

Effects of Personality on Interpersonal Negotiation Strategies and Self-Presentation in a School Setting

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Resumo

A negociação tem vindo a ser contemplada como uma das formas ideais de prática social. Os indivíduos que participam no processo negocial exprimem características que podem afectar o modo e a efectividade da sua actuação. As diferenças respeitantes às características de personalidade, sexo e idade podem moldar o próprio processo negocial. Este estudo pretende determinar se os factores da personalidade (extroversão, amabilidade e conscienciosidade), bem como as variáveis sexo e idade, são relevantes na explicação da eficácia negocial. A amostra é constituída por 407 alunos de uma escola secundária do centro do Porto. Os resultados sugerem que a personalidade e o sexo são variáveis essenciais para o entendimento da eficácia de conduta dos negociadores.

Palavras-chave: avaliação, conflito, educação, escolas, negociação, personalidade

Abstract

Negotiation is considered to be an ideal way of dealing with social conflict. Individuals who take part in negotiating processes draw on individual personality characteristics that affect their way of behaving. Additionally, prior research suggests that gender and age differences also shape individual approaches to negotiation. This study aims to determine whether personality factors (extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness) as well as socio-demographic variables (gender and age) are associated with different negotiation strategies. This research is based on a sample of

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407 students attending a secondary school in Porto, Portugal. Findings suggest that personality and gender are moderately significant.

Keywords: personality, conflict, negotiation, education, schools, measurement

Introduction

Interpersonal conflict is a fact of life in every culture and society. In a world of scarce resources (such as time, money and influence), interests will inevitably clash. In complex societies, however, opportunities for interpersonal conflict are multiplied given the number of interactions that an average person engages in every day. Moreover, it has been argued that the anonymity of modern urban living loosens normative controls on conflict, thus making conflict potentially more serious. This is captured in Durkheim's (1997 [1893]) classic notion of anomie, whereby a lack of social cohesion further alienates individuals from shared norms and values.

In a sense, the school is the penultimate institution of modern society. Schools are (in theory) universal institutions that bring together and blend people of many different backgrounds and subjects them to a common curriculum and pedagogical philosophy. Schools embody ideals of both meritocracy and equity, standardization and individualism, anonymity and intense social exchanges among students and teachers. As such, they are potent arenas of conflict (Lourenço, 2003; Paiva, 2003). In this paper, we examine students' attitudes and stances towards the negotiation and resolution of interpersonal conflict. Earlier research shows that socio-demographic variables such as age are significantly related to different attitudes and stances towards conflict. Following this lead, our work examines the relationship between negotiation strategies and two sets of independent variables: socio-demographic variables such as gender and age and personality variables based on Costa and McCrae's (1992) five-factor model of personality traits: openness to new experiences, agreeableness, conscientiousness, extroversion and neurosis (see also Cunha, 2000).

In this paper, we will focus on three personality factors in particular – extroversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness – following research by Barry and Friedman (1998) which suggests that these are the key factors influencing an individual's approach to conflict and negotiation. Extroversion

is associated with the tendency to seek out numerous social interactions, to approach interactions with a high level of engagement and to express a high level of pleasure and comfort in social situations. Agreeableness is defined as an empathetic disposition towards others. Finally, conscientiousness is defined as the tendency to focus on tasks or objectives.

Mack and Snyder (1957) characterize conflict as a distinct type of social interaction. Pruitt (1981) describes conflict as a process in which one party tries to act upon a situation or another person against resistance. In the larger sense, conflict may be defined as “[...] a perception of incompatibility between two or more actors and the variety of behaviours associated with such perceptions” (Bercovitch, 1984, p. 125). Serrano and Rodríguez (1993) argue that conflicts are observable and best studied at the moment in which two parties confront one another in order to reach objectives that are considered irreconcilable.

Similarly, there are various interpretations of what negotiation means in the context of conflict. Generally speaking, most of the literature presumes that negotiations are integral to the resolution of conflict in a way that is acceptable to both parties (Serrano, 1996). However, as Kennedy, Benson and McMillan (1986) point out, negotiation has limits and there do exist intractable conflicts that cannot be resolved in this way.

