

Is Negotiation Training Important when Dealing with Chinese Business People – An Analysis of Managers' Beliefs and Needs in Three Countries

Xiaoshu ZHU

Business Confucius Institute, FAAP, Brazil

Chang GAO

Mandarin Mathematics Corporation, USA

Abstract: Before the November-2021 China International Import Expo, the demand of foreign business people for targeted training in negotiating with the Chinese was on the increase. We conducted a survey before the negotiation training, intending to find out the demographic characteristics of the potential trainees, their beliefs in negotiations, their exact needs in terms of negotiating with Chinese business people, and we analyzed the post-training effects and results with an evaluation questionnaire. We administered the survey in three countries – Brazil, Mexico and Germany, and received 57 answers for the pre-training questionnaire, the results of which were analyzed with SPSS26, and 49 answers for the training effect evaluation form. Our major findings are as follows. Regardless of origin, the professionals surveyed attached great importance to negotiation training, and the topics they have foremost interest in are respectively: To develop a negotiation mindset, to deal with contract-related issues; and to build trust and stable relationships. Whereas to the question of negotiating with their Chinese counterparts, the surveyed focused on the following three topics: How to determine VIPs in the Chinese negotiation team, dealing with legal concerns in negotiations, and the typical Chinese wisdom related to business. As for the evaluation, all the trainees gave positive feedback, but with somewhat different preferences. Our general conclusion is that negotiation training is necessary for managers at all times, but the training contents should ideally be targeted towards their specific needs.

Keywords: Negotiation training, business people, Chinese business culture, negotiation mindset, transferability

1. Introduction

In the professional world, especially at the managerial level, negotiation skills are gaining increasing recognition. Negotiation has been called “the hardest soft skill” among all the professional skills required in the present world. As a logical result, negotiation has become the most sought-after course not only in business schools at different universities, but also in the training business. A Google search for independent negotiation training programs, i.e., not for degree purposes, but only for increasing the attendees’ negotiation knowledge or improving their negotiation performance, yields 157,000,000 relevant results. Why have negotiation-training courses received so much popularity? Negotiating is an essential part of any company’s business activities. It can have a significant impact on the profitability and market value of the company. The following statement reveals the secret even more plainly: What is negotiation training? “In

the best negotiation training courses, trainees learn not only how to effectively manage the negotiations they face, but also how to uncover opportunities they may otherwise have missed.”¹

Andres Lares, managing partner at Shapiro Negotiation Institute, believes that there are two reasons why companies should train employees in negotiation.² The first is that it “can significantly improve everything from working with teams to relationships with clients to managing both up and down internally.” The second is that negotiation training is different from any other type of training, since it will enable companies to track the impact of the training and measure ROI (return on investment). It is also believed that negotiation training effects can most easily be seen in salespeople and procurement professionals. Therefore, providing training to employees in negotiation skills can have a positive impact on both the employee and the organization. After all, negotiation is a combination of art and science.

Realizing the increasing importance of negotiation skills, organizations across the globe spend millions of dollars each year on negotiation training for their employees. Negotiation training is conducted either in-house, when the number of participants is large, or outside the company when the trainee group is not sizeable. In any case, to management’s disappointment, after engaging in a couple of days of training, the trained employees return to the office and, more often than not, apply in vain what they learned. To be more exact, their newly trained negotiation knowledge and skill often fail to “stick.” They quickly abandon the best practices they learned during negotiation training and replace them with ineffective old habits.³

To account for this phenomenon, the present authors believe that the failure in applying the training knowledge lies in the trainers’ lack of information about what the negotiation training attendees’ special needs are. In order for the trainees to put into practice what they have learned from negotiation training, they need a starting point first, before extending the learned skills to other occasions. To phrase it another way, the negotiation trainers have not taken enough into consideration why the trainees are in the training sessions in the first place. That is exactly the problem that the present study aims to solve.

