

Effective sales negotiation tactics:

A case study of the English language school market in Ireland

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Abstract

This paper provides for an overview of the literature as pertains to sales negotiation tactics. Particular focus is lent to what makes such sales negotiation tactics successful or not. However, its true value lies in its attempt to uncover such effective sales negotiation tactics within one sector of the economy. The sector in question is the English language school market in Ireland. Results suggest that effectiveness in tactical approaches is to some extent dependent on the nationality, age group, and sex of the other party to the negotiations.

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Chapter 1- INTRODUCTION

“We cannot negotiate with people who say what’s mine is mine and what’s yours is negotiable.”

John F. Kennedy

The Berlin Crisis: Radio and Television Address to the American People

(The White House, July 25, 1961)

We have begun our paper with a quotation by former United States president John Fitzgerald Kennedy, a man who was considered by many a formidable negotiator. The quote captures some of the most essential aspects of negotiation, namely that it is a process that involves two (or more) parties and typically requires movement by both (or all) those parties. Our focus in this paper is not on effective negotiation tactics in the world of nuclear diplomacy but on effective negotiation tactics in the commercial sector that whilst not involving such high stakes still command a great deal of significance in contemporary society and the modern economy.

As we proceed, we will attempt to outline in detail further aspects of negotiation to those mentioned above, and moreover seek to uncover what it is that constitutes effective sales negotiation tactics. This is an enormously challenging task and one to which we cannot reasonably add any great additional insight. Nonetheless, we will attempt to add to the literature in a modest fashion by providing a brief analysis of what negotiation tactics are and should be applied in the field of English language schools in Ireland. In other words, we will investigate the effectiveness of current-day tactics as applied to a relatively vibrant area of the Irish economy (we will attest to that assertion anon).

The paper is duly structured as follows. Firstly, we will outline some of the most pertinent and thought-provoking ideas pervading contemporary literature on the topic. In doing so, we will take particular care to identify and define what it is we mean by the individual terms in the title of this paper, namely effective sales negotiation tactics. We will subsequently proceed to clarify the methodological philosophy and procedures that will apply throughout our analysis. Having provided this background, we will be in a position to continue to our case study. This will, as just cited, constitute the main value of this paper and will take the form of a brief study of the sales negotiation environment as pertains to the English language market in Ireland. This will include a survey of English language students in respect to what they want from an English language course and their responsiveness or hostility to various sales techniques. Subsequent to this a descriptive statistical analysis of the responses of the survey participants will be conducted. On completing the analysis, we will offer some general concluding remarks and proffer some potential avenues of inquiry for future research. In our final chapter, we will comment briefly on our experiences of writing this paper, reflect on the limitations of our research and clarify what we have learnt by undertaking this project.

Chapter 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

As we mentioned in the introduction to the paper, it would perhaps be useful to define what it is we mean by some of the terms: *negotiation*, *tactics*, and indeed *effective*, before we begin to review the literature in regard to what are considered effective sales negotiation tactics. In this vein, we start with the term negotiation, something which will eventually allow us to proceed down the road to an investigation of negotiation theory and thus contextualization of the central concern of the paper.

So, what do we mean by *negotiation*? A host of widely similar, yet subtly different definitions exist. According to Saner it should be considered a process whereby two or more parties search for an agreement to establish what each should give or take to facilitate a transaction between each other. Essential elements of this interpretation are the following¹:

- two or more parties
- convergent and divergent interests
- a voluntary relationship
- a distribution or exchange of tangible or intangible resources
- a sequential, dynamic process
- incomplete information
- alterable values and positions as affected by persuasion and influence

From the perspective of Brown, negotiation is considered a process of communicative interaction between two or more people who possess different as well as common goals, and

¹ Saner, R. *The Expert Negotiator*, 2000.

which is intended to produce agreement or reconciliation, but with each party having the power to block the other to some degree².

What then would *effective* negotiation entail? According to Brown, the effective negotiation process should produce a wise agreement, meet the legitimate interests of both parties, resolve all conflicting goals and interests in a fair and just manner, be efficient and ameliorate or at least not hurt the relationship between both the parties³.