The literature on conflict negotiation strategies has been strongly influenced by Mastenbroek (1987, 1989). According to Cunha (2000), the Mastenbroek’s model sees negotiators as flexible agents who are highly adaptable to changing circumstances, but whose basic negotiating strategies are grounded in general attitudes towards the problem and his or her opponent(s) in the negotiation process. In short, personality likely has a strong impact on how an individual approaches conflict and comports him or herself in negotiating resolution or outcomes.

Personality refers to an ensemble of individual characteristics that are assembled into a coherent whole. As such, personality has a certain consistency and stability (Monteiro & Santos, 2001, p. 298), although it may vary situationally according to an individual’s emotional state, motivations, thoughts and decision-making. Sociologist Erving Goffman (1959) famously argued that individuals approach social situations as “performances”, tailoring their presentations of self to reflect their assessments of other people involved in the interaction. These performances, however, are not entirely open-ended:

while people may vary their behaviours according to circumstances, personality is more stable, allowing an individual to recognize oneself and to be recognized by others even when playing different social roles (Fontana, 1974).

All definitions of personality across the literature agree that personality is not completely static and is constructed throughout the life course. Rosenberg (cited in Lourenço & Paiva, 2004, p. 30) links personality to self-esteem, arguing that the latter “is a product of the (low or high) attitude that an individual has towards him or herself”. Psychological maturation involves both self-esteem and personality development that may be observed through characteristics such as self-control, capacity for interpersonal communication, expression of ideas and affect and the pursuit of personal objectives.

The aim of the study is to search, on the one hand, for dimensions of personality – extroversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness – and, on the other hand, for sociodemographic variables (gender and age) that may explain the adoption of different negotiation strategies. More precisely, we advance three hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1: Scores obtained on the negotiation strategies measure will vary according to the personalities of participants.
- Hypothesis 1.1: Degree of extroversion will be significantly associated with scores on the negotiation strategies measure.
- Hypothesis 1.2: Degree of agreeableness will be significantly associated with scores on the negotiation strategies measure.
- Hypothesis 1.3: Degree of conscientiousness will be significantly associated with scores on the negotiation strategies measure.
- Hypothesis 2: Scores obtained in the negotiation strategies measure will vary according to the gender of participants.
- Hypothesis 3: Scores obtained in the negotiation strategies measure will vary according to the age of participants.

Methods

Sample

This study is based on a survey of 407 students attending a secondary school located in central Porto, Portugal (response rate 93.1%). 156 (38.3%) of respondents are male and 251 (61.7%) are female. 75 (18.4%) are at the grade ten level, 169 (41.5%) at the grade eleven level and 163 (40.1%) are students in grade twelve. Ages are between 17 and 22 (average age of 17.78; SD = 0.99). Average age for males is 17.83, for females, 17.74.

Research Instruments

Two instruments were used, one to assess the negotiation strategies and the other to measure the personality variables. The first one (CEN – *Cuestionario de Eficacia en la Negociación*) was originally designed by Serrano and Rodríguez in 1989 (Rodríguez, 1990) and adapted for the Portuguese context (CEN II) by Cunha (1996, 2000). The strength of this commonly used Spanish and Portuguese-language measure of negotiation practices is that it clearly distinguishes between different approaches to negotiation. CEN II is composed of 42 items, 10 of which are indicators of negative performance and the remaining 32 measure positive performance. These instruments are grounded in the negotiation model proposed by Mastenbroek (1987, 1989) and encompasses also the approaches of Bazerman and Neale (1992) and Pruitt and Carnevale (1993). The CEN II uses statements about negotiation practices that are measured using five-part Likert scales that range from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

In order to assess personality, we employ a Portuguese language version of NEO-PI-R (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness-Personality Inventory – Revised) originally developed by McCrae & Costa (1992) and modified by Lima (1997). This measure takes a multi-dimensional approach to personality and was constructed using established behaviour scales, results of personality questionnaires and analogies with other personality measures (see McCrae & Costa, 1992). The NEO-PI-R scales measure traits using scores that are compared to the normal curve. This model allows us to build a comprehensive score based on five dimensions (Extroversion, Neuroticism, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness). The scale is a means of combining

information about individual characteristics including affect, experience, interpersonal skills, attitudes and motivations. The NEO-PI-R test also uses Likert scores and can be administered to anyone older than 17 years of age.