2. The Present Study

Although the negotiation training programs advertised in various media differ in purpose, scope, duration, methods, and so on, we hold true our observation that before deciding to go through systematic training, those who plan to attend such trainings have their intuitive understanding of negotiation-related concepts. In order for them to apply their learned negotiation-related knowledge such as strategies and tactics after the training, they need an anchoring point. That is why the present study chooses to compare the beliefs in and needs for negotiation training of businesspeople that plan to negotiate with their Chinese counterparts in particular. We provided training for a group of businesspeople from three countries, namely, Mexico, Brazil and Germany, or German-speaking countries a week before the China Import Expo 2021. Our belief was that the participants of the course could put into immediate use the information they obtained from the negotiation training. When they were offered this negotiation training opportunity, the potential trainees, mainly managers at different levels in their respective companies, had varying requests regarding the negotiation training. A US-based company provided the negotiation training session

¹ Retrieved 19 Aug, 2021 from <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/tag/negotiation-training/>

² Retrieved 23 April 2022 from <https://trainingindustry.com/articles/leadership/what-is-negotiation-and-why-is-it-important-to-include-in-training/>

³ Compare <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/negotiation-training-daily/implement-negotiation-training-organization/>

for the trainees, and administered both the pre- and the post-training survey, the results of which will be shown below. The reason why these three countries have been chosen for comparison is that all of them are non-English-speaking countries, and they represent businesspeople from North America, South America and Europe. To understand their specific needs enabled the training institution to provide more tailored training contents for the participants. To put it in the terminology of negotiation per se, to know the other party is always the key to successful negotiation.

3. Related Literature

What is negotiation training? Such training usually refers to a short period of time, ranging from days to weeks, to teach the course participants (usually for non-degree purposes) to improve their negotiation skills in their professional arena. Literature on negotiation training compared to that on negotiation in general is less frequently encountered, yet this limited amount of related literature centers either on teaching what to do in negotiation situations (most frequently discussed) or negotiation effectiveness (less frequently dealt with).

Although measuring negotiation training effectiveness is difficult, academic attempts to do it have never stopped. The traditional model for assessing training outcomes, first advanced by Donald Kirkpatrick in 1959, described different levels of outcome measurement. In Kirkpatrick's model there are four levels: Level One (reaction), Level Two (learning), Level Three (behavior change/application), and Level Four (impact) (Kirkpatrick 1959).

For the past few decades, negotiation training courses and programs have typically aimed at teaching trainees how to control their emotions and behave in a manner so that their benefits or the results of the negotiations can be maximized (Lewicki, 1997). As for negotiation trainers, their ultimate goal would be the trainees' transferring the learned negotiation skills to practice. Nadler et al. (2003) referred to this type of transfer as learning and acquiring negotiation skills. To put it in another way, after some targeted training the trainees should ideally develop "the ability to apply a concept, schema or skill learned in one situation to a relevant but different problem" (Rollof et al., 2003, p. 825). Susskind and Corburn (2000) observed that the general pattern of such programs and courses on negotiation training is as follows: the negotiation training sessions usually consist of a group of role-play exercises adapted from real cases for understandable reasons, but should be subject to scientific explanation, and be followed by a lecture and a short debrief, for instructional purposes; they remarked that at least this pattern applied in the US, not to mention other countries. Movius (2008) mentioned that to evaluate the effectiveness of negotiation training, trainees tend to be asked to demonstrate their learning of new concepts or skills and to ask self-efficacy questions too.

Taking a somewhat critical stance on negotiation training, scholars such as Movius (2008) and Lewicki (2014) believe that systematic improvement is needed in order to raise training effectiveness. However, it is not quite clear from which level of effectiveness this kind of improvement would begin, as few studies have measured effectiveness in terms of long-term learning transfer from simulation to real world contexts and private lives of course participants (Coleman & Lim, 2001). To put it more plainly, the focus of "[n]egotiation training evaluation tends to be short-term, aspectual, and piecemeal" (Coleman & Lim, 2001, p. 363). In other words, the goal of measuring the effectiveness of negotiation training may turn out hard for negotiation trainers to realize simply on account of the fact that "[e]ven when people learn integrative negotiation skills, they have great difficulty transferring these skills to new tasks" (Moran et al., 2008, p. 100) and negotiation training "has to 'stick' over time in order to be effective" (Lewicki,

2002, p. 2).

Burke and Hutchins (2007, p. 263), examine negotiation training from the standpoint of companies, and rank “training transfer [as] a core issue for human resource development researchers and practitioners focused on designing interventions that support individual, team, and organizational performance,” because enterprises, with rare exceptions, expect cost-effectiveness for their money spent on negotiation training. However, these companies are disappointed more often than not: Beer et al.’s (2016) study reported that US-based companies spent over \$160 billion on employee learning in 2015, yet researchers assume that only 10 to 50 percent of this training resulted in behavioral changes (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). Beer et al. (2016) have come to the pessimistic discovery that when people learn something in a training, “[f]or the most part, the learning doesn’t lead to better organizational performance because people soon revert to their old ways of doing things.”

