
**FRANCO-GERMAN BUSINESS NEGOTIATIONS: MASTERING INTERCULTURAL
COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES**

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Dissertation

Master's in Innovation and Technological Entrepreneurship

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Honor Pledge

I declare that the present research proposal for my master's dissertation is of my own authorship and has not been previously used in another course or curricular unit of this or any other institution. References to other authors (statements, ideas, thoughts) scrupulously respect the rules of attribution and are duly indicated in the text and the bibliographical references, in accordance with the referencing rules. I am aware that the practice of plagiarism and self-plagiarism constitute an academic offence.

Abstract

This master's dissertation provides a comprehensive literature review on intercultural communication in the context of Franco-German business negotiations. The background of this research lies in the increasing globalisation and the related need for companies to negotiate effectively with counterparts from different cultural contexts. The motivation originates from the general challenge of understanding and overcoming cultural differences during negotiations to ensure a successful outcome.

How do intercultural communication challenges influence Franco-German business negotiations in the region of Saarland-Lorraine?

Researching this question is crucial as business negotiations between German and French partners in this specific region increasingly occur in an international context characterised by cultural differences. Identifying and investigating concrete strategies and theories negotiators use are highly relevant to minimise misunderstandings and communication barriers and promote successful and sustainable business relationships between the two cultures. This research aims to bridge an existing gap in the literature and provide concrete recommendations for negotiation teams and organisations operating in an intercultural environment.

Keywords: Intercultural communication, German-French business negotiations, cultural differences, and business communication

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Motivation

As a researcher, my motivation to explore intercultural communication in Franco-German business negotiations is deeply rooted in my keen interest in cross-border negotiations, particularly in the Franco-German context. Growing up in a family environment heavily influenced by Franco-German relations, I was exposed early to the complexities and cultural nuances underpinning these commercial interactions. My education also focused on Franco-German interculturality, reinforcing my belief that a thorough understanding of intercultural communication is essential for successful negotiations between these two nations. In addition, my strong motivation to occupy a future position in cross-border negotiations drives me to contribute to research on this subject, providing practical insights and a solid basis for managing commercial relations between France and Germany.

1.2. Scope of the work

This research is essential because it enhances our understanding of intercultural communication in the Franco-German business negotiation context, which has high implications in the region of Saarland-Lorraine. It also demonstrates the role of historical background and the potential influence of intercultural skills training on the success of negotiations in culturally diverse environments.

This work aims to develop a model to prepare and support negotiators in cross-cultural negotiations. It includes a comprehensive analysis of academic works, theories and applied studies in negotiation, intercultural communication and intercultural behaviour. The focus is on the complexity of cultural differences in negotiation contexts, examining factors such as communication styles, power dynamics and decision-making processes in diverse cultural contexts. This study identifies the key concepts, frameworks and best practices that inform effective negotiation strategies in cross-cultural contexts. By synthesising this knowledge, the study lays the groundwork for building a practical framework that provides ideas, tools and guidelines to help negotiators prepare for, navigate and successfully resolve conflict in cross-cultural negotiations.

1.3. Background

The research question " *How do intercultural communication challenges influence Franco-German business negotiations in the region of Saarland-Lorraine?* " addresses the area of intercultural communication in negotiation, particularly in the context of German and French negotiators. It focuses on the cultural challenges posed by differences in communication styles, values and preferences in negotiations between individuals from the two cultures. The aim is to identify and analyse the specific strategies and theories that can be used by German and French negotiators to navigate and overcome these intercultural differences, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful negotiations.

1.4. Research Methodology

The methodology applied to analyse the literature in this dissertation adopts the qualitative meta-synthesis approach (Sandelowski, Barroso, & Voils, 2007). This method provides a methodical framework for reproducing qualitative information, allowing for a better understanding and exploration of the research topic. This approach generates new insights and knowledge from synthesising secondary research data, allowing themes, ideas and patterns to emerge from the collective analysis of individual documents.

The literature review will identify critical theories, frameworks and tools relating to Franco-German business negotiations and the challenges of intercultural communication. This analysis aims to develop a new concept to improve professionals' intercultural awareness and skills in this context. By improving understanding and collaboration between France and Germany, two central economic powers in Europe, the research will have significant implications for cross-border commercial relations. Ultimately, it aims to improve intercultural business practices and promote collaboration in an increasingly globalised world.

Within the qualitative meta-synthesis approach are several different techniques of qualitative synthesis. Two methods will be combined for this literature review: literature research and integration. The literature research involves identifying and gathering relevant qualitative studies on a specific topic or research question. The second integration method involves integrating individual studies' findings to generate new insights or interpretations that provide a deeper understanding of the research topic.

1.5. Structure

In order to achieve the objectives, the dissertation is structured into six chapters.

Chapter 1 includes the researcher's motivation, research scope and background, research methodology, and dissertation structure.

Chapter 2 delves into an in-depth literature review on culture, cultural models, intercultural negotiations, and communication. This section includes the PRISMA Flow diagram and provides an overview of the literature contributions of all records.

In Chapter 3, the research question is formulated based on the gap identified in Chapter 2 using the Design Science Approach methodology.

In Chapter 4, the model created based on the methodology used is presented and explained.

Chapter 5 outlines the assessment method used for the model, along with a cultural assessment tool.

Chapter 6 delivers the discussions, limitations, and recommendations for this dissertation and summarises the primary findings of the research and the model.

Chapter 7 is the bibliography.

Chapter 2. Literature review

The chapter presents the literature review based on the keywords researched in Scopus and Web of Science databases. A total of 521 papers resulted from the search conducted with Scopus, and a total of 368 papers resulted from the search on the Web of Science. Applying the PRISMA method (Moher et al., 2009) led to identifying the most relevant scientific contributions on the subject of this work. Analysing these relevant scientific papers aims to synthesise their main contributions and limitations.

2.1. Search Results

The following section will demonstrate the search trials done during the research. The research was done using two databases, Scopus and Web of Science. The search trials will be presented as a table to facilitate the understanding. For each search trial, the table will show the database used, the search string, the number of papers that resulted from that research, the file's name and date, and a critical assessment/view of the results.

Table 1. Representation of Web of Science Research Trials

	Search string	Number of papers	File name and date	Assessment of the results
5 th search	(ALL FIELDS (intercultural AND communication) AND ALL FIELDS (business AND negotiation*)).	78	WOS_result_1 Wednesday, 17th of January 2024	This first Web of Science search used the exact keywords as the first Scopus search. This search also resulted in a few interesting articles that could be used for the theme and research question. Too many articles that cannot be used or duplicates of previously selected pieces are shown.
6 th search	(ALL FIELDS (intercultural) AND ALL FIELDS (communication) AND ALL FIELDS (negotiations))	297	WOS_result_2 Wednesday, 17th of January 2024	The second attempt to search with more targeted keywords and separate resulted in many more articles, which meant more reports could be used for further analysis. This search string will be used and is considered relevant for further research.

Table 2. Representation of Scopus Research Trials

	Search string	Number of papers	File name and date	Assessment of the results
1st search	(TITLE-ABS-KEY (intercultural AND communication) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (business AND negotiation))	65	Scopus_result_1 Wednesday, 17th of January 2024	This first Scopus search string served as a try-out of all four keywords grouped into two, "intercultural communication" and "business negotiation". The results of this string could be interesting, but unfortunately, most documents found through this string were irrelevant when considering the research topic.
2nd search	(KEY (intercultural) AND KEY (communication) AND KEY (business))	140	Scopus_result_2 Wednesday, 17th of January 2024	The second search string created with Scopus resulted in more articles, increasing relevance and matching results with the research topic and question. Thanks to this string, several pieces were considered for further analyses and research. This research is the one that brought the best results for this database.
3rd search	(TITLE-ABS-KEY (intercultural) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (communication) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (negotiation*))	296	Scopus_result_3 Wednesday, 17th of January 2024	This third search string resulted in many more results. Unfortunately, many of the articles shown were too far from the topic, and some were already out of the wanted scope. The relevant articles were duplicates of the ones that resulted from the one above. As a consequence, this was the most irrelevant search string that was implemented in Scopus.
4th search	(TITLE-ABS-KEY (cultural) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (dimensions) AND AUTH (hofstede))	34	Scopus_result_4 Tuesday, 16th of January 2024	As for this last search string, it was intentionally aimed at a particular author's work; the results were expected to be lower. Nevertheless, this search string is one of the most helpful, as it will significantly impact the work.

As a conclusion for this section, for both databases, Scopus and Web of Science, different keywords bring the best results. For Scopus, the best results are reached with the keywords: “*intercultural*”, “*communication*”, and “*business*”, only searching within the keywords. With WOS, the following keywords of the sixth search string bring the best results: “*intercultural*”, “*communication*”, and “*negotiations*”. For both databases, it is essential not to group the keywords but to insert them individually into the search string. Finally, both databases provide decisive and crucial articles for

the topic and research question. However, it is essential to run several searches with different keywords to identify the best working search string.

2.2. PRISMA Flow Diagram

The following paragraph presents the PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram (Moher et al., 2009), which is used to define eligible articles for the synthesis that will be done.

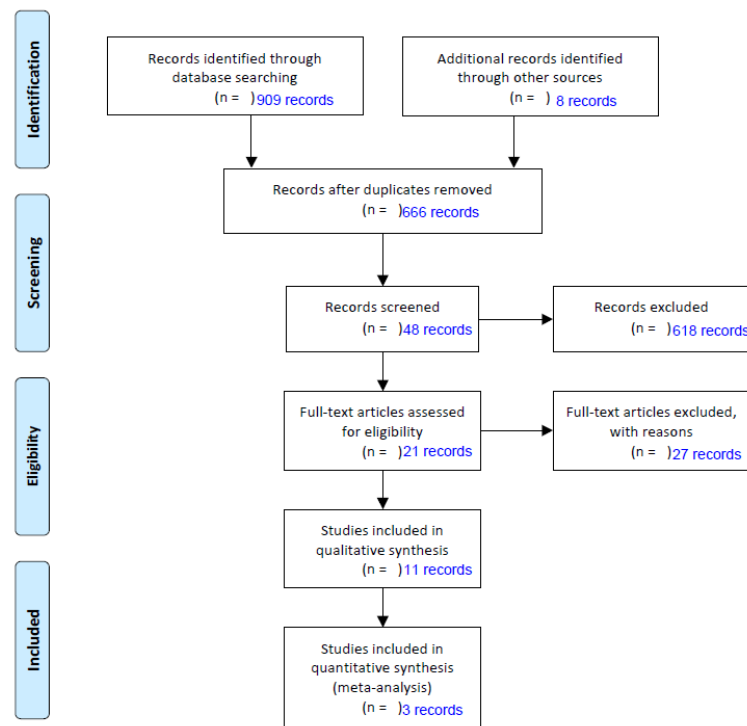


Figure 1. PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram

Based on: Moher et al., 2009

An intensive search using the Scopus and Web of Science databases allowed the identification of 909 records using the search words chosen earlier. A total of 534 records resulted from the search in Scopus, and 375 records originated from Web of Science. A further search through Google Scholar, Science Direct, Research Gate, and the university's library allowed me to identify seven records.

All these records were gathered in one Excel sheet to identify and remove 251 duplicated records, leaving 658 records for deeper screening. Following a brief analysis of the titles and keywords of these 658 records, 47 are selected for a more in-depth analysis. This led to the exclusion of 618 records from further analysis, mainly because of irrelevant titles and keywords, which bring insufficient contribution to the research question and targeted topics for analysis.

After reading the abstracts, introduction, and conclusion of those forty-seven records, another twenty-seven were discarded and deemed less relevant than the others, which provided poorer information than and incomplete information, which left twenty relevant articles that provided complete information related to the research question and analysed topics.

In the complete analysis of twenty records, fourteen were chosen for their high relevance to the research and model creation. Eleven were included in the qualitative synthesis and three in the quantitative synthesis.

