I emphasize the similarities I share with people I want to persuade.	3.5833	4.0417	0.4583	219	0.1349
22. When I encounter resistance to my idea, I use paraphrasing and questioning to understand the source of the resistance and to	3.9565	4.1667	0.2101	249.5	0.5454

communicate my understanding of the resistors' concerns.					
23. I try to establish positive relationships and feelings with people I want to persuade.	4.0833	4.4167	0.3333	232	0.2143
24. When I anticipate encountering resistance to my ideas, I raise and understand opponents' arguments before presenting my own views.	3.3333	3.7917	0.4583	223	0.1587
25. I use affirmative, assertive speech and win-win language while persuading.	3.6364	3.9583	0.3220	215.5	0.2492

(Table 3.26 – Persuasion Skills' Results for single item)

In summary, regarding the participants' Persuasion skills' development outcomes after the training programme, the results have been very positive, showing how more than eight items resulted in significant improvements, and how all 25 items of the Persuasion skill self-assessment, which was used, have shown an increase of persuasion skills' behaviours.

3.3.2.2.1 Control Research Sample

The results of the data collected from the Control Sample relatively to the degree of variation of the sample's Persuasion behaviours in an interval of one and a half months, without training, are the following:

	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	Mean_t1-t0	W	P_value
Persuasion	3.5033	3.6150	0.1117	252	0.4574

(Table 3.27 – Persuasion Results – Control Sample)

The Persuasion control sample has shown no significant improvement of this skill overtime by analysing the scale as a whole (Table 3.27); however, when analysing single

items, two are found to be significant. In fact, the 2nd item (“When persuading, I offer proof of how people have been able to trust me in the past”) and the 19th item (“When I promote something, I stress that it’s standard practice or part of a popular trend”) have shown significant improvement over time, although not having a significant impact on the final results. (Table 3.28).

Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
1	3.2917	3.3333	0.0417	286	0.9657
2	2.7083	3.5417	0.8333	158	0.0052*
3	3.8333	3.9167	0.0833	285	0.9555
4	4.2083	4.2083	0.0000	286	0.9645
5	3.9167	3.9583	0.0417	296	0.8796
6	3.2917	3.4583	0.1667	255	0.4718
7	4.0000	4.2500	0.2500	246	0.3577
8	3.8750	4.0833	0.2083	254	0.4596
9	3.6250	3.4583	-0.1667	306	0.7046
10	3.0833	3.4167	0.3333	241	0.3232
11	4.2083	4.1250	-0.0833	305	0.7225
12	3.6667	3.6250	-0.0417	304	0.7348
13	4.0000	3.7500	-0.2500	335	0.3165
14	3.7083	3.5417	-0.1667	319	0.5113
15	3.8333	3.8333	0.0000	279	0.8464
16	2.4583	2.7500	0.2917	234	0.2450
17	2.3333	2.6250	0.2917	234	0.2452
18	3.0833	3.2083	0.1250	274	0.7742
19	2.6667	3.2083	0.5417	194	0.0417*
20	2.5833	2.9167	0.3333	247	0.3730
21	3.4583	3.6250	0.1667	255	0.4640
22	3.8750	4.0000	0.1250	276	0.7938
23	4.1250	3.7500	-0.3750	353	0.1664
24	3.8333	3.8333	0.0000	298	0.8345
25	3.9167	3.9583	0.0417	288	1

(Table 3.28 - Negotiation Results of the Control Research Sample per single item)

In summary, the results of the Experimental Sample show an initial degree of possession of the Persuasion skill which is lower than the Control sample's; however, the final results of the degree of development of the skill over time, show how, while the Control sample improved very slightly, the Experimental Research sample improved significantly, both considering all items of the scale together and independently. These results show how the Seminar on Persuasion skills was very effective in developing the participants' skills.

3.3.2.2.2 Persuasion and Empathy

Participants of the Pill of Persuasion have shown a slight increase in behaviours of Empathic Concern and Perspective Taking, resulting in a slight increase of the degree of Empathy. (Table 3.29).

	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
Empathic Concern	3.8611	3.7014	-0.1597	341	0.2810
Perspective Taking	3.7321	3.9464	0.2143	224	0.1845
Empathy (EC+PT)	3.7917	3.8333	0.0417	280	0.8768

(Table 3.29 – Persuasion and Empathy)

However, no significant change can be found, and the table below shows the items whose variation was slightly more significant than others. In particular, Perspective Taking items slightly improve, whereas Empathic Concern items show a slight increment of behaviours but in reality are a slight worsening of the degree of Empathy, being items with a reverse score. (Figure 3.30).

Item	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
4. Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems. (-)	2.4167	2.8333	0.4167	236	0.2676

14. Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal. (-)	2.3333	2.6667	0.3333	239	0.2930
15. If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments. (-)	2.6667	2.3750	-0.2917	349	0.1876
21. I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.	3.7917	4.0833	0.2917	231	0.2057
25. When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his shoes" for a while.	3.8333	4.0833	0.2500	236	0.2496
28. Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.	3.7500	4.0417	0.2917	233	0.2120

(Table 3.30 – Most significant Empathy items for the Negotiation skills' participants)

In summary, the degree of Empathy with regard to the participants of the Persuasion skill slightly increased, although analysing the results of the items that change a bit more, both positive and negative changes can be found, positive for the Perspective Taking subscale and negative for the Empathic Concern subscale, which balance the final Empathy results. Furthermore, a slight degree of correlation has been found between the initial degree of Empathy and participants' level of Persuasion skill ($Rho = -0.3804$; $P\text{-value} = 0.0667$), which reduced in the analysis of final degree of Empathy and participants' level of Negotiation skill at the end of the Seminar ($Rho = -0.2722$; $P\text{-value} = 0.1981$).

3.3.2.2.3 Sub-Experimental Studies

Other than the analysis of all the participants taking part in the Persuasion skill programme, two other main analysis have been conducted for both skills, comparing the results of the students participating at only the Persuasion skills Seminar with the results of the students participating at both the Negotiation and Persuasion Seminars.

In particular, Table 3.31 shows the results of the 13 students, among the total 24 of the Experimental sample for the Persuasion skills, participating at only the Persuasion Seminar; whereas, Table 3.32 shows the results of the other 11 students who participated at both Seminars. Whereas the participants of both Seminars show to be possessing an initial and final level of skill which is higher than the one possessed by the participants in only Negotiation, both results show a significant improvement. Finally, Table 3.33 shows the compared results of these to samples.