Other studies on negotiation training effectiveness list culture-awareness as an important influencing factor, since culture plays its role both before and during a negotiation. Hardeggers (2021) opined that “if we aim at making culture an effective negotiation tool, we have to carefully study cultural differences during our pre-negotiation preparation stage in order to be fully aware about the cultural sensitivities of the other parties” (cf. p. 4). In contrast, the role of culture remains crucially important during a negotiation even when the negotiators don’t have time to analyze the cultural context of the process (cf. Hardeggers, 2021, p. 4). Peter Thomson (1998, p. 40) argued: “To communicate an idea effectively, you must use both the left and right sides of your brain in order to connect with the both sides of the listener’s brain.” (p. 4). Tang Chaorong (2006) pointed out the importance of understanding the negotiation counterparts’ culture, and claimed that before negotiating with the Chinese, it is vitally important to really understand the concept of relationship, status, position, and power, and be best prepared.

More recent studies categorize negotiation training as (professional) competence building. Soliman, Stimec and Antheaume (2014) presented the subset of research on the enhancement of cooperation in negotiation with a focus on the intra-organizational context and studied the long-term impact of negotiation training and teaching implications. Poitras et al. (2015) designed a competency scale that maps out the most important managerial mediation competencies from four perspectives—cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and attitudinal. Some other scholars like Wheeler (2006), Bordone and Viscomi (2015) and Ebner (2016), asserted that the main task of negotiation training or teaching would be to train negotiators so that they can ultimately equip themselves with the skills, self- and social awareness, and ethics necessary to create and claim value, with the end goal of building sustainable relationships in complex business, legal, or diplomatic environments. Their study clustered a variety of negotiation skills and attitudes into four broader categories: language and emotionality, negotiation intelligence, relationship building, and moral wisdom, since these scholars believe that such a classification facilitates observing these skills and attitudes shown during negotiations.

On the issue of training effectiveness, the current authors believe that the presently available literature has failed to take into consideration the pre-departure understanding of the trainees and their specific needs before negotiation training. Besides, in order for negotiation training to be effective or to yield productive results, incentive measures should be taken in a top-to-down manner in a company. To prove the authors’ beliefs, the present study surveys 57 top and medium level management personnel in the three above-mentioned countries and we aim at finding out how to achieve this goal. The post-training questionnaire is intended to confirm these beliefs of ours on negotiation training. We are certain that such a horizontal comparison of trainees in

different countries will not only provide inspiration for related training institutions in various countries, but will also throw some theoretical light onto negotiation training.

4. Methodology

4.1 Rationale of the Questionnaire Design

The design of the questionnaire was based on the inspiration obtained from the above-mentioned literature. As complement to the literature discussed, we find the following negotiation competence model very much applicable:



Smolinski and Xiong, 2020, p. 371

We believe Smolinski and Xiong's (2020) negotiation competence model serves our purpose well in that all the four elements mentioned, that is, language and emotionality, negotiation intelligence, relationship building, and moral wisdom, are exactly what we planned to train our trainees in. Being aware of our negotiation training attendees' beliefs as well as their exact needs, the training session can be more targeted.

With this purpose in mind, we conducted the survey in two parts: first we surveyed the attendees a week before the 2021 China Import started, and then two weeks after it ended.

The first questionnaire we distributed consists of five sections, namely, basic information, beliefs in negotiation, their preferences in the training contents in general, related information on the training session, and about the Chinese businesspeople in particular. The questionnaire was distributed to 57 business executives in the three countries. The questionnaire results were calculated through the SPSS 26 below.

For the second part of this study, the trainees were asked to fill out another questionnaire, so that they could evaluate their own performances during the Expo regarding their negotiations with their Chinese counterparts and how useful they found our training session to be.

4.2 Research Questions

- 1) What are the demographic features of the trainees who have potential interests in negotiation training?
- 2) How do they view negotiation before training?
- 3) What are their exact needs regarding negotiating with Chinese businesspeople in general?
- 4) Did the trainees find our training session to be useful? If yes, in what ways? If no, why not?

- 5) What would they prefer to be trained in if they were to attend our future negotiation training courses/programs?

5. Results and Discussion

The results of our **first questionnaire**, or **the pre-departure survey**, are as follows:

5.1 Demographic Statistics

Of all those surveyed, 44 were males, and 13 are females, accounting respectively for 77.2 percent and 22.8 percent of the total.