2.3. Literature Contributions

Table 3. Analysis of researched articles

Paper	Type	Model	Contribution	Future research Limitations
(Liu, Chua, & Stahl, 2010)	Conceptual Research	Yes	This paper considers how intercultural and intracultural negotiations differ. It also emphasises the importance and quality of communication during talks. The authors developed and validated a concept called "Quality of Communication Experience"; this concept identified a lower communication rate during intercultural negotiations than during intracultural ones. However, once this concept is applied in intercultural negotiations, its effects are higher than during intracultural negotiations.	The concept developed in this paper can be tested with specific intercultural negotiations and other areas of organisations. In the case of the research question, the idea could be validated explicitly with French and German negotiations. Moreover, the different dimensions of the quality communication experience might differ when considering France and Germany. As for the limitations of this paper, the concept was developed in a general context of negotiations. Thus, the concept might not fit this research's French and German context.
(Szkudlarek et al., 2020)	Literature review	No	This paper highlights the importance of communication in international businesses. It enhances a limitation in the understanding, mainly the high focus on cross-cultural	The generalised perspective of communication in international business and the proposed concept leaves space for further research. The concept and theories of

Paper	Type	Model	Contribution	Future research Limitations
			comparisons rather than intercultural, process-oriented research focusing on dynamic interactive communication. The authors provide an overview of existing studies at the interface of culture and communication in global work interactions and identify the prevailing research trends.	this paper could be tested with a more precise context or group of negotiators. The limitations of this paper lie in the fact that the proposed eight shifts might not match the negotiations between France and Germany.
(Peleckis, 2014)	Conceptual research	No	This paper provides information about how innovation can be leveraged to support and prepare the negotiation process. The authors also highlight the importance of an effective team that will lead the negotiations with their analytical work and their skills in order to achieve the best outcome. In intercultural negotiation, the negotiating teams must prepare themselves thoughtfully, as the environment is way more sensitive. The team must prepare by understanding the other parties' cultures and languages and the other country's legal knowledge.	As future research, it could be validated if negotiating teams are open to using innovation to prepare themselves for intercultural negotiations. Furthermore, tools for using innovation to prepare negotiations could be developed and tested with negotiating teams. It could be tested if a potential concept would focus on individually preparing German and French negotiating teams to interact with each other. Regarding the limitations of the paper, the findings are generalised in an essential negotiation context, and these might not be implementable in French and German negotiations.
(Vasilyeva, Bultseva, & Lebedeva, 2023)	Qualitative	Yes	This article analyses how the communication context affects face-related concerns in business relations. The study strives to distinguish whether the priority of face-related concerns is the same or different in intra- and	The most significant limitation of this paper lies in the national context, which is so different from the target of this work. Russian managers can adapt their behaviour to the intercultural context. However, it needs to be

Paper	Type	Model	Contribution	Future research Limitations
			intercultural business communication. The results showed a substantial distinction between face-related concerns in Russian managers' intercultural and intracultural communication conduct. These results prove that Russian managers build a public image in business interactions by considering cultural differences and changing their behaviour to adapt to the context.	tested if German and French negotiators could adapt similarly. This is where the space for future research of this paper lies; a similar test could be done with French and German negotiators to reveal their adaptation qualities to an intercultural context.
(Barmeyer & Davoine, 2013)	Literature review	No	This article informs of the cultural differences that cause a critical environment during French and German organisational interactions. The authors synthesise the main differences in the perception of leadership, time management, and the ways of leading negotiations.	For further research, find a framework to prepare both negotiating teams to interact with each other, to smoothen the different perceptions and validate a standard view that will guide the negotiations. More research could be done to find guidelines that lay out a typical communication style, time management, and managerial role.
(Barmeyer C. , 2000)	Qualitative	Yes	This book explains how international cooperation can fail when different ways of thinking and working lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. The book's author reveals the connections between other intercultural management and national learning styles. By comparing intercultural training methods, he provides essential orientation aids for cross-border management.	In the course of this research, numerous starting points for further research efforts became apparent. Many topics that have only been dealt with peripherally lend themselves to further and more differentiated detailed studies. For example, the content and methods of training that characterise style should be investigated much more than has been the case to date. Therefore, the most exciting areas are intercultural action and team skills and

Paper	Type	Model	Contribution	Future research Limitations
				correspondingly orientated forms of training that promote learning processes.
(Hofstede, 1984)	Quantitative	Yes	The paper outlines the importance of work-related cultural differences based on research in over 50 countries and clarifies the fundamental concepts and interconnection between culture and management. Furthermore, it provides a comprehensive exploration of the four cultural dimensions formulated by Hofstede, namely Individualism, Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Masculinity. The study goes on to validate essential aspects, engaging with the implications of cultural differences for management across categories such as Individualism versus Collectivism, variations along the Power Distance dimension, the influence of Uncertainty Avoidance, and the dynamics of Motivation towards Achievement and Success.	This paper serves as a beneficial resource by providing tangible insights into the nuances of management techniques in Germany and France. The concrete information presented a subtle insight into the cultural differences in management within these two countries. Moreover, the conclusions presented in this paper lay a reliable foundation for future research works. The detailed examination of cultural differences sets the stage for further investigations to comprehensively address these differences and determine common ground.
(Ting-toome & Kurog, 1998)	Qualitative	Yes	This article undergoes three essential steps: the first delivers an update on theories about face negotiation, the second presents a model about facework competencies aiming to improve intercultural conflict training, and the last examines significant training and research	Future research can quickly emerge from the expressed theory and model by testing them on French and German negotiators. New research can be based on the model and theory to develop them and tailor them to a precise group of negotiators in the intercultural context.

Paper	Type	Model	Contribution	Future research Limitations
			issues using the theory of face negotiation and the facework competence model.	
(Hofstede, 2001)	Quantitative research	Yes	This book examines the differences in social thinking and acting that exist between members of more than 50 nations. It argues that people possess "mental programs" that are a constituent of national culture and are manifested in distinctive values. The author describes how the data was collected and translated into five main dimensions on differing cultures. Later, the author discusses the consequences of cultural differences between countries for the functioning of organisations and meetings between different cultures.	Similar to the previous paper of the same author, this book serves as a beneficial resource by providing tangible insights into the nuances of culture and values in Germany and France. This book creates a strong foundation for the future development of the artefact by highlighting the similarities and differences of both cultures.
(Hofstede & Minkov, 2010)	Quantitative	Yes	This book section is complementary to the book above, adding a sixth dimension to Hofstede's model.	As this sixth dimension is relatively new, it is supported by less data and is not as developed as the other five dimensions. Similar to Hofstede's other dimensions, this one creates the basis for further research in the field of culture and intercultural negotiation.
(Lempereur & Colson, 2010)	Synthesis of reflections	No	The book offers essential perspectives on the complex dynamics of negotiation processes, highlighting the importance of communication, preparation and conflict resolution strategies. Exploring theoretical	Although "The First Move: A Negotiator's Companion" offers valuable insights into negotiation strategies and tactics, one of its limitations may be that it focuses mainly on traditional negotiation contexts, potentially

Paper	Type	Model	Contribution	Future research Limitations
			frameworks and practical applications enables researchers and practitioners to understand negotiation dynamics in various contexts better. In addition, the emphasis on decision-making and ethical considerations adds further insight to the discussion, facilitating a more comprehensive review of negotiation strategies. Altogether, "The First Move" is an invaluable resource for researchers and practitioners who seek to broaden their understanding of and improve their skills in negotiation theory.	neglecting the nuances of negotiating in multicultural environments. Future research could explore the impact of cultural differences on negotiation dynamics and efficiency. Altogether, while "The First Move" offers a solid basis for comprehending the dynamics of negotiation, there remains plenty of room for future research to address this limitation and explore new findings in negotiation studies.
(Mayer, 2012)	Conceptual literature	Yes	Building on the original edition, this extensively revised and updated book aligns itself with the latest trends and research in the field. It focuses on four key concepts: interactional dynamics, systems dynamics, culture and conflict, and conflict engagement. Mayer offers reflections on conflict by presenting it as a series of conceptual tools that complement each other and offer autonomous value. This approach provides a holistic understanding of conflict and conflict intervention. In chapter	The theory and model expressed can quickly give rise to future research by testing them on French and German negotiators. New research can be carried out based on the model and theory in order to refine and adapt them to a specific group of negotiators in a cross-cultural context.
(Cloe & Goldsmith, 2005)	Literature review	No	In this book, the two authors propose interesting avenues for improving individuals' ability to manage conflict and for creating	Like the previous article, this book is a beneficial resource, providing tangible information on conflict management. This book creates a solid

Paper	Type	Model	Contribution	Future research Limitations
			organisational cultures in which conflict is openly tackled. The authors suggest various strategies for tackling, summarising, modifying and drawing learnings from conflicts. They encourage individuals to communicate more openly and to participate intelligently in conflicts.	foundation for the future development of the artefact by providing strategies that could be passed on to German and French negotiators.
(Glasl, 2011)	Conceptual literature	Yes	Friedrich Glasl has developed a model for conflict escalation and resolution that can be applied in a variety of cases - from schools to state conflicts. According to the Austrian organisational consultant and conflict researcher Friedrich Glasl, every dispute goes through nine stages. If the parties are aware of which stage they are at, they have the opportunity to analyse their conflict and react better during the course of the conflict. According to this model, conflicts that have reached a certain point on the scale of conflict escalation can no longer be resolved without outside help.	The model has a broad spectrum of uses; it can be used for minor and massive conflicts in daily life. It would be interesting to evaluate in which way his model can be used for intercultural negotiations between German and French companies.

In the table above, fourteen articles and books were analysed, considering five criteria, each being a column. The columns named “*Paper*”, “*Research Method*”, and “*Model*” provide the reference of the paper, the type of research method used by the authors and if the paper is demonstrating a model. The last two columns, “*Contribution of Paper*” and “*Future Research / Limitations*”, give information about the paper after analysis. The critical aspect of this table is to provide the reader with information about the method used by the authors to write the paper, a quick summary of critical key elements found during the analyses, and information on how the paper contributes to

this research proposal, as well as the elements that could be researched further that were not yet analysed by the documents, but also the limitations those papers have regarding the research proposal.

In conclusion, this literature review enforces that the communication challenge and cultural differences between countries jeopardise intercultural negotiations. A significant research gap emerges, characterised by the need for comprehensive models and theories tailored for the training and preparation of French and German negotiators in navigating intercultural communication challenges inherent in negotiations in the region of Saarland-Lorraine. This identified gap significantly puts the outcomes of intercultural negotiations involving these parties at risk. The primary objective of this dissertation is to address the research gap by developing a robust framework. The aim is to provide these negotiators with comprehensive training and preparation from small- and medium-sized companies operating near the border in Germany and France. The dissertation strives to contribute significantly to optimising intercultural negotiation outcomes by creating and implementing this framework.

To summarise, this chapter examines a large amount of literature, primarily sourced from the Scopus and Web of Science databases, totalling 889 articles. The most relevant scientific articles were extracted using the PRISMA method, and their main ideas and limitations were analysed. The most pertinent scientific articles were extracted using the PRISMA method, and their main ideas and limitations were analysed.

Chapter 3. Methodology

The following chapter will frame the research question into the gap that emerged from the previous chapter and, with the methodology of the Design Science Approach from the Information Systems Research Framework (Hevner et al., 2004), introduce and present the developed model to answer the research question and bridge the research gap.

3.1. Research Question

Intercultural communication is essential in the global business environment, where businesses from culturally different backgrounds work together and intensively negotiate. Given the historical, economic, and political importance of the French-German relationship within the European Union, Franco-German commercial negotiations occur daily in Saarland-Lorraine. The previously presented literature review explored the complexities and challenges of culture, values, organisational functioning and communication between these two distinct cultures, focusing on professional and business interactions. Preparing the negotiators to tackle the cultural differences that influence stakeholder attitudes, behaviours and expectations and effective communication strategies that promote successful negotiations is crucial for a positive outcome. Bridging this gap is essential to strengthening relations between France and Germany, two major European Union economic players, while enriching intercultural business practices in an increasingly globalised world.

Due to a lack of research on the strategies and theories that German and French negotiators could use to manage intercultural challenges during business negotiations specifically, there is a need for in-depth investigation and practical analysis to bridge this gap and to gain valuable insights for enhancing intercultural communication in this specific context, answering the following research question: How do intercultural communication challenges influence Franco-German business negotiations in the region of Saarland-Lorraine?

3.2. Design Science Approach

After conducting the analyses of eight papers, the most crucial aspect stated in almost all papers was the importance of the negotiator's preparation, knowledge and training before the negotiations to enhance the chances of a successful outcome. The research design below aims to prepare negotiators to lead intercultural negotiations through a framework that includes modules on

cultural awareness, negotiation strategies, cross-cultural communication, and practical case studies (Hevner, March, Park, & Ram, 2004).

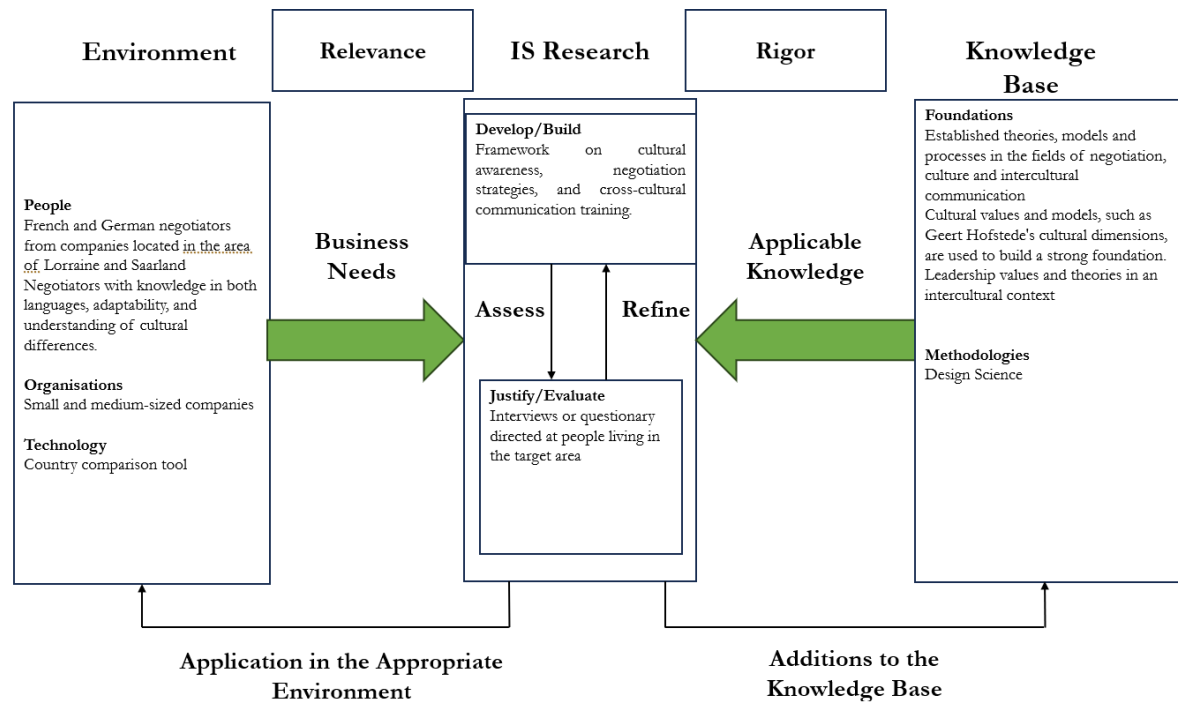


Figure 2. Design Science in Information Systems Research

Based on: Hevner et al., 2004

To establish a robust foundation, this research proposal advocates the utilisation of rigorously validated theories and models about intercultural negotiations, validated cultural values and models with a primary focus on the seminal works of Hofstede (Hofstede, 1984) as cornerstone references, as well as leadership values and theories in an intercultural context. The framework's efficacy will be fortified by incorporating dynamic pedagogical approaches, including active learning methods, case-based learning, and training techniques, aligning seamlessly with established theories and methodologies.