	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	Mean_t1-t0	W	P_value
Persuasion	3.1398	3.6462	0.5064	37	0.0148*

(Table 3.31 - Persuasion Results of the Participants of only the Persuasion skill Seminar)

	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	Mean_t1-t0	W	P_value
Persuasion	3.3753	3.9127	0.5374	24	0.0176*

(Table 3.32 – Persuasion Results of the Participants of both Seminars)

Item	Persuasion Results of the Participants of only the Persuasion Skill Seminar					Persuasion Results of the Participants of both Seminars				
	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	t1-t0	W	P_value
1	2.6667	3.1538	0.4872	56	0.2098	2.7000	3.6364	0.9364	18	0.0050*
2	2.9231	3.7692	0.8462	46	0.0418*	3.7273	4.1818	0.4545	43	0.2181
3	3.5385	4.2308	0.6923	56	0.1240	3.8182	4.0000	0.1818	51	0.4652
4	3.7692	4.1538	0.3846	71	0.4610	4.0909	4.3636	0.2727	48	0.3668
5	3.0769	3.9231	0.8462	43	0.0258*	3.1818	4.1818	1.0000	29	0.0285
6	2.9091	3.3846	0.4755	53	0.2648	3.2727	3.5833	0.3106	55	0.4747
7	3.4615	4.2308	0.7692	43	0.0266*	3.8182	4.0909	0.2727	48	0.3519
8	2.6923	3.4615	0.7692	53	0.0934	3.7273	4.0000	0.2727	51	0.4913
9	2.5833	3.3846	0.8013	50	0.1241	3.5000	4.0909	0.5909	37	0.1676
10	3.4615	3.5385	0.0769	82	0.8947	3.1818	3.7273	0.5455	43	0.2412
11	3.9231	3.8462	-0.0769	87	0.9343	3.9091	4.4545	0.5455	35	0.0672
12	3.1538	3.8462	0.6923	54	0.0915	3.5455	4.1818	0.6364	34	0.0596
13	3.1538	3.7692	0.6154	57	0.1410	3.7273	4.3636	0.6364	41	0.1727
14	3.5385	3.6923	0.1538	80	0.8093	3.3636	3.7273	0.3636	43	0.2138
15	3.0000	3.6154	0.6154	63	0.2702	3.0000	3.6364	0.6364	39	0.1400
16	2.1538	2.2308	0.0769	81	0.8519	2.3636	3.1818	0.8182	30	0.0306*
17	2.1538	3.0769	0.9231	47	0.0392*	2.1818	3.3636	1.1818	19	0.0044*

18	3.0833	3.3077	0.2244	69	0.6093	2.8182	3.5455	0.7273	38	0.1322
19	2.9091	3.3077	0.3986	59	0.4584	2.8000	3.0000	0.2000	50	0.7053
20	2.3636	3.3077	0.9441	40	0.0622	2.3000	3.3636	1.0636	28	0.0471*
21	3.3846	3.9231	0.5385	62	0.2429	3.8182	4.1818	0.3636	47	0.2997
22	3.6923	4.2308	0.5385	60	0.1736	4.3000	4.0909	-0.2091	64	0.5081
23	4.0769	4.3077	0.2308	73	0.5210	4.0909	4.5455	0.4545	46	0.3090
24	3.2308	3.6923	0.4615	67	0.3616	3.4545	3.9091	0.4545	44	0.2565
25	3.3333	3.7692	0.4359	57	0.2346	4.0000	4.1818	0.1818	47	0.5414

(Table 3.33 – Persuasion - Comparison single items – Sub-Sample)

Furthermore, an additional study has been conducted, dividing the Experimental Research Sample in smaller samples based on their field of studies; however, having a small initial sample and no homogeneity in the number of students attending each course, the results will be only briefly mentioned, as a potential future analysis to be conducted. For this analysis the only possible sub-categories were: 13 Students of Economics (Table 3.34), 7 Students of Languages (Table 3.35), and 5 Students of mixed faculties (Table 3.36).

	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	Mean_t1-t0	W	P_value
Persuasion	3.2804	3.8892	0.6088	29	0.0048*

(Table 3.34 – Persuasion Results – Students of Economics)

	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	Mean_t1-t0	W	P_value
Persuasion	3.0514	3.6343	0.5829	10	0.0727

(Table 3.35 – Persuasion Results – Students of Languages)

	Mean_t0	Mean_t1	Mean_t1-t0	W	P_value
Persuasion	3.3399	3.5200	0.1801	9	0.5296

(Table 3.36 – Persuasion Results – Students of Mixed Faculties)

Although small, with reduced possibility of finding statistical effects, these research samples could be pioneers to future studies. In this case, a significant result is given by the analysis of the students of Economics who show a significant improvement.