As to the educational level of the respondents, the distribution is as shown below in the pie chart (M=Mid-level, 47 persons, 82%; T=Top level, 6 persons, 10.5%; O=Owner of an enterprise, 4 persons, 7.0%; and N=None of the above, 0 person, 0%).

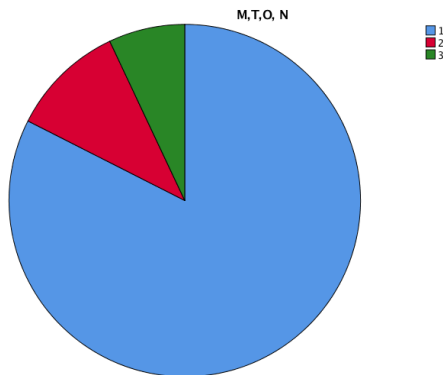


Figure 1. Educational Level Distribution of the Respondents

The age distribution (1=30-35 years old, 2=36-40 years old, 3= 41-45 years old, 4=46 years old and above) of the respondents is as follows:

3 (5.3%) of them are between the age of 30 to 35; 42 (73.7%) are between 36 and 40; 7 (12.3%) are between 41 to 45; and the remaining 5 (8.8%) are 46 years old or above.

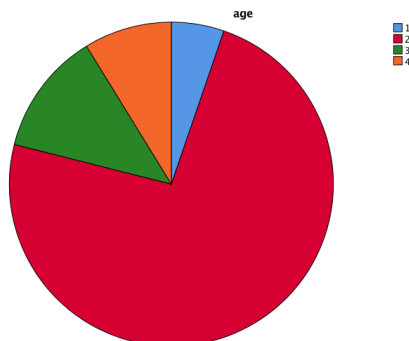


Figure 2. Age Distribution of the Respondents

For their educational level variant, we received only the following two categories: 43 persons (75.4%) have bachelor's degrees and 14 (24.6%) have master's degrees.

5.2 Beliefs Related to Negotiation

In this part of the questionnaire, the respondents were required to scale their beliefs related to negotiation, with 1 denoting most true, and 6, the least true.

For the first statement “Negotiation is indispensable in both daily life situations and at work,” we received the following results:

Table 1. Results of Belief 1

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00 39	68.4	68.4	68.4
	2.00 15	26.3	26.3	94.7
	3.00 2	3.5	3.5	98.2
	4.00 1	1.8	1.8	100.0
Total	57	100.0	100.0	

To interpret the result, we can see that the sum of 1 and 2 amounts to 94.7%, which means that the great majority of the informants believes that this statement is very true.

For the second statement “Some people are born negotiators, but negotiation competence is trainable,” the result we received turned out as follows:

Table 2. Results of Belief 2

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00 17	29.8	29.8	29.8
	2.00 35	61.4	61.4	91.2
	3.00 5	8.8	8.8	100.0
Total	57	100.0	100.0	

The accumulative percentage of 1 and 2 is similar to that for belief 1, yet the result shows that about two thirds believes that the negotiation competence can be trained, but in terms of trueness it is not so strong as the first statement.

The third statement “The attitude and willingness to learn to be better negotiators matters” has yielded the following result:

Table 3. Results of Belief 3

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00 23	40.4	40.4	40.4
	2.00 22	38.6	38.6	78.9
	3.00 10	17.5	17.5	96.5
	4.00 1	1.8	1.8	98.2
	5.00 1	1.8	1.8	100.0
Total	57	100.0	100.0	

This result can be interpreted as showing that the informants are not so sure about the influence level of attitude and willingness to learn to be better negotiators, so that their answers do not show a clear pattern as in beliefs 1 and 2.

The fourth belief “Negotiation training at work can be transferred to life situations” was held in the following pattern:

Table 4. Results of Belief 4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	25	43.9	43.9	43.9
	2.00	24	42.1	42.1	86.0
	3.00	5	8.8	8.8	94.7
	4.00	3	5.3	5.3	100.0
	Total	57	100.0	100.0	

The result of this particular statement means that the managers surveyed do not have overriding confidence as to whether their learned skills in negotiation training can be transferred to their life situations, although they rate this relatively positively. In comparison with the above statements, this one seems to be somewhat inferior.