This comprehensive framework is tailored explicitly for French and German negotiators, aiming to obtain a mutually profitable agreement from small and medium-sized companies on the border of Lorraine and Saarland. The model is founded on established theories, models and processes in negotiation, culture and intercultural communication. Cultural values and models, such as Geert Hofstede's cultural dimension comparison tool, are used to build a strong foundation (Hofstede, 1984). Leadership values and theories from Lempereur and Colson will be applied in the intercultural context. The evaluation of the model will be conducted through interviews and questionnaires directed at people living in the target area (Lempereur & Colson, 2010).

In conclusion, this chapter contextualises the question within the research gap identified in the previous chapter. Using the rigorous methodology of the Design Science Approach, as outlined in the Information Systems Research Framework by Hevner et al. (2004), a model aimed at addressing the research question and bridging the identified research gap was introduced. This model will be introduced and explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 4. Proposed Model

This chapter represents the model developed based on the research question, the identified research gap, and the information system research framework.

4.1. Model representation

The following model is a conceptual framework aiming to answer the research question: How do intercultural communication challenges influence Franco-German business negotiations in the region of Saarland-Lorraine? The Planning-Preparing-Implementing-Reflecting (PPIR) model contains four phases: planning, preparing, implementing and reflecting; each phase contains several steps. The phases of preparation and reflection will be done away from the negotiation table, whereas the phase of implementation will be held at the table.

When using the PPIR model, negotiators can tackle challenges that might appear along the negotiation process, such as coordination and logistics, conflict identification and management, resolution of conflict, and reflection and learning.

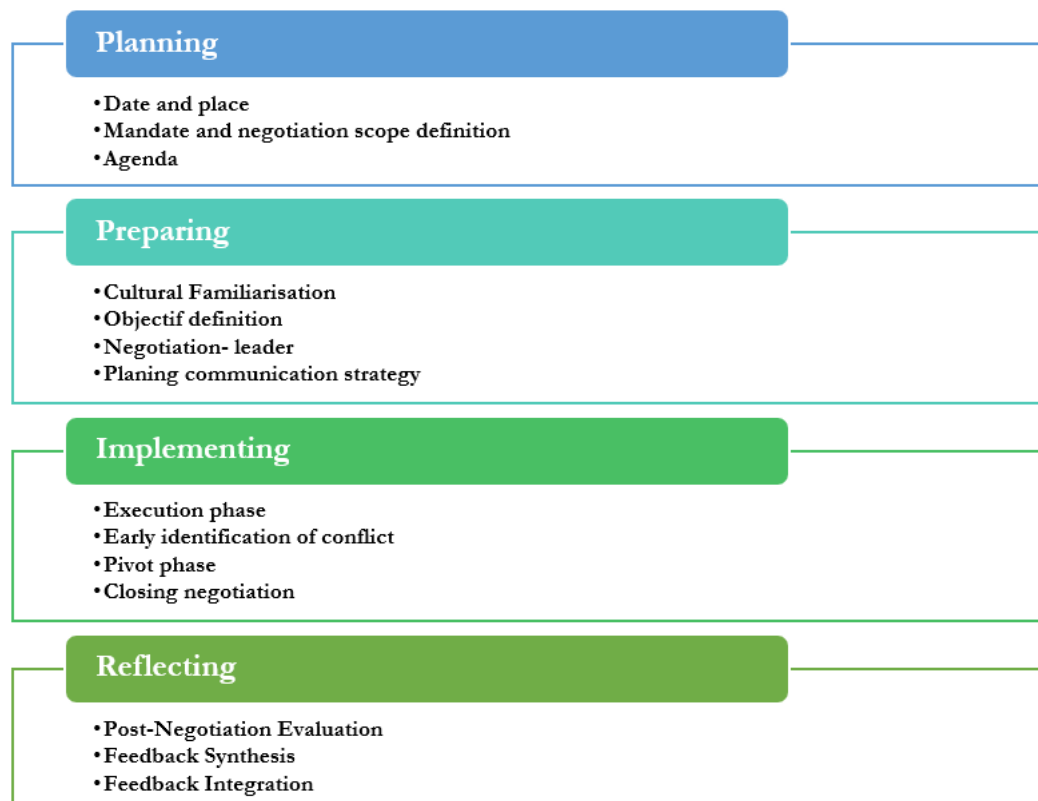


Figure 3. PPIR Model as Negotiation Guide by the author

4.2. Model Explanation

4.2.1. Planning

The purpose of this first phase is to plan the negotiation. It is composed of three steps aiming to set up a date and place, define the scope of the negotiation, and create its agenda. This phase and steps tackle the challenge of coordination and logistics.

Date and place

Based on Lempereur and Colson, a win-win agreement should be considered when meeting to define the date and place of the upcoming negotiation. The negotiation date should suit both parties and not be too close to other negotiations or upcoming challenging issues such as board meetings. Care needs to be taken when choosing the place, whether the negotiation will be held at the facilities of one of the negotiators or those of a third party. The desired level of discretion, number of attendants, and technical resources needed should be considered when choosing a place to negotiate (Lempereur & Colson, 2010).

Mandate and negotiation scope definition

Lempereur and Colso advance the possibility of a mandate, serving as a delegation of competence from the company to the negotiator. In order to get a mandate from his company, the negotiator will first get precise instructions from his superior; he will then negotiate in the scope of the mandate and finally synthesise the negotiation to his superior. It is crucial that the superior clearly sets the boundaries for the negotiator, including the motivations, objectives, and priorities. In any case, the negotiator must never overstep the boundaries and limits provided by his superior when negotiating. To ensure a win-win agreement, all parties should be aligned on the exact scope of the negotiation. This will guarantee that the discussion will only focus on this object (Lempereur & Colson, 2010).

Agenda

Representatives of each negotiating party should create the agenda together and agree on an approach. According to Lempereur and Colson, there are two possibilities for approaching the

creation of the negotiation agenda. The first one is called the crescendo approach, along which the topics are discussed from the easiest to the most difficult. With this approach, the negotiators aim to keep an advantage by quickly starting communication and warm-up with the other party. The possibility of reaching a win-win agreement is the highest while the relationship and confidence have time to grow along the negotiation. A stable environment is created with built relationships and trust, and more complex issues can now be discussed. The decrescendo approach is applied when a negotiation party refuses to leave the most challenging issues for last. Being more aggressive, this approach counters all doubts about gaining time and not leading a direct and honest communication (Lempereur & Colson, 2010).

4.2.2. Preparation

This second phase is developed to prepare the negotiators for the negotiation and its potential intercultural challenges. This phase contains four steps: familiarisation, negotiation-leader identification, objective definition, and planning communication strategy. These steps aim to tackle two critical potential challenges: knowledge and communication.

Cultural Familiarisation

In today's globalised business world, understanding the cultural nuances of different countries is crucial for successful organisational management and cross-cultural business negotiations. Considering the cultural diversity in Saarland and Lorraine, the more extensive region of Saar-Lor-Lux and Belgium is considered to gather more accuracy when comparing the cultural impacts. The map below shows the borders of Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg. The red line separating France and Germany designates the area on which this dissertation focuses.

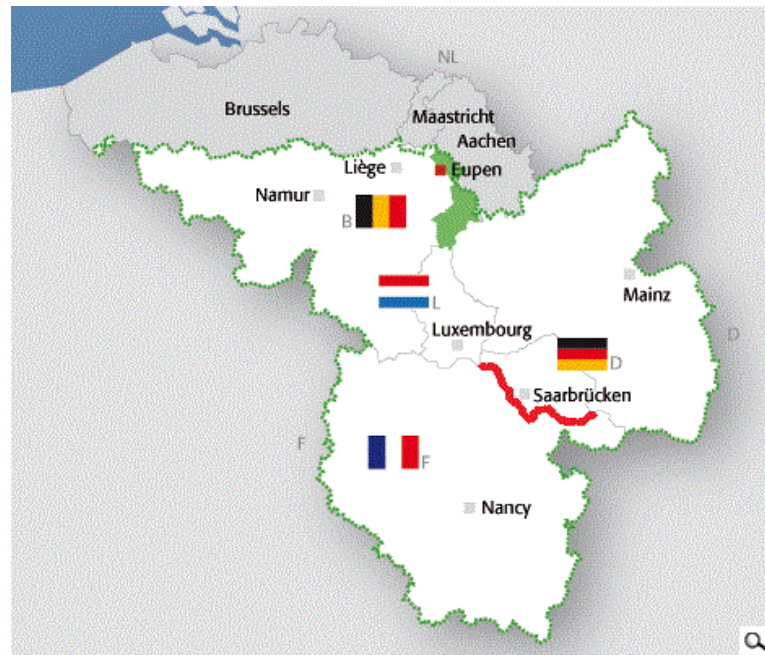


Figure 4. Map of Saar-Lor-Lux Region and Wallonia (Belgium)

Based on <https://www.goeast.be> , GoEst last visited in May 2024

Based on Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions, we can compare the organisational cultural contexts of Belgium (orange), France (blue), Germany (purple), and Luxembourg (blue) with the following dimensions: power distance, individualism, motivation towards achievement and success, uncertainty avoidance, long term orientation and indulgence. Hofstede assigns an index for all dimensions to more than 50 countries and translates these indexes into consequences on the social norms of each country (Hofstede, 2001).

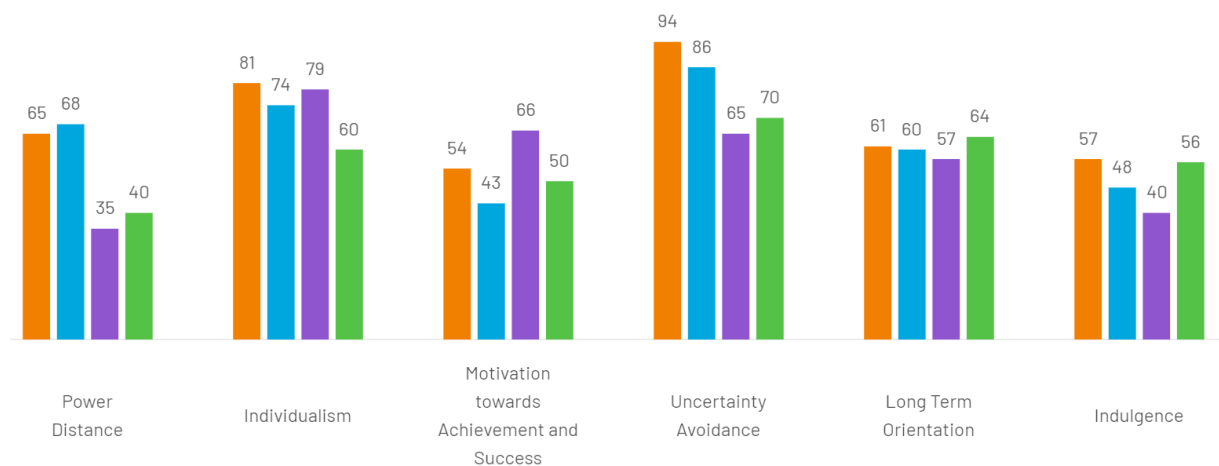


Figure 5. Cultural comparison between Belgium, France, Germany, and Luxembourg

<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/>, country-comparison-tool, last visited May 2024



In today's globalised business world, understanding the cultural nuances of different countries is crucial for successful organisational management and cross-cultural business negotiations. Based on Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions, we can compare the organisational cultural contexts of Belgium, France, Germany, and Luxembourg, considering the possible influence created by Belgium and Luxembourg with the following dimensions: power distance, individualism vs collectivism, motivation towards achievement and success, uncertainty avoidance, long term orientation and indulgence. Hofstede assigns an index for all dimensions to more than 50 countries and translates these indexes into consequences on the social norms of each country (Hofstede, 2001).