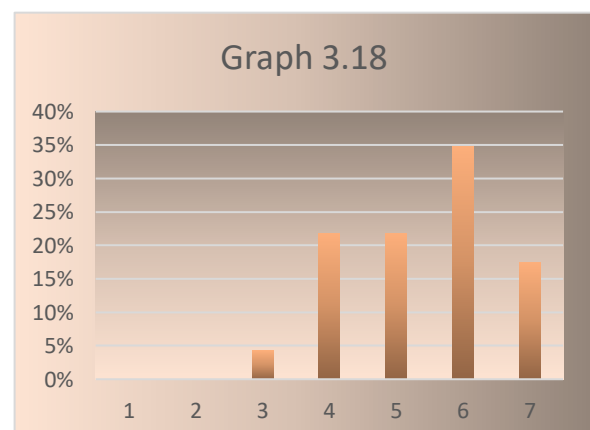
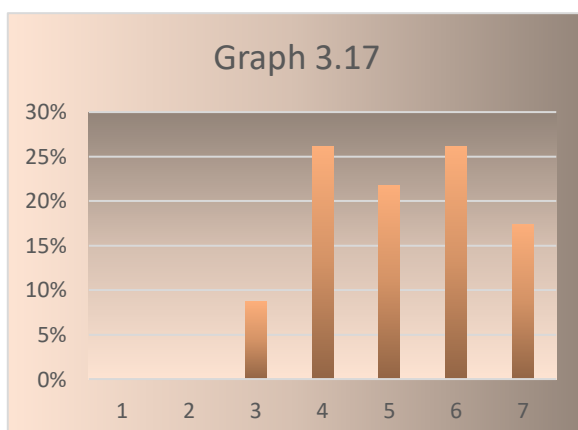
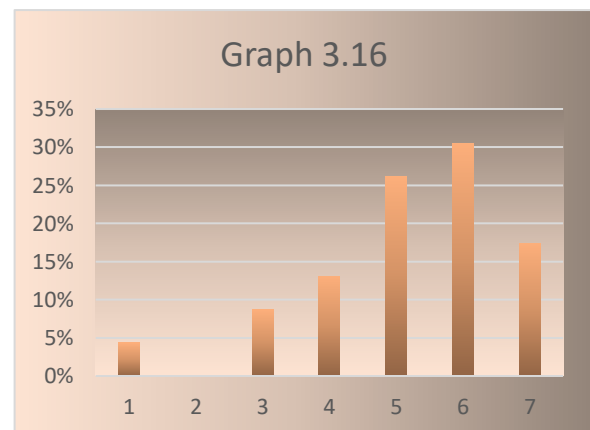
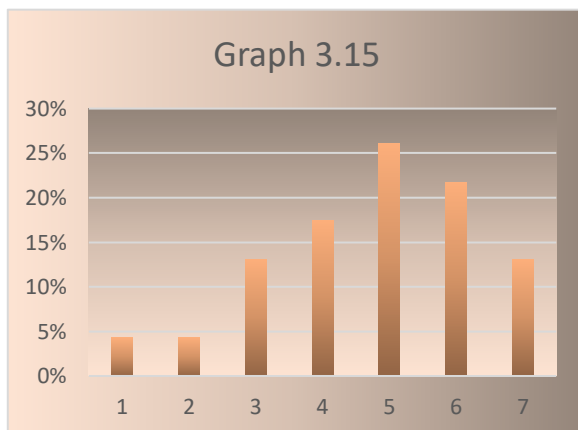
3.3.2.2.4 Qualitative and Semi-Qualitative Results

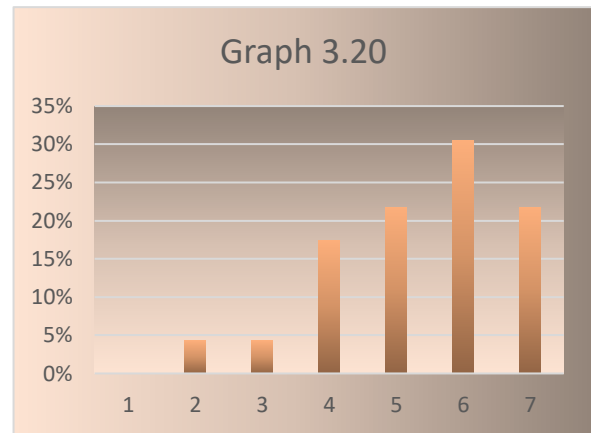
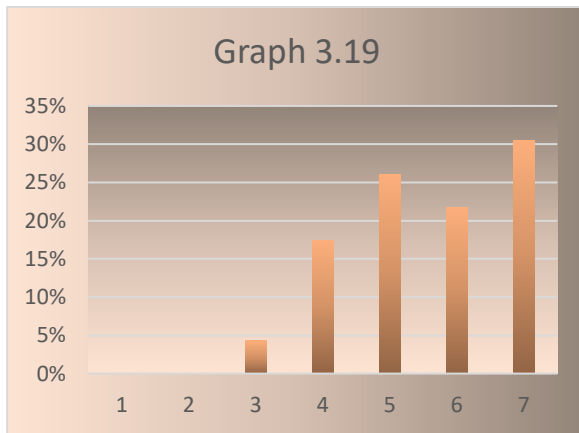
In addition to the quantitative data collected through the initial and final self-assessments, other qualitative and quantitative data on the various tools adopted during the Seminar of Persuasion, was collected from the Experimental Research Sample through the various standardized modules on the activities and through short questionnaires.

3.3.2.2.4.1 Peer-Coaching

As far as the Peer-Coaching activity is concerned, the data collected showed how students didn't organize many sessions but during the sessions they had during the Seminar and after, they covered together with their peers many different topics, such as discussing about how to understand one's interlocutor's perspective, how and when to use Persuasion skills, how Persuasion is important at work, what connection there is between Persuasion and other soft skills, such as Negotiation, Empathy, Leadership, etc. Furthermore, peers during their peer-coaching sessions, discussed which could be the useful aspects in a persuasion process (e.g. motivation, conviction, interest toward one's interlocutor, etc.), their experience with persuasion and their failures, the tactics they found to be more effective, and many more different topics, understanding how these sessions helped understand one's self, get to see different perspectives, reflect together with someone, gaining more awareness of the actions adopted and how to modify them, gain an external point of view on one's behaviours, remember past and present experiences, etc. All aspects that helped reflect on how emotional factors are always present, how important it is to know the topic of discussion in order to find evidence and coherent examples, how important it is to be coherent in one's words and non-verbal expressions, how to develop this skill, and hypothesizing what one would do "if" something happens or if in a certain situation. Through this activity, students were able to freely talk with their peer and help each other to understand their strengths, weaknesses and other effective actions one could take to develop the Persuasion skill, and also get to know their peer's experiences and a different reality, although it wasn't always easy to create a good relationship with one's peer from the beginning and trust him/she in telling one's own experiences. Nevertheless, the results gathered through the final self-assessment done at the end of the seminar, are the ones that follow in the graphs as short 7-point scale surveys, where 1="I totally disagree", and 7="I totally agree".