The last prediction “Learning to negotiate can make a person a better cooperater in teamwork” was even less believed in:

Table 5. Results of Belief 5

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	27	47.4	47.4	47.4
	2.00	17	29.8	29.8	77.2
	3.00	9	15.8	15.8	93.0
	4.00	2	3.5	3.5	96.5
	5.00	1	1.8	1.8	98.2
	6.00	1	1.8	1.8	100.0
	Total	57	100.0	100.0	

This result is even more varied in that less than half of the surveyed firmly believes that negotiation learning has to do with teamwork. Even coupled with the second choice, the level of holding was not so strong as the previous beliefs.

5.3 Negotiation Training Contents in General

In this part we asked the respondents to rank the following negotiation related topics from 1 to 10 according to their own needs, with 1 referring to the item they feel is most in line and 10 as least with their interests. The descriptive statistics are as follows:

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Negotiation Training Contents

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
strategy	57	1.00	10.00	5.0000	3.08221

tactics	57	2.00	9.00	5.4737	2.53620
skills	57	2.00	10.00	6.0175	2.19163
emotions	57	1.00	10.00	5.4737	2.38376
roleplay	57	1.00	10.00	7.6491	2.49636
application	57	1.00	10.00	6.6842	2.35401
mindset	57	1.00	9.00	3.2807	1.90633
relationship	57	1.00	9.00	3.9649	2.43461
contract	57	1.00	10.00	3.9123	2.40001
communication	57	1.00	10.00	7.5439	3.09418
Valid N (listwise) 57					

The preferred contents of training, according to the survey results, are in the following order:

First: Developing the negotiation mindset

Second: Negotiating contract-related issues

Third: Establishing trust and building relationships

Fourth: Negotiation strategies in general

Fifth: Managing emotions during negotiations

Sixth: Negotiation tactics

Seventh: Negotiation skills

Eighth: Applying business negotiations skills to daily life

Ninth: Verbal and non-verbal communication in negotiations

Tenth: Role-playing exercises/training

From this ranking, we can interpret that managers from different countries seem to have similar understanding of the importance of developing a negotiation mindset. We notice interestingly that the surveyed managers pay almost the same attention to negotiation tactics and emotion management. We rank emotion management in front of negotiation tactics because of the standard deviation. Somewhat out of our expectation is that the managers view contract-related issues as well as establishing trust and building relationships among the top priority in negotiation training. We predicted that our trainees would like role-plays, but it turned out to be the contrary.

5.4 Preferences on the Negotiation Training Session

For this part we asked our informants to choose the most appropriate answer for each question according to their own situation. The questions are: 1) about the preferred length of the training session (in hours); 2) about the paying party for the training session; 3) about permission to participate in the negotiation training; 4) about the preferred ratio of negotiation theories to role-play exercises; and 5) about the focus of training on negotiation per se or developing a negotiation mindset in daily life. The answers we received are as follows: Table 7. About the Length of the Training Session (in Hours)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 (4-8)	32	56.1	56.1
	2 (9-16)	15	26.3	82.5
	3 (17+)	10	17.5	100.0
Total		57	100.0	100.0

The results we got for this question were that slightly more than half of the potential trainees would prefer that the training session be within 4 to 8 hours, and about a quarter of them would like it to be in the range of 9 to 10 hours. From these two answers, we can infer that the trainees want a condensed training session.

Table 8. About Payment Party

	Frequency		Percent Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 (company)	41	71.9	71.9
	2 (self)	13	22.8	22.8
	3 (other)	3	5.3	5.3
Total		57	100.0	100.0

The results of this question delighted us in that more than two thirds of the potential trainees' companies would pay for their negotiation training, but still we were somewhat surprised to learn that about a quarter of them would pay for the training fee themselves.

Table 9. About Obtaining Permission to Participate in the Training Session

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 (yes)	23	40.4	40.4
	2 (no)	10	17.5	17.5
	3 (nego.)	24	42.1	42.1
Total		57	100.0	100.0

The authors were pleasantly surprised to find that 40.4% of the surveyed managers gave an affirmative answer to the permission question, and interestingly, a slightly higher percentage of them (42.1%) responded that they would have to negotiate with their bosses to get permission to participate in the negotiation training session.

Table 10. About the Ratio (%) of Negotiation Theories to Role-Play Exercises

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 (50-50)	29	50.9	50.9
	2 (60-40)	18	31.6	31.6
	3 (40-60)	10	17.5	17.5
Total		57	100.0	100.0

For this question, the interpretation is that our trainees would prefer to have at least half of the training time to concentrate on negotiation theories. This runs contrary to our previous speculation that they would prefer more role-play exercises in the training session.