Power distance defines the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is unequally distributed. This dimension recognises that not all individuals are equal in society and expresses the cultural attitude towards these inequalities. When considering the scores of all four countries for this dimension, a very high impact is regarded as between the highest (France) and the lowest score (Germany) (Hofstede Insights, 2024). France and Belgium have a high power distance, making them societies that accept unequal and hierarchical power distribution, with people who accept their role in society. In contrast, Germany and Luxembourg are societies with low power distance, where power is equally distributed and extensively scattered (Hofstede, 2001).

The dimension of individualism is the extent of interdependence a society holds among its members. The question is whether people have a self-image defined in terms of '*I*' or '*We*'. Analysing the scores of all four countries, it appears there is a low impact on the differences in their societies as all have a relatively high individualism score. (Hofstede Insights, 2024). In these societies, there exists a low interpersonal interaction with individuals who are not part of the family; individuals respect others' privacy and take no responsibility for them. With all four social systems scoring relatively high for this dimension, there is a low cultural impact between them. These societies are built so that individuals only care for themselves and their nuclear family. The social system is a society instead of a community where the "*I*" mentality and self-orientation are prone. In society, all individuals have a right to have a private life and identity. Individuals are considered emotionally independent from institutions and organisations, and individual initiatives and achievements are recognised (Hofstede, 2001).

The third dimension, motivation towards achievement and success, previously called Masculinity (vs. femininity), describes allocating roles between men and women. In a society motivated by success (masculine), the individuals want to be the best, whereas in a society motivated by achievement

(feminine), they like what they do. When analysing the scores of Belgium, France, Germany, and Luxembourg, cultural difference has a high impact (Hofstede Insights, 2024). France and Luxembourg, which have low scores, are relationship-oriented feminine societies where an individual's quality of life is essential. The focus is on the personality of an individual, working to live. There is no difference in the gender's emotional and social roles; men and women should be modest.

In contrast, Germany and Belgium are ego-oriented masculine societies, where capital and objects are more significant than anything else. The actions of an individual are more meaningful than his personality, living to work. A clear distinction is made between the gender's emotional and social roles; men should be firm and perform, whereas women may be proactive and ambitious (Hofstede, 2001).

The dimension named Uncertainty Avoidance relates to how a culture handles the unknown future. Do individuals try to influence the future, or do they let themselves be surprised by it? This complexity can trigger anxiety in some individuals. Nevertheless, different societies have found a way to handle this anxiety through various approaches. The degree to which the individuals of the culture feel vulnerable to unpredictable circumstances and try to control these. Considering the scores of the four countries analysed, the close scores reflect a low cultural impact (Hofstede Insights, 2024). According to Hofstede's research, all four countries have relatively high uncertainty avoidance, creating low cultural impact. In these social systems, uncertainty is perceived as a constant menace that must be avoided. They are causing high stress and anxiety to the individuals, resulting in an inner urge to stay busy. Individuals express their emotions within the culture. Factors like conservatism, law and order are reflected, and only foreseeable risks are taken; what is different is perceived as wrong (Hofstede, 2001).

Long-term orientation describes how each society maintains some connection with its past while facing present and future challenges, with societies giving different priorities to these two existential goals. It deals with change. In a long-term oriented culture, the fundamental idea of the world is that it is constantly changing and that the future must be prepared for. In a short-term culture, the world is essentially as it was created, so the past is a moral compass, and it is morally right to cling to it. With very similar scores, the four countries have a shallow cultural impact, making them pragmatic cultures (Hofstede Insights, 2024). In pragmatically orientated societies, people believe the truth depends highly on the situation, the setting, and the time. They can quickly adapt their traditions to changing conditions, have a strong tendency to save and invest money, and have a sense of frugality and perseverance in achieving results (Hofstede, 2001).

The last dimension, created and explained by Hofstede and Minkov, is the newest and includes less data. Indulgence (vs. restraint) represents the extent to which individuals try to control their impulses and desires and to which span children are socialised. Considering the scores of the four countries analysed, the close scores reflect a low cultural impact. (Hofstede Insights, 2024). After a relatively high indulgence, all four countries make them societies where the gratification of the individual's impulses and desires is encouraged. These are societies where individuals give high importance to freedom of speech, lead an optimistic approach to life, and are encouraged to focus on their personal happiness (Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

Geert Hofstede's research makes it clear that the culture and values of France and Germany are more significant than they seem. Even if both countries share similarities, those underestimated differences will most likely lead to challenges during negotiations if the negotiators are unprepared.

Negotiation-leader identification

Before choosing a leader for an upcoming negotiation, the company should be aware of the characteristics of a good leader. Lempereur and Colson draw the portrait of today's leaders, insisting more on interpersonal knowledge than technical knowledge. The leader should have several impactful criteria, such as a cooperative mindset, problem-solving orientation, flexibility, and creativity. Furthermore, the chosen leader should be emotionally intelligent, have the company's best interests at heart and be calm and patient. Both negotiation leaders discuss the agenda and place of negotiation.

A negotiation leader should focus on involving all co-negotiators and justifying his goals to solve potential challenges. The leader should pay close attention to the exchanged information and listen actively to the other party to understand their strategies and objectives. To finalise an agreement and search for the best possible consensus, the leader needs to draw several possible outcomes and create value with the other party (Lempereur & Colson, 2010).

Objective definition

The negotiation leader needs to meet with his co-negotiators before the negotiation to identify the best possible outcome and the lowest non-negotiable outcome for his company. Lempereur and Colson propose a guideline to navigate through to ensure the efficiency of the brainstorming.

Inspired by the authors, the following guidelines are considered relevant when brainstorming the negotiation's objective. Every person who will be an actor in the upcoming negotiation should participate in the brainstorming. During brainstorming, everyone should be allowed to talk freely, express their opinion, and have room for all ideas. Suggestions for possible solutions should be received and considered without criticism. Every negotiator should come up with suggestions for the solution; no idea will be perceived as irrelevant. All suggestions are evaluated after the brainstorming, implying the negotiation leader and the company board (Lempereur & Colson, 2010).

Planning communication strategy

The keystone and common point of all negotiations is communication, combining speaking to provide the other party with information and listening to gather information. When a team of negotiators prepares for negotiation, anticipating a communication strategy with care is crucial. To control the flow and order of collected information, negotiators prepare questions to help them get the needed information and filter the relevant information. When it comes to sharing information, the negotiator decides with whom he will be providing information, what information he is willing to share, and when he will share which information (Lempereur & Colson, 2010).

4.2.3. Implementing

The third phase requires the negotiators to implement the preparation for an actual negotiation. This phase consists of four steps: execution, early conflict identification, pivot, and closing negotiation. These sub-steps are crucial for the following potential challenges: conflict identification and management and resolution of conflict.

Execution

After the long phase of preparing for the upcoming negotiation, the negotiators finally have all the theoretical knowledge and strategies needed. Negotiators have to implement the agreed-upon strategy and use the knowledge they have received to tackle the first negotiation challenges. While going along with the initial plan, the negotiation leader must be highly aware of the rhythm and direction of the negotiation. Starting, leading, and closing the negotiation is an art that needs great

care and attention. Negotiations can take much longer than planned and even might lead to an impasse, where the negotiators will be asked to reschedule or quit the negotiation entirely. This will lead the negotiator to the next step, where he needs to identify challenges to act upon them (Lempereur & Colson, 2010).

Conflict identification

According to Mayer, conflict can be caused by six different factors: emotions, communication, history, structure, and value. The reasons for conflict might come from only one factor, but several can also cause it at a time. A negotiation leader must succeed in acknowledging the presence of conflict, even if this results in admitting failure and a hopeless situation. Conflict may represent a feeling or disagreement, but it often translates into incompatible interests and distinct perceptions and behaviours. Negotiators may experience conflict throughout the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural senses. The negotiator will conclude that the needs, interests, goals and values do not align with the other party. They are triggering the emotions of the negotiator, feeling anger, frustration, irritation, and fear of failing (Mayer, 2012). After acknowledging the presence of conflict, the negotiator can identify the primary reasons for conflict. This is how he can pivot his strategy towards a more successful outcome, being during the same negotiation or in one that will be rescheduled.

Pivot

Following the acknowledgement and identification of the conflict, the negotiation leader changes his strategy, mainly the communication used at the table, to pivot the outcome of the negotiation. Cloke and Goldsmith (2005) suggest that the negotiation leader must break the negotiation flow and open a deeper conversation with the opposite party. Regarding conflict, the negotiation needs honesty and open discussion so the other party listens and becomes interested again in a trustworthy negotiation. There are several steps that the negotiator might follow to pivot the outcome of the negotiation successfully. The negotiator focuses on his perception of the conflict and understands his new wants and needs. The communication should be more active, fluent and honest. Taking the risk of emotional transparency and susceptibility to what is seen, heard, and said deepens the interaction. Finally, the negotiator will have to accept any possible outcome and close the negotiation (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2005).

Closing negotiation

Glasl divides the nine conflict escalation stages into three possible outcomes. In the first three stages, it is still possible for both parties to emerge from the conflict unharmed or even with a victory (win-win). In the second stage, one of the parties must lose (win-lose), and in the third stage, both parties suffer only losses to the point of mutual destruction (lose-lose).

The deeper you get into the last stage, the more rudimentary and brutal the methods used by opponents to try and win. That is why Glasl does not present his model as an ascent to the higher levels of escalation but as a descending staircase that literally leads further and further into the depths of human morality (Glasl, 2011).

The negotiation must be closed after the pilot phase, even if unsuccessful. The negotiation leader should prepare to accept any of the three possible outcomes and accept a loss in case of negotiation failure. Should the negotiation be a success, both parties ensure that they are in agreement on the terms and conditions discussed during the negotiation process. The aim is to summarise the key points and ensure that each party understands and accepts them. The parties review and finalise the specific terms of the agreement, including any concessions or compromises made by each of them, to clarify any ambiguous points and ensure that all details are clearly defined. All parties involved must sign the agreement to formally confirm their acceptance, which can be done in person or electronically, depending on the circumstances and the parties' preferences. The negotiator expresses gratitude and appreciation to the other party for its cooperation and willingness to negotiate in good faith. Finally, the outcome of the negotiation should be reported and presented to the manager of the company by the negotiation leader.

4.2.4. Reflecting

The last phase consists of gathering the perception of the negotiation from all party participants, followed by synthesising that gathered feedback and integrating that feedback into the preparation of the subsequent negotiation of the company. This step tackles the challenges of reflection and learning.

Post-negotiation evaluation

In a timeline of two days post-negotiation, the manager of the company and negotiation leader must anonymously gather the feedback of all actors who took part in the negotiation. That feedback

can be gathered in different ways; the individuals could file a report or fill out a document provided by the company. The way in which the information is gathered is not as important as long as each individual thoroughly clarifies and criticises his perception of the negotiation.

Feedback synthesis

After gathering all the feedback on the negotiation, the negotiation leader should draw a feedback synthesis, which figures out the main positive and negative aspects of the negotiation. The negotiation leader needs to be open-minded and non-judgemental when reading and assessing the feedback of his colleagues. Once the negotiation leader draws the synthesis, it should be presented to the manager and the participants of the negotiation in order to close the negotiation internally.

Feedback integration

As a last step of this guide, the manager and negotiation leader should assess which feedback would be helpful for the subsequent intercultural negotiations. These points should imperatively be integrated into the preparation phase of the next project.

In conclusion, this chapter has presented a comprehensive model developed from exploring the research question, analysing identified research gaps and applying an information systems research framework. By synthesising ideas from the existing literature and incorporating elements of the research framework, we have developed a rigorous guide addressing the research question's critical aspects. It attempts to bridge the gaps identified in the research but also offers a structured approach to understanding and addressing the challenges faced in the field of intercultural negotiation. In the future, this model could serve as a valuable tool to guide future intercultural negotiation and inform negotiators.

Chapter 5. Assessment and Discussion of the Model

This chapter encompasses the assessment methodology of the previously presented 4-phased model, including a discussion of the main findings, the model's limitations, and recommendations.

5.1. Assessment

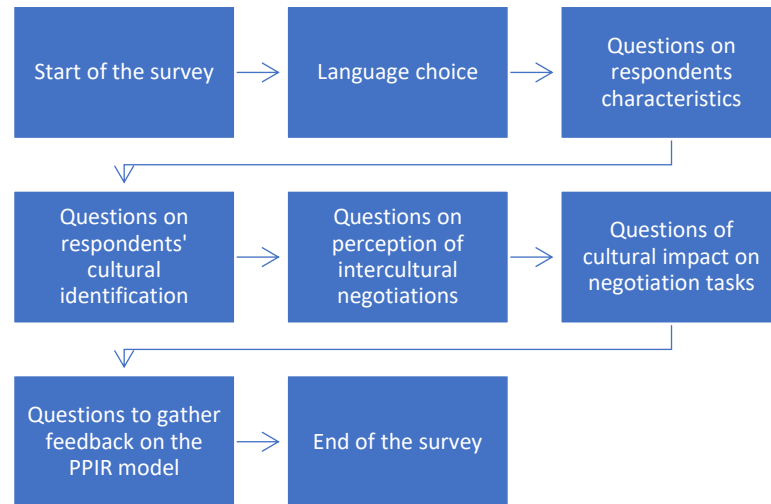


Figure 6. Question flow of the survey

This assessment aims to understand the cultural perspectives of the people living in the target area, identify the most essential negotiation steps and validate the model. The evaluation was conducted using a survey of students and professionals in the Saar-Lor-Lux region, with **49 respondents** providing valuable information. The following sections describe the methodology, summarise the main findings and discuss their implications.