- The dialogue with my coach helped me to gain awareness of my progress in time in my development plan of this skill. (Graph 3.15)
- The dialogue with my coach helped me to identify behaviours that brought me to have positive outcomes in the development of this skill. (Graph 3.16)
- The dialogue with my coach helped me to reflect on the behaviours used that are little or not at all effective to develop this skill. (Graph 3.17)
- The dialogue with my coach helped me to reflect on how to modify my behaviours in order to obtain positive outcomes in the following development experience. (Graph 3.18)
- Being a coach to my peer helped me to explore new ways to develop this skill, which I hadn't considered or experimented in my personal development experience. (Graph 3.19)
- Being a coach to my peer helped me to formulate questions that I too then used to reflect on my personal development experience of this skill. (Graph 3.20)





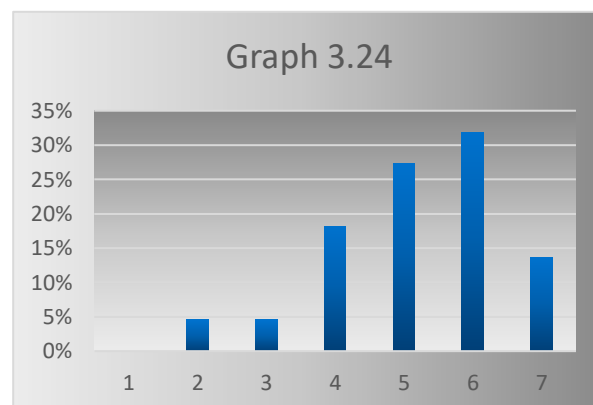
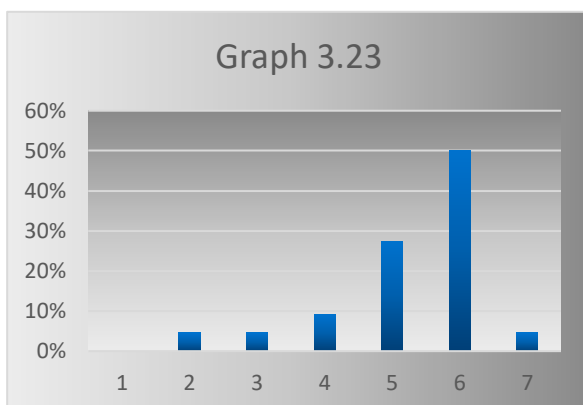
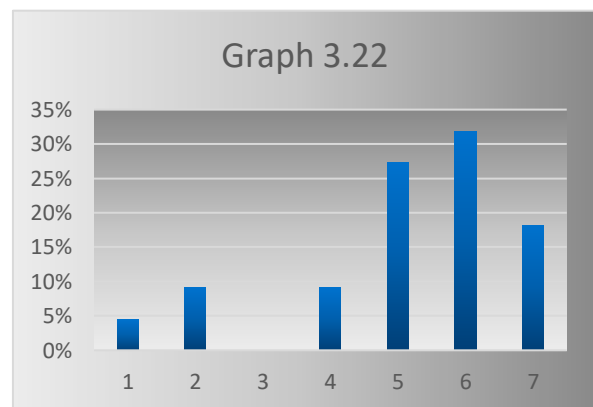
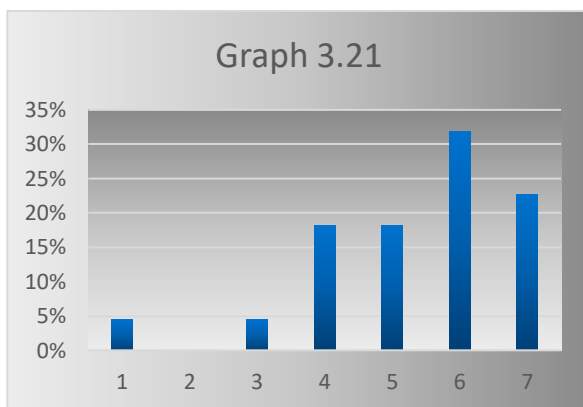
According to the results of these graphs for the activity of Peer-Coaching for the Persuasion skill, more students, compared to the participants at the Negotiation Seminar seem to have found it useful, and compared to the results from the Negotiation sample, these show a positive outcome both for the role of coach and the role of coachee. No student has furthermore totally disagreed with the statements of Graphs 3.17, 3.18, 3.19, and 3.20.

3.3.2.2.4.2 Development Plan

Data was also collected regarding the activity of filling out one's Development Plan, obtaining the participants' reflections of the benefits and positive aspects encountered, as well as the difficulties. Students had, in fact, to fill out a form reasoning on their context, interlocutor, on the interests of both sides, persuasion tactics, on how to anticipate possible objections, build one's credibility, arguments, emotional connections, and encourage one's interlocutor to take action. The results of the survey regarding this activity for the skill of Persuasion, showed how it helped students prepare an argument, giving a guideline with steps to follow, organize their thoughts, set their goals, practice what was learnt during the Persuasion skill seminar, and be more aware of their abilities, actions and decisions. However, when identifying the difficulties for this activity, students identified the difficulties in expressing clearly each aspect and being constant in making use of this tool, knowing there is no feedback on the direction taken; on the other hand, participants realized that having a plan is just the beginning because practice is needed and a plan helps but doesn't guarantee success. Presented below are the results of

a short survey regarding this activity on a 7-point scale where 1="I totally disagree", and 7="I totally agree":

- Designing the plan helped me to reflect on the techniques/behaviours that are more effective to experiment, in the specific context. (Graph 3.21)
- Designing the plan helped me to improve my confidence in my abilities. (Graph 3.22)
- Designing the plan helped me to persuade my counterpart. (Graph 3.23)
- I'm altogether satisfied about how I put into practice my development plan. (Graph 3.24)