And what of the term *tactics* as pertaining to negotiation? These are the specific methods used by negotiators to gain the upper hand and they can involve deception and manipulation of their negotiating partner. Negotiating tactics should be carefully distinguished from the concept of negotiating strategies, which seek to outline and deliver overall objectives. We will clarify this distinction presently. With these definitions in tow, we are in a position to explore in more depth the theories behind why and how certain negotiation tactics are employed and why some are more or less successful than others.

Negotiation and Negotiation Theory

As aforementioned, the nature of this paper necessarily requires a treatment of negotiation theory. In the sections that follow we will seek to briefly outline some of the core aspects of this increasingly important field of study, and how it seeks to characterise various forms of negotiation.

Distributive versus integrative negotiation

We begin with the two broad types of negotiation typically identified in the literature, namely

² Brown, R. W., *Sales Negotiation skills*, 2019

³ Brown, R. W. (n.d.). *Sales Negotiation skills*, 2019

distributive negotiation and integrative negotiation. In the former, a fixed set of goods or services is to be allocated among the parties to the negotiation. In the purely distributive negotiation, there is a negative correlation of the objectives of the negotiating parties and the improvement of one side's situation occurs simultaneously with the deterioration of the other's⁴. In other words, distributive negotiation is a form of zero-sum game, a prime example being the process of haggling over the price of a product. Accordingly, participants in distributive negotiations regard those who they are negotiating with as adversaries as opposed to partners. Prospect theory, to which we will return in the following chapter, asserts that loss aversion is predominant in the minds of most people engaged in negotiation and thus, it is probable that such negotiations are typified by hostility and failure to reach compromise⁵.

In an integrative negotiation, as the name might suggest, encounters leave open the possibility that both sides might gain from the process. Typically, this requires more communication than in the distributive case, and more divulgence of their true intentions. It can often arise on the grounds that each side may have different outcome priorities⁶. As alluded to, in sharp contrast to the distributive case, integrative negotiations often involve compensation of both parties, or a win-win outcome. However, most negotiations involve a degree of both, and are sometimes described as mixed motive negotiations.

⁴ Barry, B. & Friedman, R. Bargainer characteristics in distributive and integrative negotiation, 2006.

⁵ Barry, B. & Friedman, R. Bargainer characteristics in distributive and integrative negotiation, 2006.

⁶ Barry, B. & Friedman, R. Bargainer characteristics in distributive and integrative negotiation, 2006.

Table 1: Distributive versus integrative negotiation⁷.

Basis for comparison	Distributive negotiation	Integrative negotiation
Meaning	The negotiation strategy in which a fixed amount of resources is divided between the parties	The type of negotiation in which a mutual problem-solving technique is used to enlarge assets that are to be divided between the negotiating parties
Strategy	Competitive	Collaborative
Resources	Fixed	Not fixed
Orientation	Win-lose	Win-win
Motivation	Self-interest and individual profit	Mutual interest and gain
Issue	Only one issue at a time is discussed	Discussing several issues at a time
Communication climate	Controlled and selective	Open and constructive
Relationship	Not a high priority	High priority

⁷ Surbhi, S. The difference between distributive negotiation and integrative negotiation, 2017

Power dynamics in the negotiation process

It should be clear that those involved in distributive and integrative negotiations experience rather different power dynamics, and this is of utmost interest to the negotiation theorist. The negotiating power of a party is clearly a relational concept dependent on the other party⁸, and one can see that in the following examples.

The best alternatives to a negotiated agreement, typically abbreviated to BATNA, constitute the options available to any negotiating party outside the negotiation in which they are engaged⁹. The more options available, the higher your negotiating power. The more attractive the options are, the higher your negotiating power¹⁰.

Information is power as the saying goes. The more information you possess than the other party to the negotiations, the more powerful you are. This can include knowledge of their BATNA. Finally, there is the *je ne sais quoi* factor. The ability of a negotiator to influence could be based on a whole host of factors, appearance, personality, experience etc. but with influence comes power. In the following section, we outline how these power dynamics sometimes emerge during the course of the negotiation process.¹¹

Stages in the negotiation process

Churchman provides a neat division of the stages of negotiation: 1) Preparation, 2) exploration, 3) bargaining and 4) closing¹². Let us outline Churchman's description of each of them in sequence. According to Churchman, the first stage, preparation, involves the identification of

⁸ Barry, B. & Friedman, R. Bargainer characteristics in distributive and integrative negotiation, 2006.