The survey (Annex 1) started by asking the respondents in which language the questions will be. The options were “German” or “French”.

Followed four multiple-choice questions to capture essential demographic and background information of the participants:

- Place of birth: option to choose from "Saarland", "Lothringen", "Other german state", "other French department", and "other"
- Gender: option to choose from "male", "female", and "Prefer not to say it."
- Age: option to choose from 5 age groups.

- Job position: option to choose from "*student*", "*trainee*", "*employee*", "*team manager*", and "*general manager*"

Two additional multiple-choice questions to better understand the cultural identification of the participants and the context of their employment were added:

- Cultural identification: option to choose from "*German culture*", "*French culture*", "*Luxembourgish culture*", "*Belgian culture*" and "*other*"
- Nationality of the company: option to choose from "*German company*", "*French company*", "*Luxembourgish company*", "*Belgian company*" and "*other*"

The following three scale and multiple-choice questions focused on the general perception of intercultural negotiations.

- Participants had to rate on a scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always): How often do the cultural values of both parties influence the outcome of a business negotiation?
- Participants were asked which phase of business negotiation they consider the most important: option to choose from "*planning*", "*preparing*", "*implementing*", or "*reflecting*"
- Participants had to choose at which stage of the negotiation conflicts between cultural values occur most frequently: the option to choose from "*planning*", "*preparing*", "*implementing*", or "*reflecting*"

Participants were asked to rate the cultural impact on a Likert scale from 1 (no impact) to 10 (high impact) for 14 specific negotiation tasks:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Set the date and place for the negotiation | • Negotiation strategy |
| • Draw up a clear internal mandate | • Preparation of exploratory questions on the interests of the other party |
| • The ability to understand the content of the other party's mandate | • Identification of mutual goals |
| • Preparation of justifications for the proposals submitted to the other party | • Implementing strategies during the negotiation |
| • Defining the scope of the negotiation | • Search for alternative strategies (pivot) |
| • Draw up the agenda for the negotiation | • Close the negotiation in a win-win situation |
| • Preparation for cultural differences | • Post-negotiation analysis |

To conclude the survey, four multiple-choice questions centred on the 4-phase model were included to gather feedback on its perceived usefulness and applicability:

- Respondents indicated whether they believed such a model would benefit intercultural negotiations: the option to choose from "yes", "no", "maybe", or "I do not know".
- Participants were asked if they saw an advantage in using the model: the option to choose from "yes", "no", "maybe", or "I do not know".
- Respondents indicated whether they would suggest their company adopt the model: option to choose from "yes", "no", "maybe", or "I do not know".
- Participants shared if they would use such a model in their private life: the option to choose from "yes", "no", "maybe", or "I do not know".

The survey was designed to collect detailed information about the participants' demographic and cultural backgrounds, their experience with intercultural negotiations, and their thoughts on the proposed four-phase model. By using a combination of multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions, we were able to gather both qualitative and quantitative insights, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of the model's effectiveness and areas for improvement.

5.2. Discussion

5.2.1. Sample presentation

Demographic data of the sample

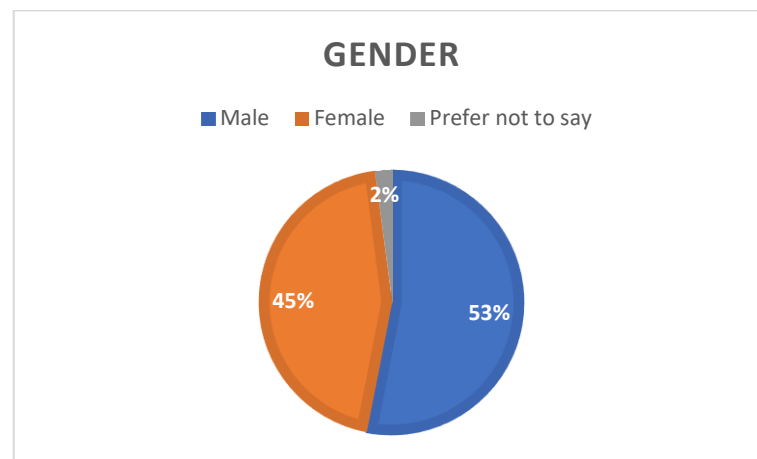


Figure 7. Gender distribution of respondents

The graph shows the gender distribution of the **49 people** who responded to the survey. Men represented the largest group, with 26 respondents; Women formed the second largest group, with 22 respondents, and one respondent chose "I do not wish to give any information". Overall, the gender

breakdown shows a diverse participant base, with a majority of male respondents, indicating that the survey theme may be particularly attractive or relevant to men.

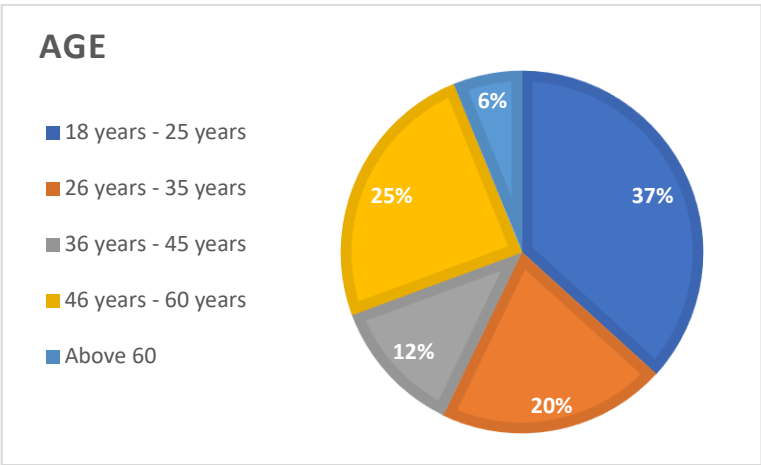


Figure 8. Age distribution of respondents

The overall distribution shows a diverse age range with a clear focus on the young and middle-aged categories, which provides valuable information on the demographic groups interested in the dissertation topic.

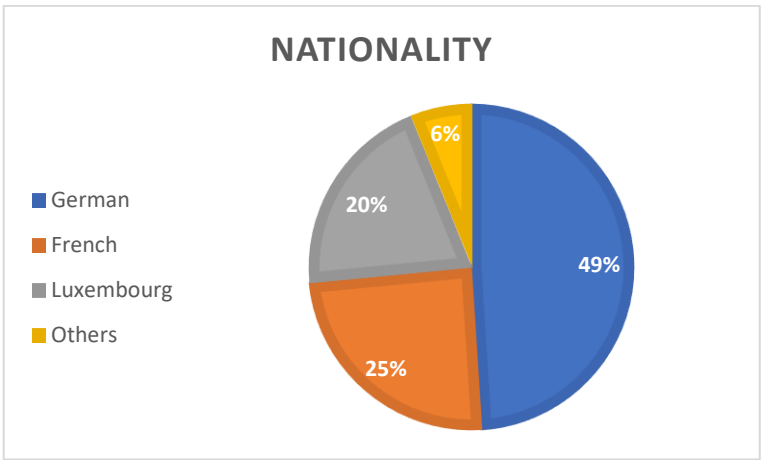


Figure 9. Nationality distribution of respondents

This distribution illustrates the diversity within the sample: the majority is German, followed by French and Luxembourgish, while a small proportion comes from other countries.

Professional background of respondents (Graphic in Annex 2)

The respondents' occupations display a diverse distribution within the surveyed group. Of the sample, 5 participants described themselves as students, while one said he was an apprentice. The majority of respondents, 38 people, described themselves as employees. In addition, 4 participants described themselves as team leaders, while no respondent described themselves as managers. One respondent described himself as a lecturer. This breakdown gives an idea of the professional

composition of the sample. It shows that different roles are interested in the research theme, ranging from students and trainees to employees and management positions.

Respondents' information on their company's location provides an insight into the geographical distribution within the surveyed group. Of the respondents, 26 stated that their company was based in Germany, making this the most frequently cited location. France follows, with eight respondents stating that their company is based in France, while 11 respondents stated that their company is based in Luxembourg. It should be noted that no respondent stated that their company is located in Belgium. In addition, four respondents indicated that their company was located in other locations not specified in the given list, including Malta, Switzerland and a European organisation. This distribution emphasises the dominance of Germany and Luxembourg as company locations within the surveyed group, with France also represented. At the same time, Belgium appears to be separate from the respondents' companies.

Cultural characteristics (Graphic in Annex 3)

Based on the graphic on the respondents' cultural identification, we can interpret their cultural comfort and affiliation as follows: The data suggests that the majority of respondents, 21 people, identify culturally with Germany, closely followed by 14 respondents who identify with French culture. Luxembourg is also represented by six respondents who identify with its culture. It should be emphasised that no respondent identified culturally with Belgium. In addition, eight respondents stated that they identify with cultures other than those listed, e.g. Portuguese, Italian, and Asian cultures, and one respondent identified with a mixture of cultures. This indicates a diverse range of cultural affiliations within the surveyed group.

5.2.2. Statistic analysis

Questions on intercultural negotiation (All graphics in Annex 4)

The data indicates that, for most respondents, cultural values have a moderate influence on negotiations, with 21 respondents stating that cultural values sometimes play a role. 13 respondents indicated that cultural values rarely impact negotiations. In comparison, 11 respondents felt that cultural values often impact negotiations. A smaller proportion, four respondents, indicated that cultural values always influence negotiations.

Respondents identified planning as the most crucial phase of negotiations, with 23 respondents prioritising this phase. This was closely followed by the preparation phase, which 14 respondents highlighted. The implementation and reflection phases were considered less important, with 8 and 4 respondents, respectively.

Regarding conflict, the implementation phase is the most conflict-ridden (31 respondents). Planning is also an essential phase in terms of conflict, with ten respondents citing it as a critical phase. Interestingly, none of the respondents indicated conflicts during the reflection phase. This suggests that the people from the Saar-Lor-Lux region believe that cultural values can affect business negotiations. In their opinion, the most essential phases of negotiation are the planning and preparing phases, which emphasises the importance brought to light in this dissertation. Additionally, the respondents think that the phase impacted the most by conflict is the implementing phase, which is why good planning and preparation phases are needed, and the step of pivoting the negotiation strategy seems crucial.

Questions on the impact of culture on negotiation steps (All graphics in Annex 5)

Regarding the 14 negotiation tasks mentioned above (Chapter 4. Assessment), all are considered to have a medium or high cultural impact by the majority of the respondents.

The tasks affected by a medium cultural impact, according to the respondents, are the following:

- Setting the date and place for the negotiation
- Preparing and formulating reasons or rationales to support the proposals
- Determine the scope of the negotiation
- Creating the agenda for the negotiation
- Preparing cultural differences
- Identification of mutual goals
- Strategy implementation

Most of the tasks considered to have medium cultural impact belong to the phases of planning and preparing, which points out the importance of these two phases. Special care should be taken during these tasks and the negotiation phases.

The tasks affected by a high cultural impact, according to the respondents, are the following:

- Drawing up a clear internal mandate
- Understanding the mandate of the counterparty
- Preparing negotiation strategy
- Preparation of exploratory questions
- Pivot (alternative strategies)
- Closing negotiation in a win-win situation
- Post-negotiation synthesis

The majority of tasks considered highly impacted by culture occur during the implementation phase. This highlights the importance of communication during intercultural negotiations and the ability to adjust one's negotiation strategy to maintain the possibility of a win-win negotiation.

Questions on the significance of the model (All graphics in Annex 6)

When asked whether the model for optimising intercultural negotiations would be advantageous, most participants (25) answered 'Yes', meaning such a tailor-made model would be beneficial for intercultural negotiations. On the other hand, 2 participants answered 'No', meaning that they did not think a tailor-made model would be advantageous for intercultural negotiations. In addition, 15 participants chose 'Not sure', indicating they might doubt whether a tailor-made model would be advantageous. Finally, seven people answered 'I do not know', suggesting they lacked information or a clear opinion. While many respondents believe in the potential benefits of a bespoke model for intercultural negotiations, others have considerable uncertainty.

When asked whether they believe that a methodology for conducting negotiations from simple to complex would be beneficial, the majority of respondents (40 respondents) answered 'yes', indicating that they see an advantage in such a methodology for conducting negotiations. They are likely to believe that a structured approach that can be adapted to different negotiation scenarios would increase efficiency. Only two respondents chose 'No', indicating that they do not see an advantage in having a methodology for negotiations of varying complexity. They may feel that negotiation skills can be developed without a specific methodology or that negotiation situations are too diverse for a single methodology to be effective. A further six respondents selected 'Not sure', indicating that they are determining whether it would be beneficial to have a method for negotiating with varying degrees of complexity. They may recognise the potential benefits of such a method but are still determining if it can be implemented in practice or is effective. Finally, only one person answered 'I do not know', indicating a lack of information or a clear opinion. Most respondents believe in the potential benefits of a methodology for negotiation at different levels of complexity.