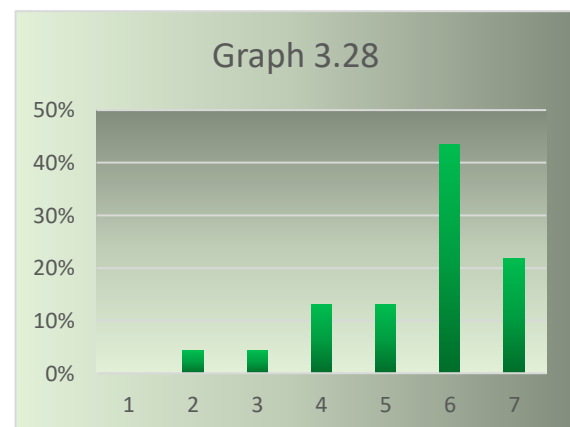
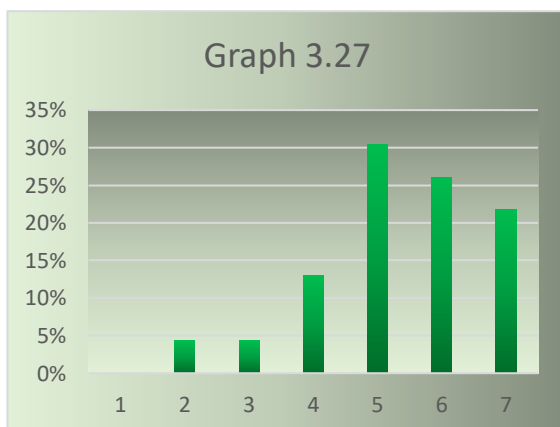
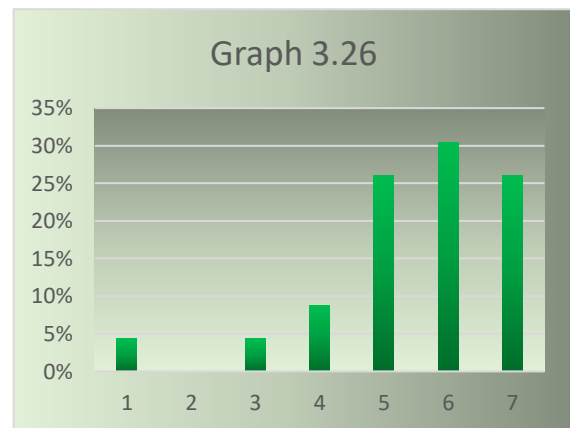
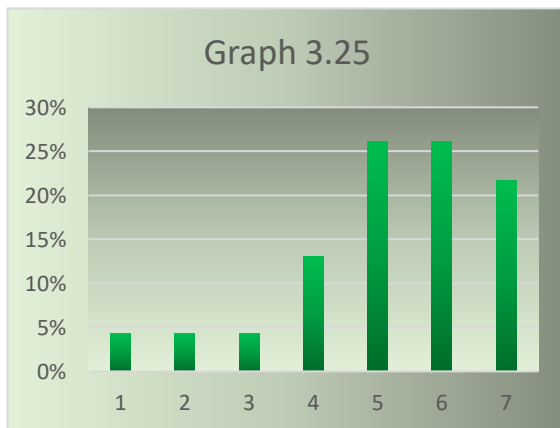
The results of the survey conducted on the Persuasion sample showed a better perceived effectiveness of the Development Plan tool, compared to the Negotiation sample. No student has disagreed totally to the statements of Graphs 3.23 and 3.24.

3.3.2.2.4.3 Journaling

As far as the Journaling activity is concerned, students found themselves recording daily experiences, which varied from persuading someone about a movie to watch or what to eat for dinner or where to go on holiday, to making one's nephews listen, or convincing someone not to throw cigarettes on the ground, or also convincing someone to start recycling, etc. Many were the different contexts the students participating at this simulation encountered or created to practice, gaining knowledge about the concrete actions they took before and during the Persuasion process (e.g. previous research on the interlocutor's interests, questions asked, giving the example, anticipating objections, giving concrete reasons, using evidence, showing understanding and concern towards one's interlocutor, understanding one's own goals, thinking of the consequences of not taking action both at micro and macro level, repetition tactics, using simple and practical reasoning, using rhetoric questions, repetitions, use of non-verbal cues, etc.). Through this activity students analysed their behaviours, their outcomes and feedback, their reflections about the described persuasion activity, the encountered difficulties, and how they would behave in other similar circumstances. In their journals they described how good they felt about themselves when their persuasion went well, or when the interlocutor showed them appreciation for their help in gaining a new point of view or new knowledge; moreover, they reflected on how emotions play a key role and how important it is to be able to manage (e.g. not be anxious or stressed), how useful this activity was to challenge one's self, how important it is to listen and find a common ground, how important it is to use the appropriate tactics, be convinced first about one's self to be convincing for the other party as well, how important examples and creating an emotional connection with one's interlocutor is. At the same time they also reflected on how difficult it is to understand an interlocutor one doesn't know, to answer objections, to overcome cultural differences, or deal with interlocutors that don't listen. The data collected showed that, although this activity wasn't done often, students identified its main benefits. In fact, among their identified benefits were the possibility of having a clearer idea of one's experience by writing it down, with the possibility to reflect on the actions that were taken, to train one's persuasion skills, reflect on one's strengths and weaknesses, reflect on possible different actions, keep in check one's own progress in the development of this skill and encountered problems. However, the main difficulties registered were the

difficulty of being constant in keeping a diary, explain one's self well, and identify which the adopted strategies were. Finally, this activity, in regard to the Persuasion skill Seminar, has been perceived by the students on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1="I totally disagree", and 7="I totally agree", as the graphs below:

- It helped me to gain awareness of my progress in time in my development plan of this skill. (Graph 3.25)
- It helped me to identify behaviours that brought me to have positive outcomes in the development of this skill. (Graph 3.26)
- It helped me to reflect on the behaviours used that are little or not at all effective to develop this skill. (Graph 3.27)
- It helped me to reflect on how to modify my behaviours in order to obtain positive outcomes in the following development experience. (Graph 3.28)