As mentioned, following Barry and Friedman (1998), we exclude the dimensions of neuroticism and openness and focus on extroversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness:

- Extroversion includes traits associated with warmth, assertiveness and a disposition to seek excitement and positive emotions.
- Agreeableness includes traits associated with trust, straightforwardness, altruism and modesty.
- Conscientiousness includes traits associated with competence, dutifulness and perseverance towards identified goals (Costa & McCrae, 1992, p. 345).

Negotiation strategies

Drawing on Mastebroek (1989), our survey contains five sets of questions (factors) that address different dimensions of negotiation strategies. Together, they form an overall scale that we term “Negotiation Strategy”. Factor 1 is comprised of nine items that capture what Mastebroek (1989, p. 42) terms the “exploring-avoiding continuum”. This dimension measures attitudes towards procedural flexibility amongst negotiators and consequently the willingness to engage in exploratory conversation and reciprocal exchange as a means of reaching agreement (see Table 1). The scores on each item are achieved by summing the Likert-scale responses of all participants (minimum = 407, maximum = 2035). Scores on all Factor 1 items average 1,533.33, making this the third-highest scoring of the five factors. The nine items correspond to 21.43% of the total of items in the overall Negotiation Strategy scale and they represent 21.77% of the total score obtained in all the items put together. Of the participants, 339 (83.3%) indicated agreement with the statement “I try to be open, but at the same time remain firm in my objectives”, whereas 317 (77.9%) indicated that “I am open to alternatives in the negotiation”. At the other extreme, 58 students (14.3%) were unconcerned with demonstrating to their opponents that they are viable and credible negotiators.

No	Item	Score
39	I try to be open, but at the same time remain firm in my objectives	1671
25	I'm open to alternatives in the negotiation	1618
26	My predominant negotiation style is based on common sense and dialogue	1611
38	I try to put on the table as many alternatives as possible in order to obtain good results	1606
24	It is useful to begin negotiations with an exchange of information about interests and priorities	1562
23	I choose carefully the examples that I give in order to get what I want	1542
29	I always actively participate in negotiations because that leads to good results	1482
42	I always actively participate in negotiations	1453
32	I always strive to demonstrate that I am a viable and credible negotiator	1435
	Total	13,980

Table 1. Factor 1 items (exploring-avoiding continuum)

Factor 2 is comprised of twelve items that represent the dimension “promoting a constructive climate” (Mastenbroek, 1989, p. 35). The items measure participants’ attitudes and strategies for developing a constructive or positive atmosphere for negotiations; specifically an openness to alternatives and consideration of proposals that reflect the goals and interests of other parties (see Table 2).

The scores associated with this factor receive a mean of 1,483.66, making this the fourth-highest scoring of the five factors. These twelve items correspond to 28.57% of the total of items in the Negotiating Strategy scale and they represent 27.72% of the total score obtained in all the items put together. Of the respondents, 315 (77.4%) indicated having a degree of flexibility in order to reach an agreement without forgetting their own goals, whereas 306 (75.2%) consider it advisable to create a sense of security among negotiators in order to obtain a satisfactory agreement for the long term. On the other hand, 56 respondents (13.8%) assert that it is a *not* a good idea to establish similarities with one’s opponents in order to reach an agreement.

No	Item	Score
15	It is best to create a sense of security among negotiators to obtain a satisfactory agreement for the long term	1599
36	I make an attempt to be flexible in reaching an agreement without forgetting my own goals	1581
34	It is important to establish a good relationship with your opponents, showing that one is banking on mutual trust	1558
20	I always try to be creative in my search for solutions	1550
33	I congratulate my opponents if they make a good point	1497
21	I try to probe my opponents' interests in order to identify their priorities	1488
41	Before the beginning of negotiations, or during the breaks, I try to create a relaxed atmosphere with my opponents by making small talk	1473
19	I try to congratulate my opponents about the positive aspects of their ideas, presentation, behaviour, etc.	1462
40	When a deadlock arises, it is useful to ask for a break in order to discuss the subject in a less formal way	1459
18	In order to reach an agreement, it is a good idea to underline similarities with one's opponents.	1448
08	It is important to make concessions little by little with the aim of creating reciprocity	1362
31	Sometimes, I exaggerate my impatience in order to pressure my opponents to give me what I want*	1327
Total		17,804

* Item is scored inversely

Table 2. Factor 2 items (promoting a constructive climate)

Factor 3 is comprised of nine items reflecting the dimension “attempts to influence the balance of power” (Mastenbroek, 1989, p. 26). These items reflect a more aggressive stance in negotiation (see Table 3). Overall, this was the least popular dimension of the overall Negotiation Strategy Scale, with items averaging 1,476.22. The nine items correspond to 21.43% of the total Scale and comprise 20.68% of the total score of all items put together. Of the students in the sample, 360 (88.5%) indicated an unwillingness to make unequivocal threats to demonstrate that their decisions are irreversible and 266 (65.4%) disagree with the saying that “what is good for the other party is bad for me”. However, 116 (28.5%) agreed that a good negotiator must try to defeat the other party.