According to the data in the graphic, 25 respondents answered 'yes' to whether they would recommend introducing the methodology in their organisation. They likely recognise potential benefits or value in adopting the proposed methodology. Only a minority of 3 respondents selected 'No', indicating that they may have concerns about the effectiveness, practicality or suitability for their organisation's needs. A group of 18 chose 'Not sure', and three respondents answered 'I do not know'. Whilst a significant proportion of respondents are open to introducing the methodology, there is also considerable uncertainty amongst others.

Finally, 20 respondents answered 'Yes' when asked if they would use such a method during their private negotiations, indicating the will of individuals to use such a model for professional but also for private purposes. A significant group of 23 respondents responded 'Not sure', indicating that it might depend on the type of private negotiation. A tiny group of 4 respondents answered 'No', and another of 2 answered 'I do not know', suggesting that these individuals are not interested in

using such a model for private negotiations or do not have intercultural negotiations in their private lives.

This leads to the conclusion that most respondents react positively to a model that aims to tackle intercultural communication challenges during Franco-German business negotiation. Most individuals perceive this model as valuable and advantageous for these challenges. Many respondents even suggested such a model to their companies and used it for private negotiations.

5.2.3. Factor analysis

The following analysis seeks to identify the relevant predictors that influence the answers given by the respondents. The different answers were analysed based on the factors of cultural comfort, age groups and respondents' gender. All answers given to the following questions are analysed according to those factors:

- All previously introduced questions on intercultural negotiation.
- Questions on the impact of the culture on negotiation steps.
- Questions about the significance of the model.

The graphics for the significant difference between the factors will be shown in Annex 7.

The factor of cultural comfort

Upon conducting a comprehensive analysis of the responses based on the cultural comfort of the participants, it becomes evident that there is a remarkable consistency in the answers provided by respondents from diverse cultural backgrounds. The initial divergence emerges in the assessment of cultural influence during the phase of preparing the negotiation strategy. Specifically, individuals aligning with the French cultural identity perceive a significant cultural impact, unlike the German respondents, who exhibit a varied distribution in their perception of cultural influence. Furthermore, most respondents identifying with the Luxembourgish culture or other cultural backgrounds categorise the cultural impact as ranging from high to very high. The subsequent divergence is situated in the conceptualisation that the formulated model can optimise intercultural negotiation processes. A predominant segment of respondents, who align themselves with the French and other cultural backgrounds, acknowledge the model's potential in optimising negotiations. Conversely, individuals resonating with the German cultural framework exhibit a divided stance; a notable faction affirms the model's efficacy in negotiation optimisation, whilst a considerable portion remains uncertain. In contrast, participants identifying with the Luxembourgish culture demonstrate an equitable distribution across the spectrum of responses, encompassing "Yes", "Maybe", and "Not sure" positions regarding the model's ability to improve negotiation outcomes.

Factor of age groups

Upon conducting an analytical review of the data segmented by the demographic factor of "Age," the findings reveal a lack of statistical significance in the correlation between age and the responses provided. This observation infers that the influence exerted by the various factors under consideration is consistent across diverse age demographics, thereby suggesting that age does not markedly affect individuals' perceptions in relation to the questions posed.

Factor of gender

The variable of gender predominantly exhibits minimal significance in the analysis of responses elicited from both female and male participants. However, a notable divergence is observed in the context of perceiving cultural influences on the determination of place and date for negotiations. Specifically, female respondents are inclined towards attributing a medium to a very high significance to cultural impacts, whereas male respondents perceive these impacts to range from very low to low in significance. In win-win negotiations, there is a noticeable difference in how female and male participants perceive the cultural impact. Female participants are more inclined to recognise a high cultural impact, while male participants tend to lean more towards perceiving very low to low cultural impact, although some men acknowledge a significant impact.

In summary, this factor analysis shows that cultural comfort, age and gender are factors of varying importance for the different variables tested. In particular, cultural background significantly impacts negotiation strategy preparation and negotiation optimisation of the model. In contrast, age as a predictor shows no significance for any variables. Gender, however, is a significant factor in preparing and closing the negotiation. The implications of these results for the developed model are remarkable. Since cultural comfort is an important predictive factor for negotiation strategy preparation and optimisation, it is crucial to go through the cultural familiarity phase sensitively. This means that negotiation leaders should emphasise cultural awareness and sensitivity to improve negotiation outcomes. The significance of gender in the perception of the different stages of negotiation shows that men and women recognise and consider different perceptions of the negotiation process, which can lead to more effective and inclusive negotiation strategies. This highlights the importance of taking gender diversity into account when building the negotiating team and ensuring that the model can be adapted to the different perspectives of different genders.

5.2.4. Proposal

The table below acts as an assessment tool for negotiators to estimate the cultural differences between their party and the counterpart involved in intercultural negotiations. This table contains a cultural impact score categorised by cultural background for each step in all phases of the model. In the last column, negotiators are expected to conduct a self-assessment by multiplying their own culture's impact score by that of their counterpart in order to assess the cultural differences between both parties at each stage of the negotiation process. The cultural impact scores assigned to individual steps are calculated from survey results, using the median of each answer based on cultural background. These scores are distributed on a scale from 1 to 5, with each number representing a distinct level of impact: 1 indicates a shallow impact; 2 suggests a low impact; 3 denotes a medium impact; and 4 signifies a very high impact.

It should be noted that the table exclusively represents French, German, and Luxembourgish cultures, as the survey conducted did not provide sufficient information regarding the Belgian culture. The contribution from "other cultures" is deemed not significant due to the limited representation, with only one respondent from each of the following cultural backgrounds: Asian, Italian, and Portuguese.

Table 4. Self-Assessment Guide for Negotiators

Negotiation phase	Negotiation step	Cultural impact Score			Self-assessment
		French	German	Luxembourgish	
Planning	Date and place	3	2	3*	
	Mandate and negotiation scope	4	3	3*	
	Agenda	3*	2	3	
Preparing	Cultural familiarisation	4	3	3*	
	Objectif definition	3*	3	4	
	Negotiation strategy	4	3	4	
Implementing	Execution	3*	3	4	
	Pivot	4	3	4*	
	Closing negotiation	4	3	4	
Reflecting	Post-negotiation evaluation	4	3	4	

¹

¹ *Numbers that ended in 0.5 were rounded down

Chapter 6. Conclusion

6.1. Limitations

This dissertation has certain limitations, primarily due to the small sample size, geographic focus of the model, and survey methodology. With a total of 49 respondents, the sample size must be more significant to generalise the findings to the broader population of French and German business negotiations. Combined with the focus on students and professionals working in the Saar-Lor-Lux region, the respondents eventually need to represent the full diversity of positions and experiences within the broader Franco-German commercial sector. Finally, when responding to a survey, participants may tend to answer in a socially desirable way rather than providing sincere responses.

6.2. Recommendations

Based on the limitations previously identified, the recommendations would focus on expanding the sample size and refining the model assessment. To expand the sample size, a more extensive and diverse sample could be targeted to assess the findings for other Franco-German business interactions taking place along the countries's borders. A double-method approach could be used to refine the assessment model by combining a quantitative survey with qualitative interviews of negotiation professionals. Moreover, the 4-phased model should be implemented in a real-life situation, and case studies should be conducted to evaluate its effectiveness directly and assemble valuable feedback.

This chapter aimed to clarify the method used to assess the 4-phased model and describe the significant findings from the survey. It also helped the reader understand this dissertation's limitations and possible recommendations.

6.3. Main conclusion

This dissertation sought to develop a model that will significantly influence the outcome of Franco-German negotiations by helping negotiators master intercultural communication challenges. The conducted literature review assisted in the accumulation of knowledge regarding interculturality, communication, culture and negotiations. Nevertheless, a significant gap emerged from this literature review as French and German negotiators need comprehensive models to navigate them

through challenges during negotiations, especially in the region of Saarland-Lorraine. For this reason, the PIRR model was developed to bridge this research gap. Regardless, this model has limitations and recommendations that can be developed in future research; specifically, testing the model in an actual Franco-German negotiation would benefit greatly. In conclusion, this research emphasises the importance of using the four negotiation phases to navigate successful negotiation in this geographical context.

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Annexe

Annex 1. Survey questions in original languages

Question 1 : Wählen Sie die gewünschte Sprache / Sélectionnez la langue souhaitée

Question 2 : Wo sind Sie geboren? / Où êtes-vous né(e) ?

Question 3: Geschlecht / Genre

Question 4: Alter / Âge

Question 5: Was ist Ihr Beruf? / Quel est votre métier ?

Question 6: Mit welcher Kultur identifizieren Sie sich am meisten? / À quelle culture vous identifiez-vous le plus?

Question 7: Für welches Unternehmen arbeiten Sie? / Pour quelle entreprise travaillez-vous ?

Question 8: Wie oft glauben Sie, dass kulturelle Werte beider Parteien das Ergebnis einer geschäftlichen Verhandlung beeinflussen? / À quelle fréquence pensez-vous que les valeurs culturelles des deux parties influencent le résultat d'une négociation?

Question 9: Im Hinblick auf die vier Phasen einer geschäftlichen Verhandlung – Planung, Vorbereitung, Durchführung und Nachbereitung – welche halten Sie für die wichtigste? / Parmi les quatre phases de la négociation - planification, préparation, exécution et réflexion - laquelle considérez-vous comme la plus importante ?

Question 10: In welcher Phase der geschäftlichen Verhandlungen treten Ihrer Meinung nach Konflikte zwischen kulturellen Werten am häufigsten auf? / À quelle phase de la négociation pensez-vous que les conflits entre les valeurs culturelles se produisent le plus souvent, selon vous ?

Question 11: Bitte bewerten Sie die folgenden Punkte auf einer Skala von 1 bis 10, wobei 1 für eine geringe Auswirkung und 10 für eine hohe Auswirkung der kulturellen Werte auf einen geschäftlichen Verhandlungsprozess steht. / Veuillez évaluer les éléments suivants sur une échelle de 1 à 10, où 1 représente une faible influence et 10 une forte influence des valeurs culturelles sur vous pendant un processus de négociation :

- Termin und Ort für die Verhandlung festlegen / Planifier une date et un lieu pour la négociation
- Erarbeitung eines klaren internen Mandats (ein Mandat sind die Vorgaben und Grenzen, innerhalb derer der Verhandlungsführer im Namen seines Unternehmens Entscheidungen treffen darf) / Élaboration d'un mandat interne clair (un mandat comprend les directives et les limites dans lesquelles le négociateur est autorisé à prendre des décisions au nom de son entreprise)

- Die Fähigkeit, den Inhalt des Mandats der Gegenpartei zu verstehen / La capacité de comprendre le contenu du mandat de l'autre partie
- Ausarbeitung von Begründungen für die der anderen Partei unterbreiteten Vorschläge / Élaboration de justifications pour les propositions faites à l'autre partie
- Verhandlungsumfang festlegen (Thema der Verhandlung) / Définition de l'objet de la négociation (il s'agit de ce qui va être négocié)
- Die Zeitplanung für die Verhandlung erstellen / Créer l'ordre du jour de la négociation
- Vorbereitung auf kulturelle Unterschiede / Préparation aux différences culturelles
- Verhandlungsstrategie (einschließlich Identifikation des Verhandlungsführers und Planung der Kommunikationsstrategie) / Planification de la stratégie de négociation (incluant l'identification du négociateur et la planification de la stratégie de communication)
- Vorbereitung von Erkundungsfragen zu den Interessen der anderen Partei / Préparation de questions sur les intérêts de l'autre partie
- Identifikation gegenseitiger Ziele / Identification des objectifs mutuels
- Strategien während der Verhandlung umsetzen / Exécution des stratégies pendant la négociation
- Suche nach alternativen Strategien (Pivot) / Recherche de stratégies alternatives pendant la négociation (Pivot)
- Die Verhandlung in einer Win-Win-Situation abschließen / Conclure la négociation dans une situation gagnant-gagnant
- Nachverhandlungsanalyse / Analyse post-négociation

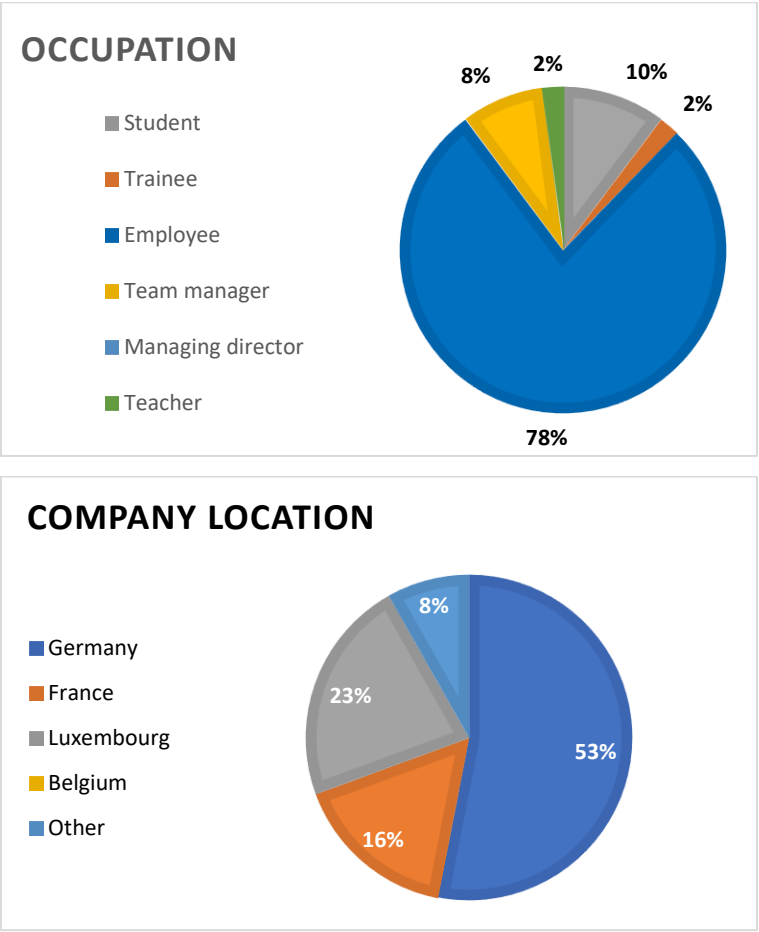
Question 12: Glauben Sie, dass ein Modell, das auf die Optimierung interkultureller Verhandlungen zugeschnitten ist, den Verhandlungen zugute kommen würde? / Pensez-vous qu'un modèle adapté à l'optimisation des négociations interculturelles serait bénéfique pour les négociations ?