Table 11. About the Contents of Training – Negotiation Per Se or Transferability

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 (per se)	33	57.9	57.9	57.9
2 (trans.)	11	19.3	19.3	77.2
3 (comb.)	13	22.8	22.8	100.0
Total	57	100.0	100.0	

The result for this question seems to extend the ranking we got in part 3 of the questionnaire. In the former part, we found that the managers surveyed regard developing a negotiation mindset as the most important, while in the present part, the results turn out that the majority of them (57.9%+22.8%) wants the training session to concentrate on negotiation per se or a combination of negotiation per se and its transferability.

5.5 About the Chinese Businesspeople in General

This part of the questionnaire is to inquire on the informants' needs in negotiating with the Chinese businesspeople in general. For this part, we asked the respondents to rank the following negotiation considerations from 1 to 10 according to their own needs, with 1 referring to the item they feel is most important to understand, and 10 as they regard least important to understand:

The results we obtained for this section are as follows:

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics on Preferences Regarding Negotiating with the Chinese Business people

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
stylehabits	57	1.00	10.00	5.0877	3.21426
etiquettes	57	2.00	9.00	5.5263	2.57117
conbreaches	57	2.00	1.0.00	5.9649	2.12943
trustrelationship	57	1.00	10.00	5.5263	2.22891
viewnegotiation	57	1.00	10.00	7.2807	2.85829
finaldecmaking	57	1.00	10.00	6.8070	2.29470
vipdetermination	57	1.00	9.00	3.3158	1.86277
approwisdom	57	1.00	9.00	4.1228	2.39098
legalconcerns	57	1.00	1.0.00	3.8246	2.35374
insights	57	1.00	10.00	7.4545	3.20196
Valid N (listwise)	55				

According to the statistics we obtained, the preferences of the respondents are ranked as follows:

First: How to determine the ranking of VIPs in a Chinese negotiation team

Second: Legal concerns in negotiating with the Chinese business people

Third: Typical Chinese approach and wisdom concerning negotiations

Fourth: Their negotiation styles or habits in general

Fifth: Build trust and relationship with the Chinese business people

- Sixth:** The basic business etiquettes in dealing with Chinese business people
Seventh: Understand how Chinese business people make final decisions in a negotiation
Eighth: Their way of dealing with contract breaches
Ninth: Understand how Chinese business people view negotiations
Tenth: Insights into negotiations with Chinese during the pandemic

The researchers regard as noteworthy that the managers from the three countries seem to have a special interest in how to determine the VIP(s) in their counterpart team. The statement of “legal concerns in negotiating” ranks second, coinciding with the previous part on negotiation in general. The third item of “typical Chinese approach and wisdom concerning negotiations” is not in conformity with our prediction. Another point is that we rank “trust and relationship building” in front of “business etiquettes” because of their standard deviation.

5.6 Analysis of the Post-Training Questionnaire

For this questionnaire, we only received 49 replies from the trainees. The results to the questions we asked are as follows:

- 1) To the question of “Did the training content meet your expectations?” we received a unanimous “yes”. To the second part of the question “In what aspects and how” we got very few answers. The respondents who did reply to this question wrote things like “about the Chinese culture.”
- 2) To the question of “How would you rate the quality of the training (with 1 being least effective and 5 being most effective)?” we received five “3”, eleven “4”s, and the rest were “5”s.
- 3) We will omit the analysis for the 3rd question on the negotiation trainers for reasons of privacy.
- 4) To the question of “Did you learn anything new?”, we had all “yes”, but only a few stated in what. The answers given were most typically like “I didn’t know much about negotiation strategies/tactics, or the characteristics of negotiations with the Chinese in general.”
- 5) To the fifth question “Was the training relevant to your needs (with 1 denoting the least to meet your expectations, while 5 to the most)?” we had eleven “4” and the rest were “5”s.
- 6) To the next question “Would you recommend the training to colleagues?” we received another unanimous “yes”.
- 7) To the seventh question “Please share any recommendations you have to improve this program”, the trainees that had answered this question recommended that such negotiation trainings of the company be provided more often and at shorter intervals.
- 8) To the final question “Which of our more advanced negotiation training modules (described in the attached brochure) would you consider attending in the future?” we provided the following choices:

☐ No.1 Negotiation strategies

☐ No.2 Core skills in practical negotiations; questioning, persuading, listening, and emotion-controlling

☐ No.3 Negotiation versus cross-cultural communication

☐ No.4 Negotiation tactics

- ☐No.5 Interests and medium options in business negotiations
- ☐No.6 Common business dispute resolution processes and related documentation
- ☐No.7 Negotiation at work
- ☐No.8 Being a good negotiator – tactics, preparation, execution, follow-up
- ☐All

Nearly 75 percent of the trainees seemed to be interested in all of them, with the rest of preferences in the following order: No.3, No.1, No. 4, No.7, etc.