No	Item	Score
01	I make unequivocal threats, showing that my decisions are irreversible*	1809
27	It is often good to be arrogant and threaten the other party*	1524
17	It is good to behave in a spontaneous and unpredictable way in negotiations*	1514
07	I agree with the saying "what is good for the other party is bad for me"*	1512
09	I often threaten to break off negotiations if the other party does not accept my position*	1418
30	In order to negotiate well, one must start from the principle that the other party is wrong*	1386
06	Creating impatience or agitation in one's opponent brings good results*	1386
04	A good negotiator must try to defeat the other party*	1372
16	Sometimes, I pretend that I'm losing patience in order to obtain more from the other party*	1336
Total		13,286
* Item is scored inversely		

Table 3. Factor 3 items (Attempts to influence balance of power)

Factor 4 is comprised of seven items corresponding to Mastenbroek's (1989, p. 18) dimension of "attempts to obtain substantial results". These items reflect the desire to achieve equitable results as the ultimate goal of negotiation (see Table 4). This is the second-highest scoring dimension, with items receiving an average score of 1588.57. These items make up 16.66% of the Negotiation Strategy scale and comprise 17.32% of the total scores on all items. Of the participants, 363 (89.2%) advocate open communication by honestly sharing necessary information in order to reach a mutual agreement, whereas 346 (85%) agree that it is very important to consider the underlying interests of all parties. However, 64 (15.7%) disagreed that they avoid speaking to opponents in an irritated and sarcastic way during negotiations.

Factor 5 is comprised of five items that reflect a rational approach to negotiation, in this case taken from research by Bazerman and Neale (1992, p. 9). In this approach, negotiators demonstrate a high level of rationality in order to prevent the negotiation from being compromised by emotion and ego (Cunha, 2000). These items reflect an analytical stance, where negotiators seek to identify common aims between both parties as a basis for negotiation

(see Table 5). This is the highest scoring of the five factors discussed in this section, obtaining an average of 1608.4. The items contribute 11.90% the Negotiation Scale and comprise 12.52% of the total scores on all items. 354 participants (87%) indicated that they listen attentively to the other party in order to make sure that they are aware of their interests. However, 31 (7.6%) indicated that they are not concerned about the effects of their position on the other party. We also note that 165 (40.5%) participants declared that they are “indifferent” to the creation of reciprocity by means of concessions in the negotiation. In addition, 144 (35.4%) were indifferent to the notion that a time-out be called if negotiations are deadlocked.

No	Item	Score
11	It is important to understand the underlying interests of both parties in order to reach an agreement	1696
03	I encourage open communication by honestly sharing necessary information with the other party	1681
37	It is important to work together in order to find common interests in what is being negotiated	1621
10	It is important to establish priorities in what is being negotiated	1618
22	I try to exchange information about the proposed goals and solutions of both parties	1577
28	Whenever possible, I emphasize the interests of both parties	1478
35	When I must warn my opponents about something, I avoid doing it in an irritated and sarcastic way	1449
Total		13,286

Table 4. Factor 4 items (attempts to achieve good results)

No	Item	Score
12	I always look for new solutions to a problem in order to reach an agreement	1671
02	I show an interest in the well-being of my opponent and I also show the will to find harmonious solutions	1664
05	I listen attentively to the other party in order to find common interests	1658
14	I often suggest an ordering of priorities of both parties	1528
13	I try to imagine the effects of my position to the other party	1521
Total		8,042

Table 5. Factor 5 items (pursuit of a rational approach to negotiation)

Personality Type and Negotiation Strategy

As discussed earlier, our hypothesis is that the scores obtained using the CEN II Negotiation Strategy scale will vary according to personality type, which we measured using the NEO-PI-R test (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness-Personality Inventory – Revised) (McCrae & Costa, 1992; Lima, 1997). The NEO-PI-R test assigns numerical values to different personality dimensions, meaning that we may use Pearson’s r correlation to test our hypothesis.