Question 13: Wenn Ihnen eine Methodik zur Verfügung stünde, um Verhandlungen von einfachen bis hin zu komplexen Situationen zu führen, würden Sie darin einen Vorteil sehen? / Si une méthodologie vous était disponible pour mener des négociations, des plus simples aux plus complexes, y verriez-vous un avantage?

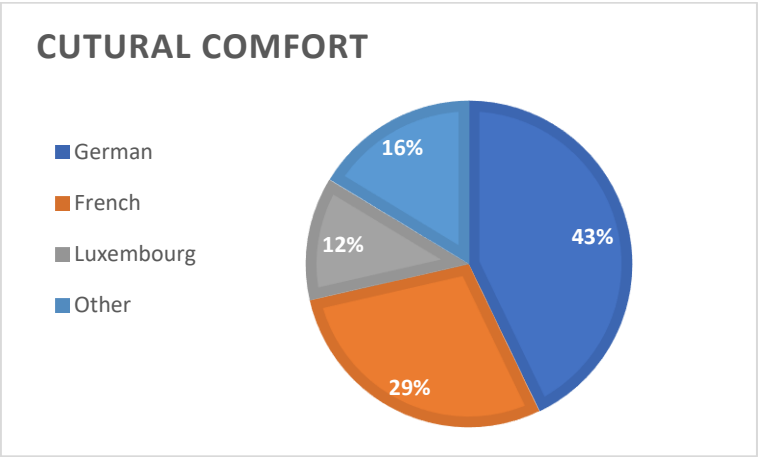
Question 14: Würden Sie Ihrem Unternehmen vorschlagen, eine solche Methodik einzusetzen? / Envisageriez-vous de recommander à votre entreprise d'adopter une telle méthodologie?

Question 15: Würden Sie eine solche Methode auch in Ihren privaten Verhandlungen einsetzen? / Utiliseriez-vous également une telle méthode dans vos négociations privées?

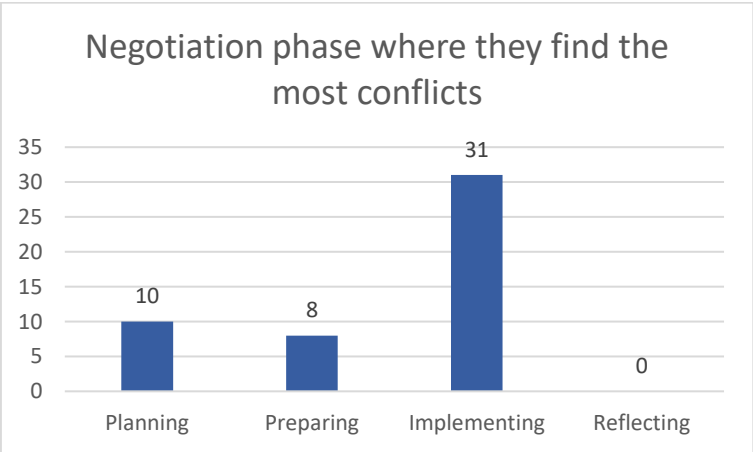
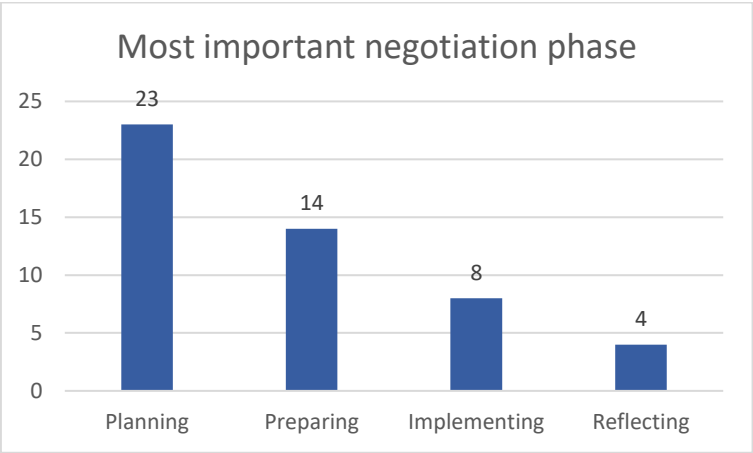
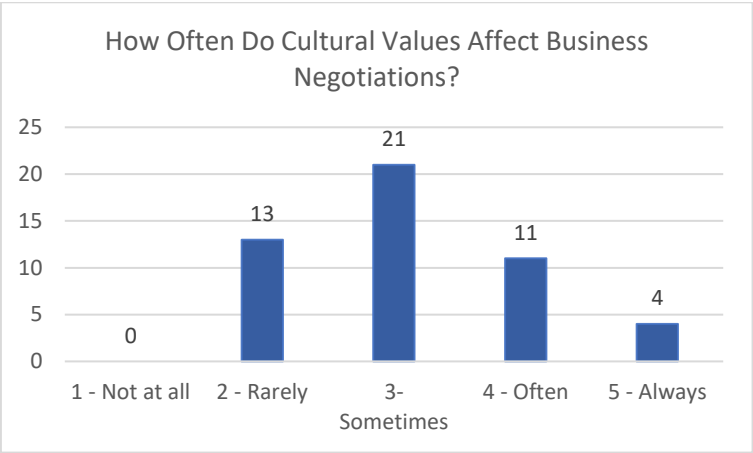
Annex 2. Professional background



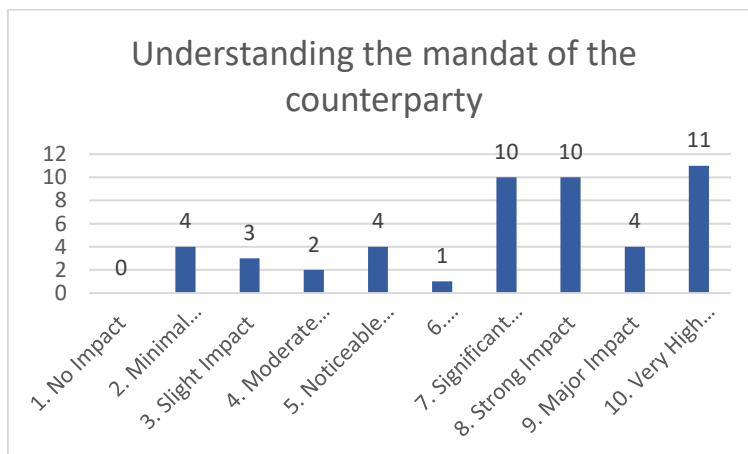
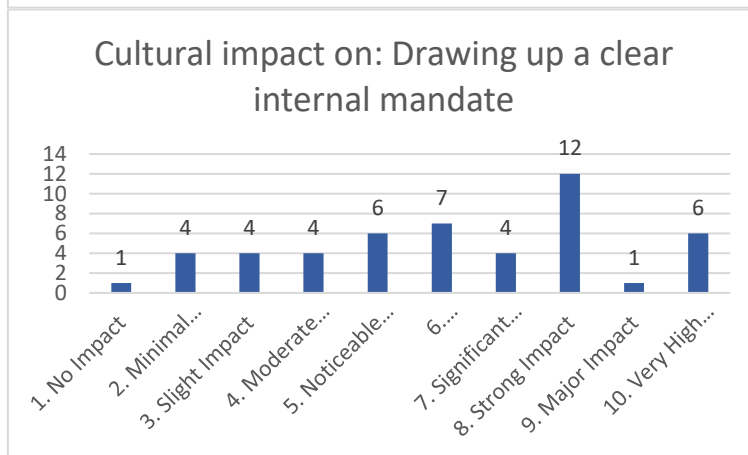
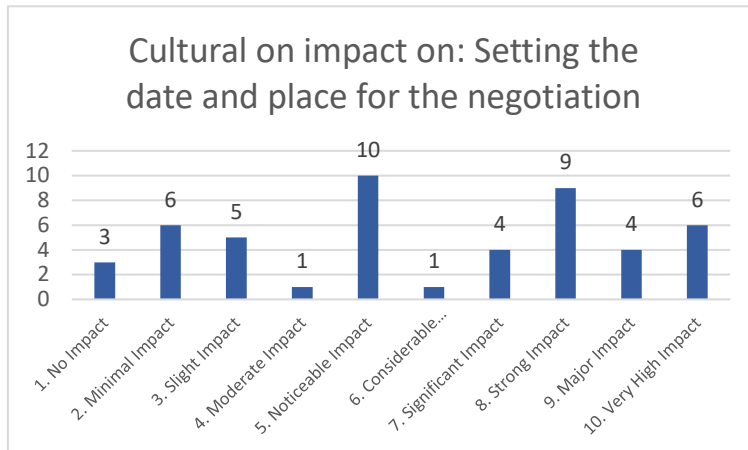
Annex 3. Cultural characteristics



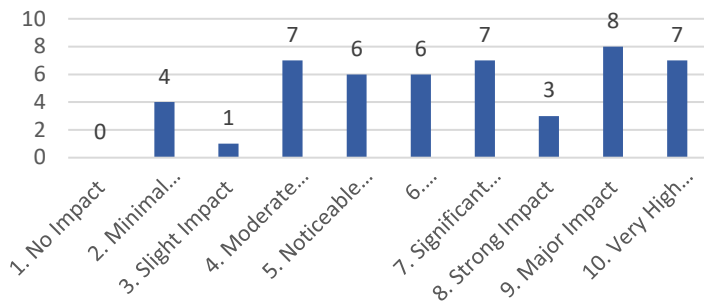
Annex 4. Intercultural negotiations



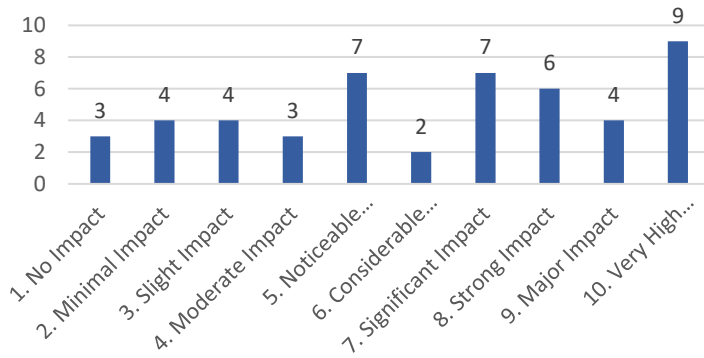
Annex 5. Impact of culture on negotiation steps



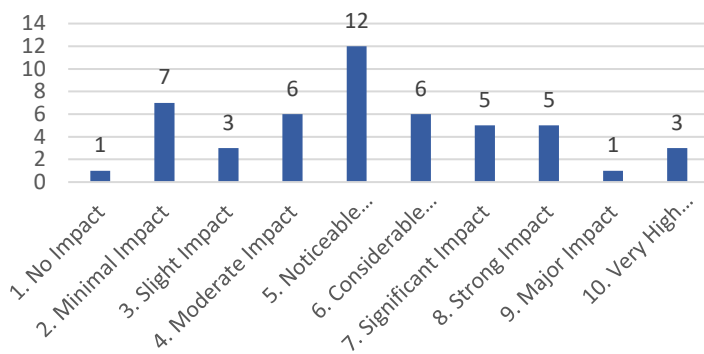
preparing and formulating reasons or rationales to support the proposals