Since we did not receive much information on the effects or usefulness of this training, the authors made phone calls to the acquainted trainees, and the comments and suggestions these few provided on the phone proved to be insightful to the training provider. To cite a few:

- 1) “We found this training useful because it was offered really in time, that is, a week before the China Import Expo 2021 started. In other words, we were able to put into practice what we learned before we forgot it. We hope next time you could provide such timely training again.”
- 2) “I’ve got an MBA degree. Negotiation was one of the courses in my MBA program, and I thought I was quite a skilled negotiator, but the trainers provided me with new perspectives. So my comments are that one can never learn too much about negotiations, both about real cases and about negotiation theories.”
- 3) “It had never occurred to me that negotiations could be approached from the aspect of cross-cultural communication. This training has aroused my cultural awareness, and I found it very useful when I negotiated with my Chinese counterparts during the Expo.”
- 4) “Like Josh, I’ve also got an MBA degree, and negotiation was my favorite course. I felt that I had learned it quite well back then. However, this training has brushed up my negotiation knowledge. I like the part about the Chinese business wisdom and the beliefs of Chinese business people on negotiations.”

6. Implications for Negotiation Training

By evaluating the questionnaire results, we can derive the following implications for future negotiation training courses on dealing with Chinese business people:

- 1) Although business people from Europe and America come from different cultures, they see similar challenges in dealing with Chinese business people: they have difficulty identifying the hierarchies in the Chinese negotiation team and want to learn more about contract issues.
- 2) Respondents seem to be aware that negotiating is an important skill in our work environment that we all need, regardless of our current status or professional positions. Therefore, the development of negotiation-oriented thinking patterns – the term “negotiation mindset” is used for this – should have a priority role in negotiation training.
- 3) Surveys carried out in advance can be of great benefit for efficient negotiation training, since the need assessments of the negotiation trainers can run counter to the actual needs of the training participants.
- 4) In order for negotiation training programs/courses to be (more) effective, it is definitely important to identify trainees’ starting point and encourage autonomous use afterwards.
- 5) Post-training surveys are also important in that they can verify and check against what the trainers’ and the trainees’ expectations are to allow for improvements in later negotiation

trainings.

6) Negotiation trainings can be useful for all of us, no matter in professional situations or in daily life, because after all, we all engage in negotiation every day. The difference lies only in the scope, extent, and matter of negotiations.

7. Limitations of the Present Work and Prospects for Future Research

Due to the small number of questionnaires, the present study is limited both in its scope and its representativeness. By highlighting the needs of potential participants in negotiation training, we intend on the one hand to contribute to increasing the efficiency of such training, and on the other hand to stimulate further research in this area. Future research could, for example, compare the status quo of the trainees before and after the training to examine their progress towards meeting the participants' self-imposed goals. It would also be interesting to make a comparison of the perceived and expressed needs of the participants with their actual needs and thus to check to what extent they can assess their own needs. As far as the research method is concerned, qualitative interviews could also provide further insights into the specific needs of managers with regard to negotiation training.