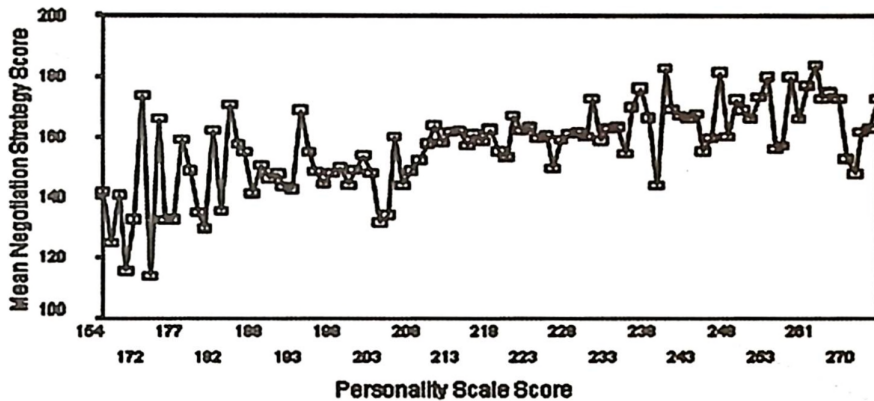


Figure 1. Negotiation Strategy (scale) by Personality Type

Figure 1 shows a slight correlation between the personality and negotiation scales, which suggests that Hypothesis 1 should not be rejected. In descriptive terms, we may also note that the positive linear correlation ($r = .410$) that exists between personality and the Negotiation Strategy scores is statistically significant ($p = .000$).

As argued by Greenhalgh et al. (1985, pp. 9-10) “negotiators’ personalities have been recognized as having important effects on negotiations. [...] Rubin and Brown (1975) pointed out that broader personality predispositions rather than isolated traits affect real-life negotiations”. However, we also recognize the possibility that basic personality traits can be masked by heightened expectations and emotional states within the negotiation process (Barry & Friedman, 1998). This is an important qualification of the findings presented below.

Table 6 shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between the three dimensions of personality (extroversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness) and the Negotiation Strategies scale. The strength of these correlations vary. The Extroversion dimension shows only a low positive linear correlation ($r = .140, p = .005$); the linear correlation for Agreeableness is also moderately positive ($r = .446; p = .000$); and the correlation for Conscientiousness is positive and linear ($r = .271; p = .000$).

	Extroversion		Agreeableness		Conscientiousness	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Negotiation strategies	.140	.005	.446	.000	.271	.000

Table 6. Pearson *r* correlation for Negotiation strategies as a function of different personality traits

Table 6, suggests that Hypotheses H1.1, H1.2 and H1.3 should not be rejected. Extroversion, which is a marker of interpersonal assertiveness (Costa & McCrae, 1992), is weakly associated with higher scores on the Negotiation Strategy scale. Importantly, Agreeableness, which denotes a compliant and altruistic personality in situations that require interactions and interdependency, is very strongly associated with higher scores. This is consistent with findings by De Dreu and Van Lange (1995), who argue that this personality type is more likely to give concessions in negotiation than individuals with who have a more competitive and ego-centric social orientation. Finally, the modestly strong links between Conscientiousness and Negotiation Strategy can be explained in part by the negotiation process itself. People scoring high on conscientiousness tend to be prepared, punctual and attentive to detail. This serves them well in negotiations, which are not just simple social exchanges, but demand preparation and foresight in order to increase probabilities of success (Lewicki, Litterer, Minton & Saunders, 1994; Murnighan, 1992). In other words, if a negotiator plans their own actions beforehand, they will be less open to influence from the other party (McCrae & John, 1992), meaning that the negotiators who have high scores in Conscientiousness will be more successful in reaching a favourable agreement.