⁹ Barry, B. & Friedman, R. Bargainer characteristics in distributive and integrative negotiation, 2006.

¹⁰ Barry, B. & Friedman, R. Bargainer characteristics in distributive and integrative negotiation, 2006.

¹¹ Hall, L. *NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES FOR MUTUAL GAIN*, (1993).

¹² Churchman, D. *Negotiation Tactics*, 1995

issues, the definition of one's own needs, and learning as much as possible about each opponent. It may also include the distribution of roles if one is participating in the negotiation as part of a team¹³.

Chief among the roles in any team is the lead negotiator. This person is usually the one who does most of the talking, who controls when and what other team members say, and who has the greatest decision-making authority¹⁴. Other team roles can be distributed in a rather surprising fashion with those who speak the most during the negotiating potentially being rather junior members, chosen only on the basis of their language skills. Spokespeople for financial, legal, technical or scientific matters may also be members of the party¹⁵.

Further important roles are those of data/file manager and observer. The job of the former is somewhat self-explanatory, but effective file managers can play an important role by anticipating needs and adding to deception tactics by pretending that information is not at hand. The job of the latter is often assigned to a senior team member. Observers analyse opponents and watch out for opportunities to sow division in opposition ranks. They constantly assess and estimate objectives, deadlines, and minimum acceptable agreements. They listen out for any signals that other participants may not notice. Sometimes a second observer is also assigned to watch for inadvertent signals being displayed by his/her own team¹⁶. Finally, if needs require it, a press representative may be part of the team.

The second stage in Churchman's sequence is the exploratory phase. This phase involves the explanation of your needs and desires to your opponents, learning theirs, and establishing the

¹³ Churchman, D. Negotiation Tactics, 1995

¹⁴ Churchman, D. Negotiation Tactics, 1995

¹⁵ Churchman, D. Negotiation Tactics, 1995

¹⁶ Churchman, D. Negotiation Tactics, 1995

bargaining climate¹⁷. By way of example, Germaine advises that a professional salesperson can determine the customer's needs by asking open questions and by simply listening carefully¹⁸.

The third phase of the sequence is the bargaining phase. This phase consists predominantly of the offering of and discussion of specific proposals. Negotiators often begin by indicating that they fully understood their opponent's position, thus inspiring hope of eventual settlement. Nevertheless, they do outline remaining unacceptable elements. Their proposals frequently begin or end with explanations and justifications of their position¹⁹. Their proposals always include an offer, and sometimes conditions or deadlines but often they will appeal for a response from their opponent to engender a feeling that settlement is possible in due course²⁰.

The final stage is the closing. Various signals may indicate that it is time to move into the closing stage with tactics playing a large part in establishing the possibility of both sides reaching their objectives. However, as Churchman also notes, actual negotiating teams seldom follow such rigidly defining sequences. Negotiations tend to cycle back and forth among the phases, and revision of objectives may also be required²¹.

Negotiation styles

To this point in our treatment, we have covered the cooperative and non-cooperative nature of negotiation, we have covered the power dynamics at play during the negotiation, and we have addressed the various stages of the process. We have yet, however, to outline the potential strategies, and more pertinently, the potential tactics available to negotiators. Furthermore, we

¹⁷ Churchman, D. Negotiation Tactics, 1995

¹⁸ Germaine, K. Selling and negotiating skills for entrepreneurs 2011

¹⁹ Churchman, D. Negotiation Tactics, 1995

²⁰ Churchman, D. Negotiation Tactics, 1995

²¹ Churchman, D. Negotiation Tactics, 1995

have not outlined the general characteristics of those said negotiators that can influence their course of action. Let us set the concern of tactics straight shortly and let it suffice to provide a very brief definition of what we mean by negotiation strategy and behavioural styles here.

Negotiation strategy consists of the overarching objectives of the negotiators and these may indeed include the prior formulation of tactics one wishes to employ during any negotiation²². One must take care however, to acknowledge the differing approaches taken in the literature to the figure of negotiator. Whilst traditionally, most theories held to the rational actor model, where negotiation could be framed in game theoretical terms, today psychological insights, especially those that stem from prospect theory and behavioural economics and psychology are starting to seep into the literature.