References

- Beer, Michael; Finnström, Magnus, & Schrader, Derek. 2016. Why leadership training fails— and what to do about it. *Harvard Business Review* 94, 50–57.
- Bordone, R. C. & Viscomi, R. A. 2015. The wicked problem of rethinking negotiation teaching. *Negotiation Journal* 31(1), 65–81.
- Burke, L. A., & Hutchins, H. M. (2007). Training transfer: An integrative literature review. *Human Resource Development Review* 6, 263–296. doi: 10.1177/1534484307303035
- Chatzis, Nikos. 2011. Negotiation: The challenge of achieving a long-term relationship. <https://www.e-ir.info/2011/07/11/negotiation-the-challenge-of-achieving-a-long-term-relationship/>
- Coleman, P. T., & Lim, Y. Y. J. (2001). A systematic approach to evaluating the effects of collaborative negotiation training on individuals and groups. *Negotiation Journal* 17, 363–392. doi: 10.1111/j.1571-9979.2001.tb00246.x
- Ebner, N. 2016. Negotiation and conflict resolution education in the age of the MOOC. *Negotiation Journal* 32(3), 231–260.
- Hardegger, Daniel. 2021. *Verhandeln lernt man nicht aus Vorlesungen oder Büchern: Eine qualitative Analyse kultureller Verhandlungsherausforderungen Schweizer Organisationen und ihre Auswirkungen auf „hybride“ Weiterbildungsangebote – Eine Studie des Zentrums für Wettbewerbsrecht und Compliance und des Center for EMEA Business*. IMPRESSUM. Herausgeber: ZHAW School of Management and Law.
- Kirkpatrick, Donald. L. 1959. Techniques for evaluating training programs. *Journal of the ASTD* 13, 3–9.
- Lewicki, Roy. 1997. Teaching negotiation and dispute resolution in colleges of business: the state of the practice. *Negotiation Journal* 14, 253–69.
- Lewicki, Roy. 2002. New directions and issues in the teaching of conflict resolution. *Conflict Management. Higher Education Report* 2, 1–4.
- Lewicki, Roy. 2014. Teaching negotiation: the state of the practice. In Akoyo, Oluremi B.;

- Ashkenasy, Neal M.; Jehn, Karen A. (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Conflict Management* (pp. 493-507). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Moran S.; Bereby-Meyer Y., & Bazerman, M. (2008). Stretching the effectiveness of analogical training in negotiations: Teaching diverse principles for creating value. *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research* 1, 99–134. doi: 10.1111/j.1750-4716.2007.00006.x
- Movius, Hal. 2008. The effectiveness of negotiation training. *Negotiation Journal* 24, 509–531. doi: 10.1111/j.1571-9979.2008.00201.x
- Nadler, Janice; Thompson, Leigh, & Van Boven, Leaf. 2003. Learning negotiation skills: four models of knowledge creation and transfer. *Management Science* 49, 529-40.
- Poitras, J.; Hill, K.; V. Hamel, & Pelletier, F. 2015. Managerial mediation competency: A mixed-method study. *Negotiation Journal* 31(2), 105–129.
- Rollof, Michael E.; Putnam, Linda L., & Anatasious, Lefki. 2003. Negotiation skills. In Greene, J. & Burleson, B. (Eds.), *Handbook of Communication and Social Interaction Skills* (pp. 801-834). London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Smolinski, Remigiusz & Xiong, Yun. 2020. Teaching note: In search of master negotiators: A negotiation competency model. *Negotiation Journal* published by Wiley Periodicals LLC on behalf of President and Fellows of Harvard College. doi: 10.1111/nejo.12332.
- Soliman, Cherine; Stimac, Arnaud, & Antheaume, Nicolas. 2014. The long-term impact of negotiation training and teaching implications. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*. November 2014: 32(2). doi: 10.1002/crq.21110
- Susskind, Lawrence & Corburn, Jason. 2000. Using simulations to teach negotiation. In Wheeler, Michael (Ed.), *Teaching Negotiation: Ideas and Innovations* (pp. 285-310). Cambridge, MA: PON Books.
- Tang, Chaorong. 2006. Verhandlungen mit Chinesen müssen gut vorbereitet sein. *KMU-Magazin*. Nr. 10, Dezember/Januar 2006/2007, 92-93.
- Thomson, Peter. 1998. *Persuading Aristotle: The timeless art of persuasion in business, negotiation and the media*. Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Wheeler, M. 2006. Is teaching negotiation too easy, too hard, or both? *Negotiation Journal* 22(2), 187–197.

Author Note

Prof. Xiaoshu Zhu, who received her doctoral degree from the University of Bonn, Germany, in 2004, is a professor at the University of International Business and Economics, and has been dedicated to intercultural business communication teaching and research for almost two decades. She has been a Fulbright visiting scholar in the United States, she served as Chinese director of the Confucius Institute at UANL in Mexico, and she is currently Chinese director of the FAAP Business Confucius Institute in Brazil. Her multi-lingual background and her lasting interest in business negotiations have made her an active researcher in business communication among people from different countries.

Chang Gao has nearly four years of experience working as a product manager in the corporation of Mandarin Mathematics. She specializes in building metrics for quantitative measuring of performance and implementing measurement methodologies for various projects, including international negotiation training. Chang Gao received her Bachelor's degree in Finance from Baruch College, CUNY and her Master of Science degree in Mathematics from Fairfield University in the United States.