Table 7 provides information on the correlations between Negotiating Strategy and each of the specific traits comprising Extroversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. Only one trait fails to reach statistical significance (excitement-seeking on the Extroversion factor), receiving a weak positive

correlation ($r = .013$). Other extroversion items are moderately significant. For instance, “Warmth”, achieves a score of $r = .328$, ($p = .000$). Participants who obtain a medium to high score on this trait are generally friendly to others, convivial and approachable. “Assertiveness” yields a modest negative correlation ($r = -.232$, $p = .000$); participants who score below average on this trait are generally reserved, avoid asserting themselves and prefer to let others speak. According to Greenhalgh, Neslin and Gilkey (1985), negotiators with a low level of assertiveness are less prepared to face down conflict in a negotiation, thus explaining the negative correlation. On “Gregariousness” ($r = .106$, $p = .033$), participants scoring above average are characterized by their energy, quick pace of life and the need to be busy, whereas participants scoring high on “Positive Emotions” ($r = .182$, $p = .000$), are generally happy, spirited and express a positive attitude.

		Negotiation strategies	
		<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Extroversion	Warmth	.328**	.000
	Assertiveness	-.232**	.000
	Gregariousness	.106*	.033
	Excitement-seeking	.013	ns
	Positive Emotions	.182**	.000
Agreeableness	Trust	.229**	.000
	Straightforwardness	.360**	.000
	Altruism	.287**	.000
	Tender mindedness	.395**	.000
Conscientiousness	Competence	.255**	.000
	Dutifulness	.216**	.000

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 7. Pearson *r* correlations for Negotiation Strategies as a function of personality traits

As far as the Agreeableness dimension is concerned, we find a low but significant positive linear correlation across each trait. The Trust trait ($r = .229$) scored slightly above average on the Negotiation Strategies scale, as participants with high trust were more likely to presume that their opponents have good intentions and consider them to be committed negotiators. This

dimension is taken as one of Erickson's reference variables (cited by Costa & McCrae, 1992) as a basis for psycho-social development. Straightforwardness ($r = .360$) also scores slightly above average. Individuals that score highly on this trait are typically frank, forthright and sincere in their dealings with others. Complacency ($r = .287$) also received a slightly above average score. People who score highly on this trait tend to accept opponents' opinions, hide their aggressiveness and are willing to forgive and forget. Finally, tender mindedness ($r = .395$) demonstrated a moderately strong correlation with Negotiation Strategy. This trait is associated with an empathetic stance towards others.

Both traits associated with Conscientiousness demonstrate a weak positive linear correlation with the Negotiation Strategies scale. First, the trait "competence" refers to "the feeling that one is able, sensible, effective" (Costa & McCrae, 1992, p. 18) and students who scored highly on this trait scored above average on the scale. Second the trait "dutifulness" ($r = .216$), which refers to a sense of accomplishment, diligence and motivation to achieve goals, also obtained scores slightly above average.

Table 8 shows that all factors of Negotiation Strategies (discussed earlier) have statistically significant weak-to-moderate positive correlations with the personality scale: factor 1 "exploring-avoiding continuum" ($r = .386$); factor 2 "development of a constructive atmosphere" ($r = .340$); factor 3 "attempts to influence balance of power" ($r = .268$); factor 4 "attempts to achieve good results" ($r = .356$); factor 5 "pursuit of a rational approach to negotiation" ($r = .293$).

	Factor	Personality	
		<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Negotiation Strategies	Factor 1	.386	.000
	Factor 2	.340	.000
	Factor 3	.268	.000
	Factor 4	.356	.000
	Factor 5	.293	.000

Table 8. Pearson's r correlation for Negotiation strategies as a function of personality

Finally, Table 9 provides the correlations between the different factors making up the Negotiation Strategies scale and the three main dimensions of the Personality Scale. This table shows that only factors 3 (“attempts to influence balance of power”) and 5 (“pursuit of a rational approach to negotiation”) fail to achieve statistical significance on the Extroversion dimension, while all other factors correlate weakly with Personality (Factor 1, “exploring-avoiding continuum”, $r = .326$; Factor 2 “development of a constructive atmosphere” $r = .130$; Factor 4 “attempts to achieve good results” $r = .191$).

As for the Agreeableness factor, we note that every correlation is statistically meaningful – Factor 3 shows a moderate positive correlation ($r = .498$), as does Factor 2 ($r = .326$), Factor 4 ($r = .318$) and Factor 5 ($r = .363$).

For Conscientiousness, all variables are have statistically significant weak positive correlations, except for Factor 3, which is not significant.