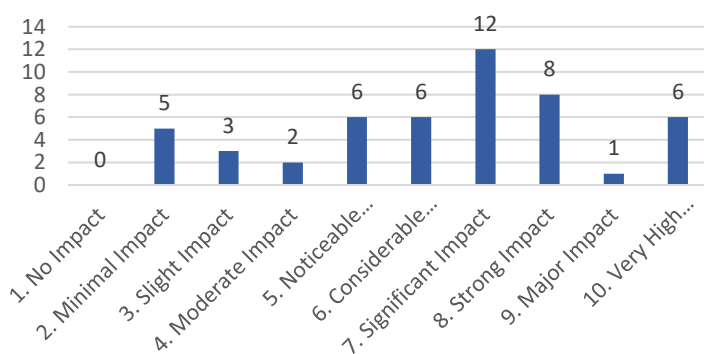
Determine the scope of negotiations

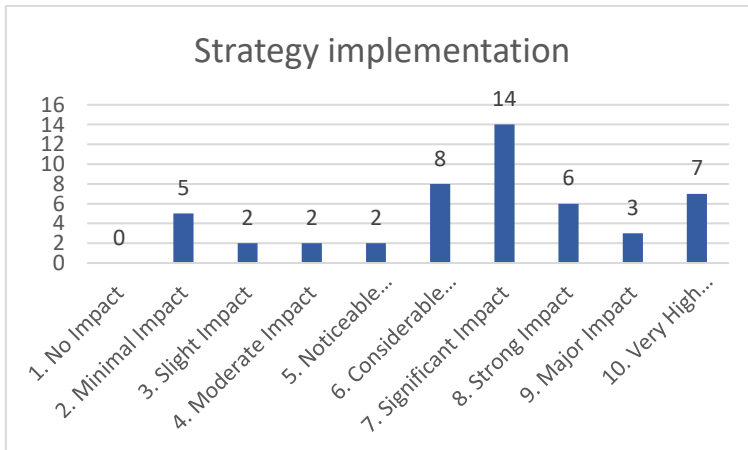
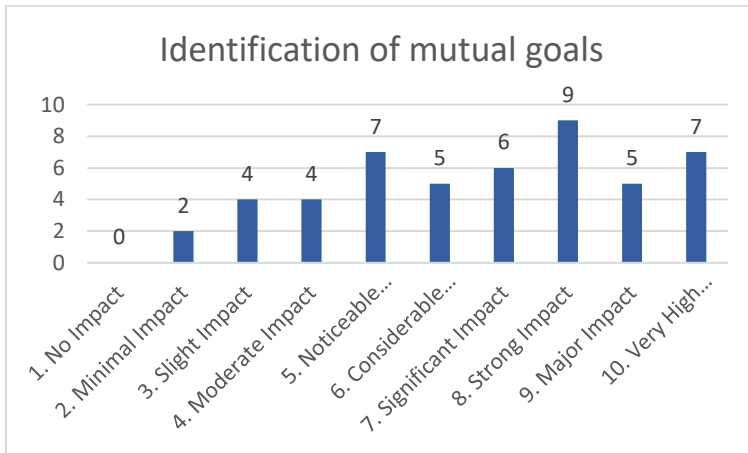
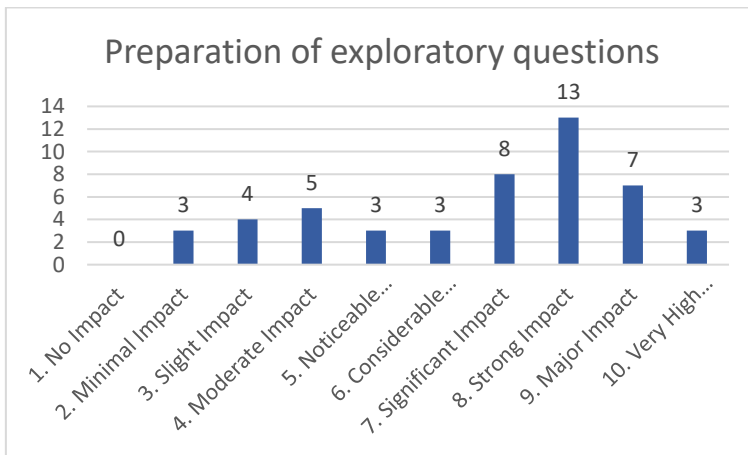


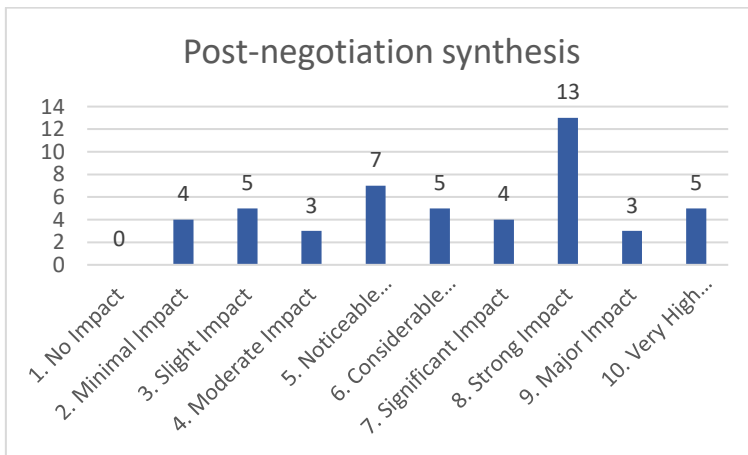
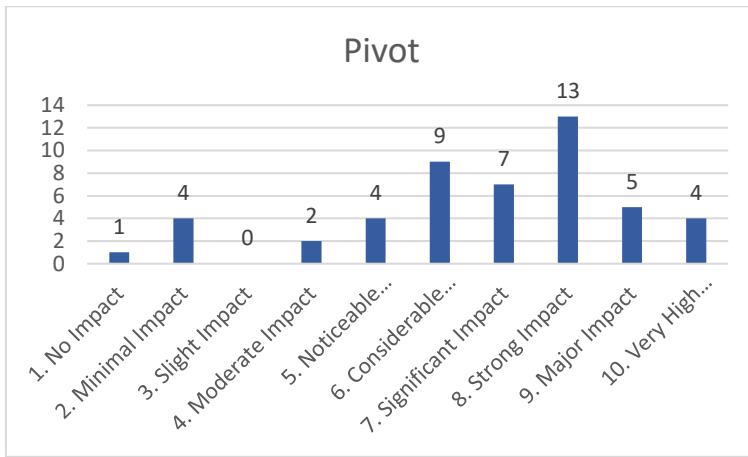
Agenda



Preparation for cultural differences

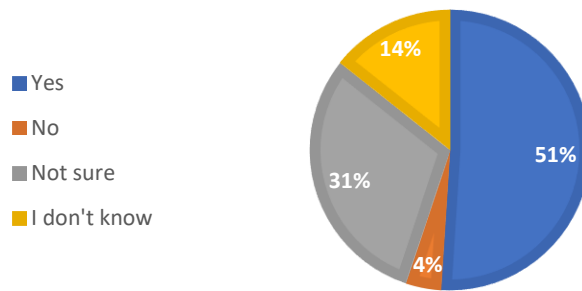




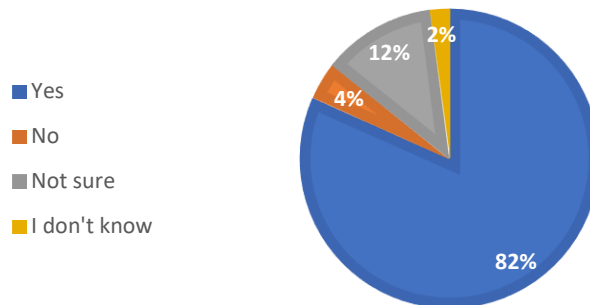


Annex 6. Significance of the model

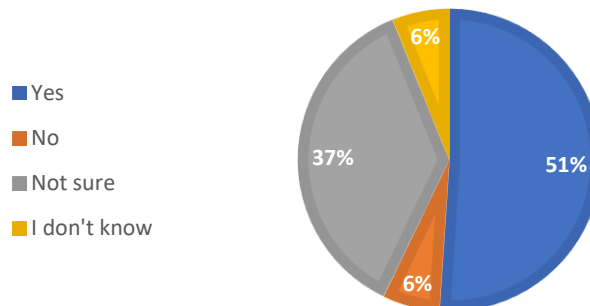
**DO YOU BELIEVE THAT A MODEL TAILORED TO
OPTIMIZING INTERCULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS
WOULD BENEFIT THE NEGOTIATIONS?**



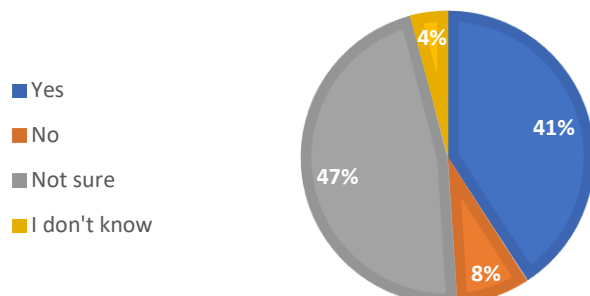
**IF YOU HAD A METHODOLOGY AVAILABLE TO CONDUCT
NEGOTIATIONS FROM SIMPLE TO COMPLEX SITUATIONS, WOULD
YOU SEE AN ADVANTAGE IN IT?**



**WOULD YOU SUGGEST TO YOUR COMPANY TO
IMPLEMENT SUCH A METHODOLOGY?**

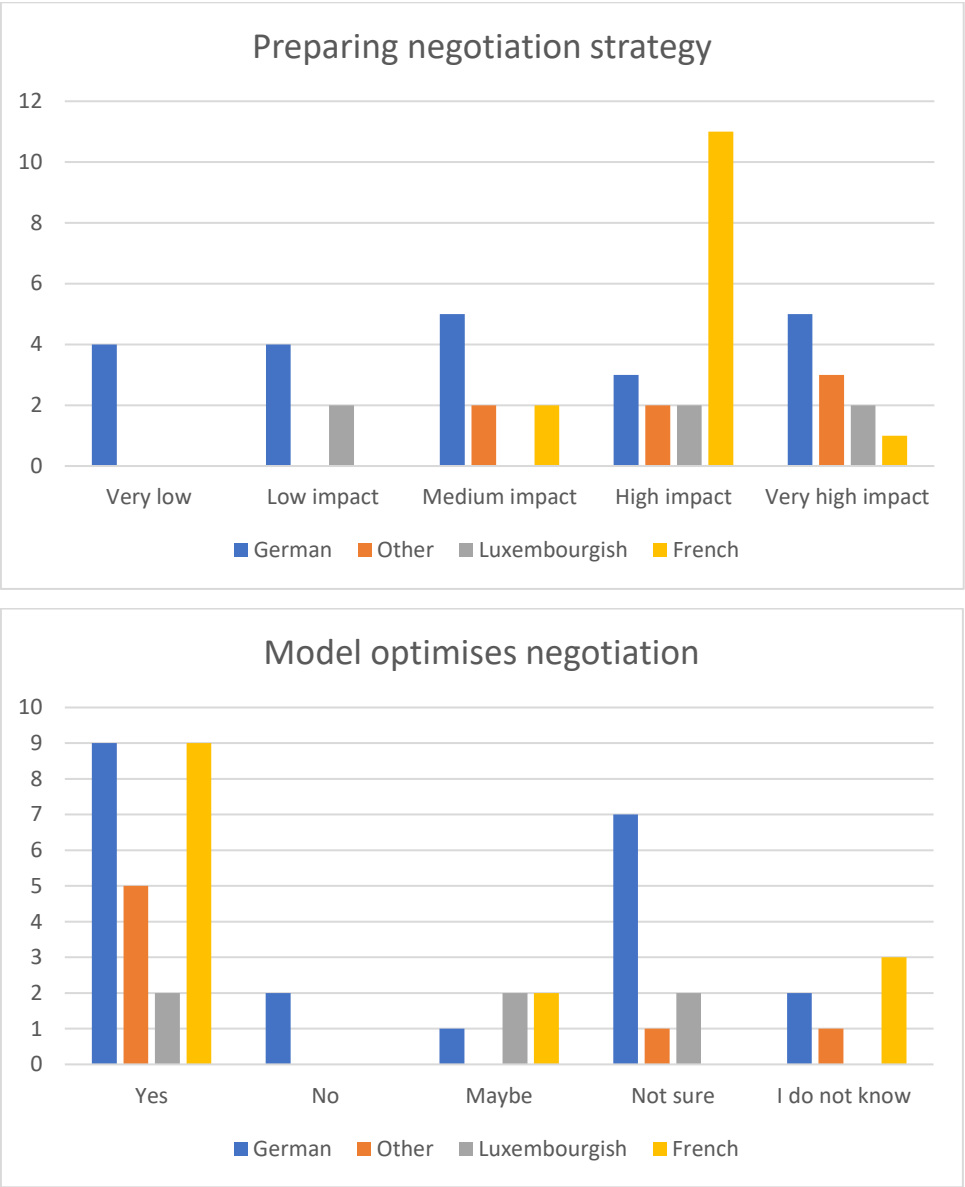


**WOULD YOU ALSO USE SUCH A METHOD IN
YOUR PRIVATE NEGOTIATIONS?**



Annex 7. Factor analysis

Cultural comfort



Gender