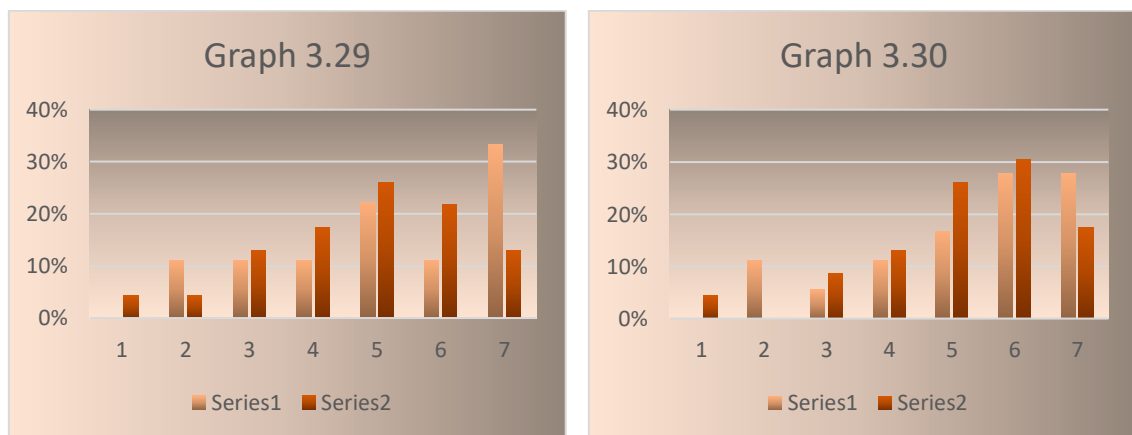


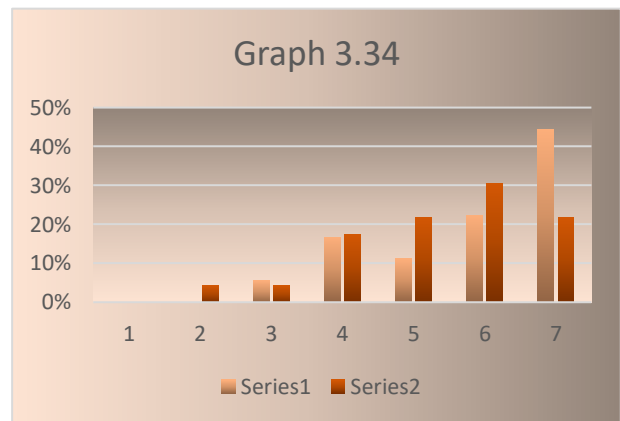
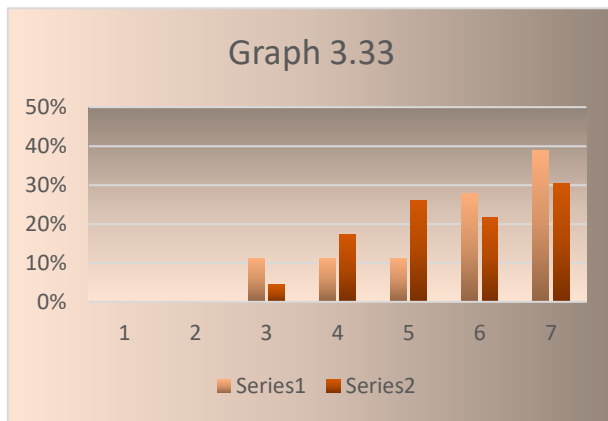
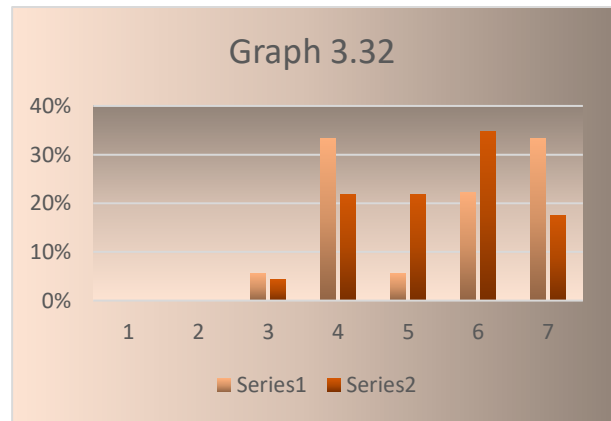
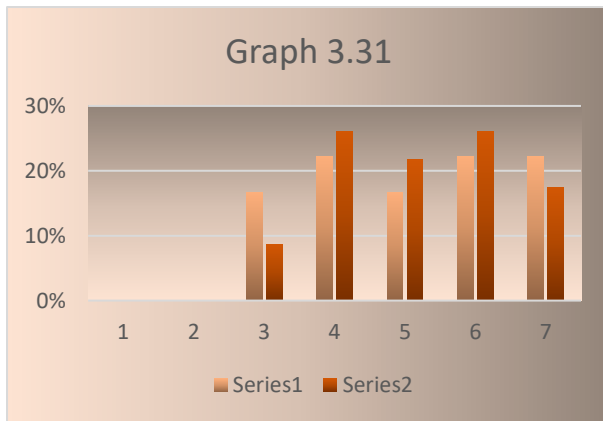
As noticed in the previous analysis, the results of the survey conducted on the Persuasion sample showed a better perceived effectiveness of Journaling activity as well, compared to the Negotiation sample. No student totally disagreed with the statements of Graphs 3.27 and 3.28.

3.3.2.3 Compared Development Tools' Results

The activities of Peer-Coaching, Development Plan and Journaling, due to the significant improvement that has been analysed both for Negotiation and Persuasion Skills through the pre- and post-assessments, have been proven to have contributed to the participants' self-development, as also previously described from the collected qualitative data. However, these adopted development tools have received a different evaluation by the participants of the two seminars. Following are the results of the comparison of this evaluation of the tools on a 7-point scale ranging from 1="I totally disagree" to 7="I totally agree". In the following graphs, "Series 1" will correspond to the evaluation given by the participants at the Negotiation Seminar, whereas "Series 2" will correspond to the evaluation given by the participants at the Persuasion Seminar. Finally, before proceeding, a clarification must be made; all results are objectively analysed, however due to the Covid-19 pandemic students didn't have many opportunities to entertain social interactions and practice. So, this analysis should be repeated when participants have had more opportunities to put them into practice.

3.3.2.3.1 Peer-Coaching

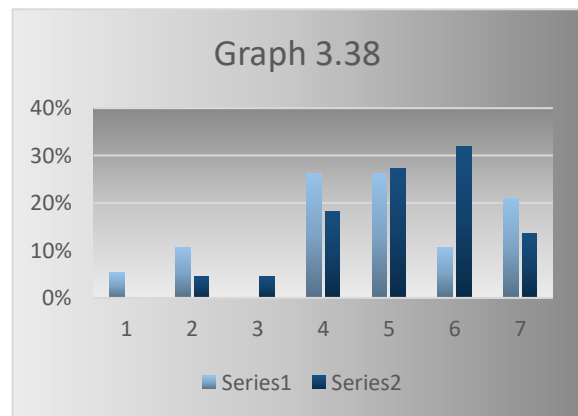
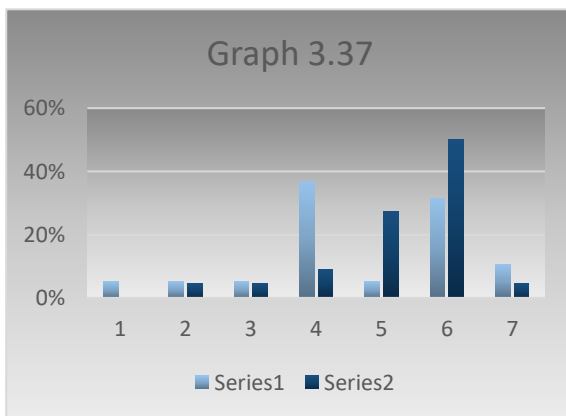
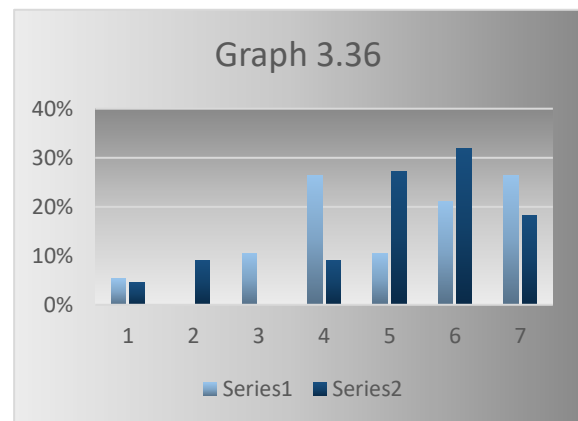
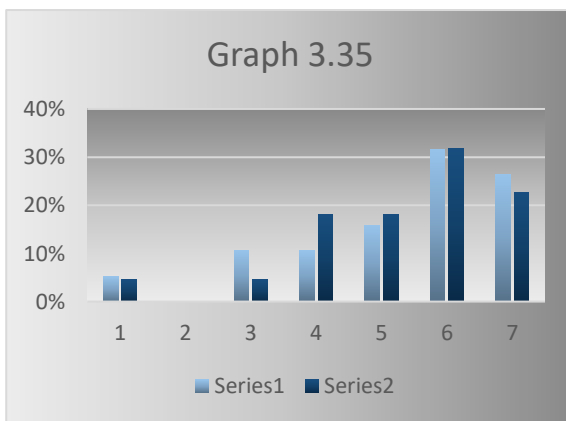