		Personality Variables					
		Extroversion		Agreeableness		Conscientiousness	
Factor		<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>P</i>
Negotiation strategies	Factor 1	.326	.000	.165	.001	.344	.000
	Factor 2	.130	.009	.326	.000	.278	.000
	Factor 3	-.064	n.s.	.498	.000	.097	n.s
	Factor 4	.191	.000	.318	.000	.219	.000
	Factor 5	.087	n.s	.363	.000	.158	.001

Table 9. Pearson’s r correlations for Outcomes of Negotiation as a function of personality variables

In conclusion, Table 9 tells us that extroverts, who tend to find pleasure in social interactions and are more comfortable being assertive, negotiate more successfully in situations of conflict, namely when it is necessary to adopt flexible positions between the parties. Conscientious individuals, characterized by willpower, perseverance and ambition, are also more successful in negotiations. Altruistic, reliable and kind individuals try to influence the power equilibrium between the parties, leaving room for the other to maneuver in order reach a positive outcomes.

Socio-Demographic Variables

Having established that personality has a demonstrable association with Negotiation Strategies, we now turn to the demographic variables of gender and age. The effect of gender is measured using a *t*-test, while the effect of age is examined using Pearson's *r* correlations.

Negotiation Strategies as a Function of Gender

We hypothesize that the scores obtained on CEN II will vary according to the gender of participants (see Hypothesis 2 discussed earlier). Indeed, Figure 2 shows that female students average better outcomes than male participants.

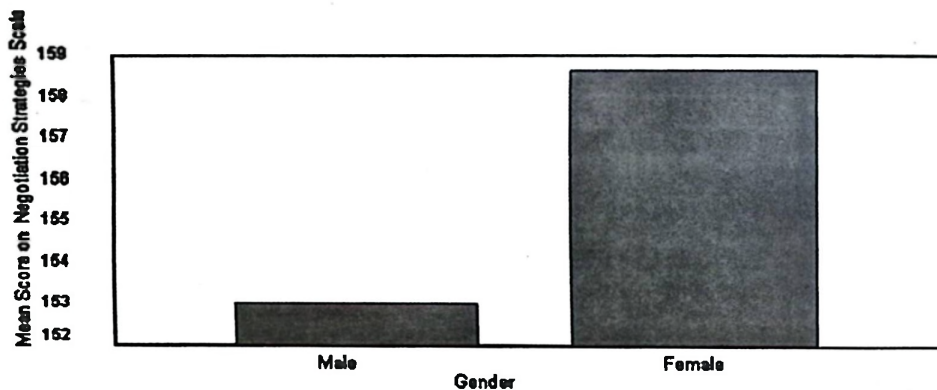


Figure 2. Negotiation strategies by Gender

As shown in Table 10, the *t*-test suggests that we should not reject the hypothesis ($t = -3.217$, $p = .001$), as we find notable differences in the averages between male (average score of 152.98, $sd = 18.38$) and female (158.65, $sd = 15.35$) participants.

		Levene test of variance		T-test of means		
		<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>g.l.</i>	<i>P</i>
Negotiation strategies	Equality of assumed variance	8.539	.004	-3.354	405	.001
	Equality of unassumed variance			-3.217	285.2	.001

Table 10. *T*-test for Negotiation strategies as a Function of Gender

Table 11 breaks down the gender effect by each of the factors that make up the CEN II instrument. Factor 2, “development of a constructive atmosphere” ($t = -2.182$; $g.l. = 286.4$; $p = .030$) and Factor 3, “attempts to influence balance of power” ($t = -5.796$; $g.l. = 405$; $p = .000$) are statistically meaningful.

	Gender	Mean	Std. dev	F	Sig	T	g.l.	p	
Negotiation strategies	Factor 1	M	34.35	5.32	2.049	.153	.012	405	ns
		F	34.35	4.64					
	Factor 2	M	42.92	6.41	4.268	.039	-2.182	286.4	.030
		F	44.26	5.38					
	Factor 3	M	30.57	6.00	3.448	.064	-5.796	405	.000
		F	33.93	3.48					
	Factor 4	M	26.97	3.48	0.428	.513	-1.642	405	ns
		F	27.54	3.29					
	Factor 5	M	19.54	2.74	5.568	.019	-1.311	291.2	ns
		F	19.98	2.35					

Table 11. *T*-test for Negotiation strategies as a Function of Gender, by factors

The items that males most frequently agreed with are “I [never] make unequivocal threats showing that my decisions are irreversible” (82.7%), “I always try new solutions for a problem in such a way that I can reach an agreement” (82.1%) and “I show interest in the well-being of my opponent and the will to find harmonious solutions” (82.1%). The modal categories for females were “open communication by honestly sharing necessary information in order to reach a mutual agreement” (93.6%), “I [never] make unequivocal threats, showing that my decisions are irreversible” (92%) and “It is important to understand the underlying interests of both parties in order to reach an agreement” (89.6%).