As far as the Peer-Coaching activity is concerned, it can be observed how no student disagreed with the statements “The dialogue with my coach helped me to reflect on the behaviours used that are little or not at all effective to develop this skill” (Graph 3.31), “The dialogue with my coach helped me to reflect on how to modify my behaviours in order to obtain positive outcomes in the following development experience” (Graph 3.32), “Being a coach to my peer helped me to explore new ways to develop this skill, which I hadn’t considered or experimented in my personal development experience” (Graph 3.33), and “Being a coach to my peer helped me to formulate questions that I too then used to reflect on my personal development experience of this skill” (Graph 3.34). It can furthermore be seen, as Graph 3.34 shows the highest percentage of positive evaluation by the participants at the Negotiation Seminar, having been 44% of the students who selected option 7, totally agreeing with the relative statement with regard to this activity to develop negotiation skills. It can be also noticed how, in the just mentioned graphs, as well as Graph 3.29 (“The dialogue with my coach helped me to gain awareness of my progress in time in my development plan of this skill”) and Graph 3.30 (“The

dialogue with my coach helped me to identify behaviours that brought me to have positive outcomes in the development of this skill”), the students rarely agreed completely with the above statements with regard to the Persuasion Skill. It’s furthermore evident that, although for Persuasion the results are more homogenously distributed, both for Persuasion and Negotiation, students found the activity to be more helpful while being the Coach, instead of the Coachee.

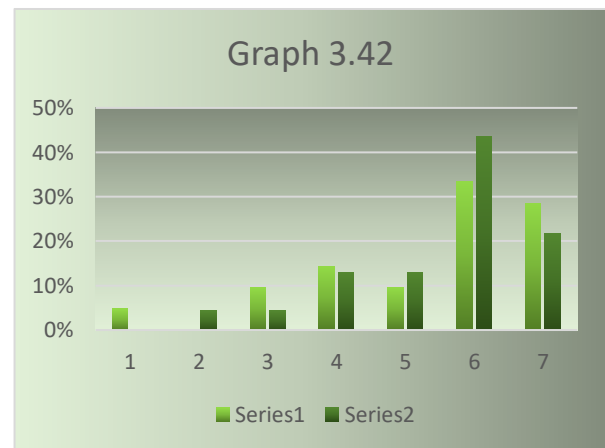
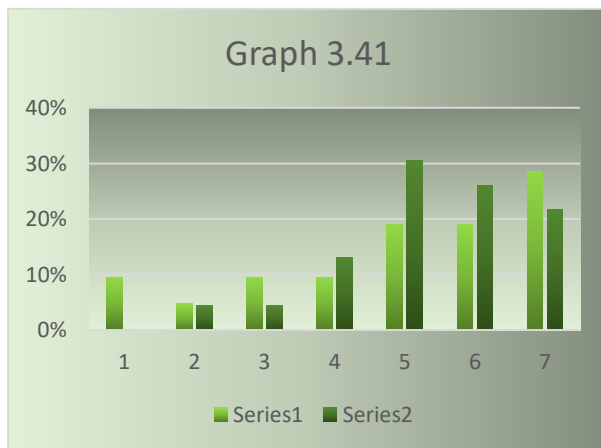
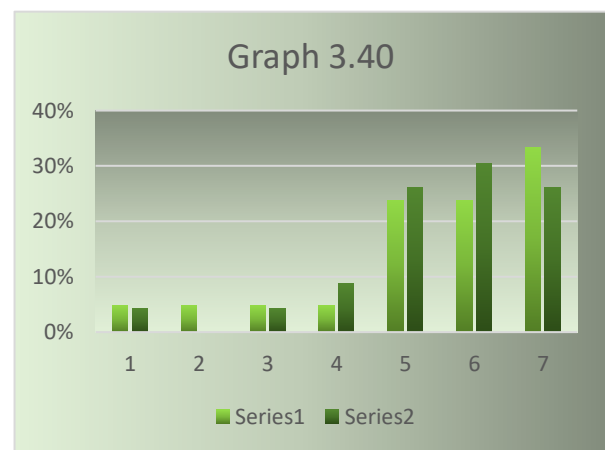
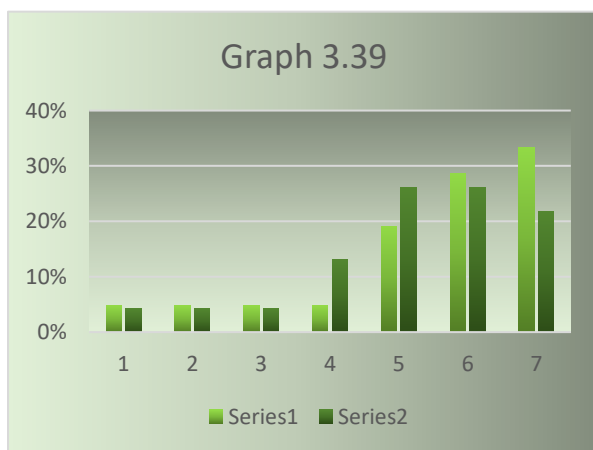
3.3.2.3.2 Development Plan



From these results it is evident how this tool has been found to effectively help students of the Persuasion Seminar to persuade their counterparts (Graph 3.37), while it doesn’t impact much for Negotiation processes, and how mostly students of the Persuasion Seminars were altogether satisfied about how they put into practice their development plan (Graph 3.38). Graph 3.35 (“Designing the plan helped me to reflect on the

techniques/behaviours that are more effective to experiment, in the specific context”) shows equally distributed evaluations for this tool both for Negotiation and Persuasion, while, on the other hand, Graph 3.36 (“Designing the plan helped me to improve my confidence in my abilities”) shows how it has been regarded as a tool which helps boost confidence for a Persuasion process; however, it appears to have less effect for Negotiation, based on the data collected.

3.3.2.3.3 Journaling



As far as the Journaling activity is concerned, nearly equivalent evaluations have been found in Graph 3.40 (“It helped me to identify behaviours that brought me to have positive outcomes in the development of this skill”) for Negotiation and Persuasion. Graph 3.42 then shows how this tool greatly helped participants of the Persuasion Seminar to reflect

on how to modify their behaviours in order to obtain positive outcomes in the following development experience. It can furthermore be seen, in graph 3.39 (“It helped me to gain awareness of my progress in time in my development plan of this skill”), graph 3.40, graph 3.41 (“It helped me to reflect on the behaviours used that are little or not at all effective to develop this skill”, and graph 3.42, how for the activity of Journaling the percentage of lower evaluations is meagre and how, compared to the previously compared development tools, the results regarding this activity tend to concentrate more on the higher points of the adopted 7-point scale. Compared to the development methodologies of Peer-Coaching sessions and the use of a Development Plan, The activity of Journaling has had the most positive effect.

3.4 Conclusions

This research on the Self Development Methodologies applied by the Ca’ Foscari University Competency Centre, has first presented the concepts of soft skills, in particular of the skills of Negotiation and Persuasion, object of this thesis, and then the main training and evaluation methodologies. It described the activities proposed during each Seminar by the CFCC, the adopted measurement tools and the results obtained. It compares the level of each skill in the participants both before and after the Training Session, through validated self-assessments, showing how for both skills there was a significant improvement compared to the Control Sample that did not receive any training. Using the Empathic Concern and Perspective Taking sub scales, the degree of correlation between Empathy and both skills has been moreover analysed both at the beginning and at the end of each Seminar. However, no correlation was found.

Furthermore, sub-experimental studies have also been conducted dividing each Experimental sample into two groups, one with participants who had followed only one Skill Seminar and the other formed by those who had participated in both the Negotiation

and Persuasion Seminars. In particular, comparing these two sub-samples significant improvement for the Negotiation skills was found in the first group whereas for Persuasion it was found in both groups. In addition another study was conducted dividing students into three groups based on their Faculties, showing how although not significant, that the students of Languages showed a greater improvement in the Negotiation skills compared to the other two sample groups. However, although students of Languages showed practically the same level of improvement for the Persuasion skill as well, it's the students of Economics who showed a significant improvement in this latter skill.

Finally, the effectiveness of each main training tool adopted has been measured through semi-quantitative and semi-qualitative short surveys which have shown how the Experimental Sample of Negotiation in the activity of Peer Coaching preferred the role of being the coach while the Persuasion sample had more uniform results, and perceived furthermore as more effective the activities of the Development Plan and Journaling as well. In particular, both samples perceived the activity of Journaling as the most effective tool for developing their skills. In fact, through the qualitative data collected, it has emerged how the training tools that have been used, although found difficult to be implemented with constancy, have presented many positive aspects. As far as the Peer-Coaching activity was concerned, students in the short open-end questions, wrote it was helpful to confront themselves with peers they had never met but who were following the same development path, as it allowed an exchange of ideas, the opportunity to analyse an aspect from more perspectives, expanding one's own. Furthermore, through the closed 7-point scale questions it has been observed how participants found useful being the coach, as it allowed them to explore new ways to develop their skills which hadn't been previously experimented, and new probing questions which could be used to reflect on one's personal development experience of this skill. The Development Plan activity has been slightly perceived as more helpful for the Persuasion skill, compared to the Negotiation one; however, participants of both Seminars in the open-end questions regarding the gained benefits, described how this activity gave them the opportunity to better analyse their goals, one's self and the counterpart, gaining more awareness of the context and the various aspects to consider, being more prepared and confident. Finally, the Journaling activity has been perceived as more impactful and useful to participants of both skills, who have perceived it as helpful to gain more awareness of one's actions,

reflect on potential alternative actions for the future, and see one's progress in time. As described, due to the Covid-19 pandemic during the interval of time in which these Seminars took place and the related restrictions, participants followed the entire Seminars through Zoom meetings, and registered the difficulty of having opportunities to put into practice what learnt and the related tools. Nevertheless, the results obtained have been analytically described in this thesis, and as positive results have been registered both by the significant improvements in one's skills that participants perceived, and the positive evaluations of the adopted development tools, it can be concluded that the training sessions and tools have impacted positively, compared to the Control Sample that didn't receive any training.

As there is hardly any research concerning practical Development and Assessment tools, this study paves the path for further research using these same, or other, tools, and/or considering other variables, such as age, gender, nationality, work experience, etc. to create a deeper understanding of their impact. Moreover, given the context in which these analysis took place and the available resources, this research could only analyse the impact of these various development methodologies used by the entire Experimental Sample, confronting the results with the Control Sample that didn't adopt them. Not having been able to interact directly with the participants both during and after the Seminars, in-depth interviews could not be conducted. However, future research could focus on creating different experimental samples each adopting a specific development tool, analysing the profound impact each applied methodology would have on the participants' personal development. In addition, different studies such as in-class and e-learning training, and the use of VR, AR and MR technologies to practice in more vivid experiences, can also be implemented and analysed. Furthermore, as mentioned, further research using neuroimaging tools, can also be conducted in order to analyse not only what is perceived consciously by participants, but also what happens in an individual's subconsciousness. Many are the potential studies that can be conducted, as there's a shortage of analysis in this field, which, as described, should be more thoroughly studied, as it is essential for personal success and organizational performance, in order to give the possibility to as many as possible, to learn and put into practice these and other potential soft skills, important in our everyday lives.

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