With respect to conflict situations, males tended to be more interested in maximizing results, whereas females were more preoccupied with maintenance of the relationship. This is consistent with Gilkey and Greenhaugh’s finding (cited in Cunha, 2001, p. 210) that “men tend to perceive their opponents as being fundamentally distinct from themselves and women tend to be more empathetic in seeing them as more like themselves”. It should be noted that women obtain higher scores on every factor, which leads us to conclude that they are more progressive and flexible in their approach to negotiations (see Figure 2).

Negotiation Strategies as a Function of Age

The trend line in Figure 3 shows a slight fluctuation in the outcomes of negotiation occurring between 17 and 20 years of age and a strong increase from 20 to 22 years of age.

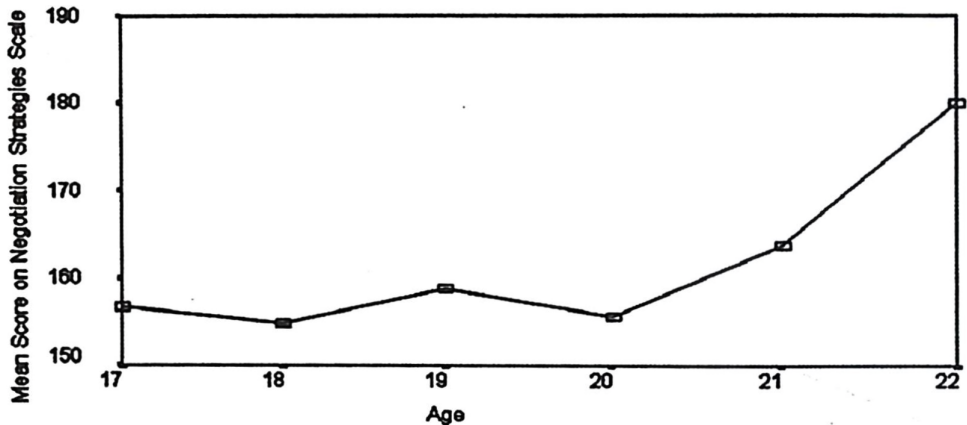


Figure 3. Negotiation strategies as a Function of Age of Respondents

Overall, we may interpret the Pearson's r correlation as having a weak linear correlation ($r = .034$) between age and outcomes and this association is not statistically significant ($p = .496$). Breaking out the factors of negotiation strategies, we see that these have a very weak correlation and are not statistically meaningful.

As far as this variable is concerned, we went from the hypothesis that the scores obtained in CEN II could vary according to age. However, the statistical insignificance of the age variable suggests otherwise. Thus, we conclude that Hypothesis 3 dealing with social-demographic variables must be rejected.

Conclusion

Conflict is a fact of life and in the modern world opportunities for interpersonal conflict are multiplied. Schools are particularly important arenas of conflict given that they bring together many people of different

backgrounds in an attempt to educate and socialize young people. In general terms, this paper addressed factors relating to success in negotiations in light of three personality factors (extroversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness) and two socio-demographic variables (gender and age). From this, we arrive at the following conclusions.

With respect to personality, we find that there is a moderate positive and statistically significant correlation with negotiation strategies (as measured by the CEN II scale). The Extroversion factor has a very weak positive correlation, whereas Agreeableness is considered positive and moderate and Conscientiousness presents a weak positive correlation.

It was also found that gender influences negotiation strategies in a significant manner. The association between gender and Factor 2 (“development of a constructive atmosphere”) was particularly significant, with female participants scoring higher than males, suggesting that they are better communicators and more capable of establishing interpersonal rapport within negotiations. Women also scored higher on Factor 3 (“attempts to influence balance of power”), showing that they follow softer strategies in pursuing positive outcomes in negotiation.

With respect to age, we found that negotiation strategies vary slightly between 17 and 22 years of age, with the latter having better outcomes.

In conclusion, we submit that that it is important to take into consideration the personalities, principles and values that are expressed by students in any attempts to formulate school policy for conflict avoidance and mitigation.

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