Kenneth W. Thomas is one who did substantial work in the field of classifying negotiation styles of those involved. His most widely cited work identifies five styles and is framed within the context of the dual-concern model²³. That is to say, that Thomas asserts that the preferences of individual actors in a negotiation are guided by their respective concerns for the self and for the other, or to put it another way, they are guided by how assertive and empathetic they are and want to be. One should not get too hung up about the strict delineations between styles that he lists, given his acceptance that individuals could possess characteristics of more than one category.

The categories are as follows, 1) accommodating, 2) avoiding, 3) collaborating, 4) competing and 5) compromising. We will start naturally with the first of these, the accommodator. Accommodating individuals actively engage in the solution to the problems of their negotiating

²² Churchman, D. Negotiation Tactics, 1995

²³ Thomas, K.W. Conflict and conflict management: Reflections and update, 2006.

counterparts²⁴. They are highly observant of emotional cues, whether through body language or verbalized and thus can respond adeptly to changes in mood that less sensitive souls might miss²⁵. Herein lies one of their great weaknesses though. They can be somewhat thrown by a lack of emphasis being placed on the negotiation relationship. They can yield meekly seeking to preserve a positive relationship dynamic.²⁶ That is to say, they often refuse to maintain the courage of their convictions.

The second of Thomas's negotiator types is that of the avoider. These negotiators are probably best described as reluctant negotiators. They search for every opportunity to avoid negotiation²⁷. Just like the accommodator, the avoider is averse to confrontation. However, in contrast to the accommodator, the avoider can tolerate conflicts and will not intervene to diffuse the situation. Some of their most common tactics involve changing the subject, not turning up for meetings, absenteeism and simply agreeing to disagree²⁸.

Next on the list are the collaborators. These are the individuals, who by contrast to the previously cited individuals, enjoy the interactions brought about by negotiations. They enjoy creative problem solving and are still capable of great empathy with other parties. They are thus typically engaged in integrative negotiations, seeking to maximize the gains for all sides.

The fourth style of negotiator are the competitors, individuals who revel in negotiations but not in the same way as the collaborators. Negotiation offers the competitor the chance to compete and

²⁴ Thomas, K.W. Conflict and conflict management: Reflections and update, 2006.

²⁵ Thomas, K.W. Conflict and conflict management: Reflections and update, 2006.

²⁶ Thomas, K.W. Conflict and conflict management: Reflections and update, 2006.

²⁷ Thomas, K.W. Conflict and conflict management: Reflections and update, 2006.

²⁸ Bayazit, M. & Mannix, E.A. Should I stay or should I go?, 2003.

display their strategic impulses²⁹. They can often dominate negotiations and they are sometimes oblivious the relationship dynamics involved. In sharp relief to collaborators, competitors as one might reasonably expect are typically found engaged in distributive zero-sum negotiations. Intimidatory tactics are often the order of the day for the competitor and so too is abuse, both of the verbal, and more physical kinds³⁰.

The last of Thomas's categories is the compromiser. This category of negotiator covers those people who almost to a fault desire the speedy resolution of negotiation. They seek equality and justice for all those engaged in the process, but their enthusiasm for swift completion means that sub-optimal results often emerge³¹.

Alternatives to Thomas's stylistic categorisation exist, a notable example being that of the Harvard Negotiation Project. (ibid) Their classification identifies three negotiation styles, namely soft bargainers, hard bargainers and principled bargainers³². The first of these, the soft bargainers, are very much akin to the accommodators of Thomas's model, seeking to avoid the confrontation and competition they view negotiation as inevitably producing. The hard bargainers, in stark contrast, are more akin to the competitors of the above cited model, viewing negotiators on the other side as rivals and enemies³³. Also, like soft bargainers, they find it difficult to separate the person from the problem but their approach is duly to engage in somewhat robust and adversarial tactics during negotiations³⁴. The principled bargainers are geared toward integrative negotiation, so much so that they regularly avoid settling on a particular point of principle. However, the

²⁹ Thomas, K.W. Conflict and conflict management: Reflections and update, 2006.

³⁰ Thomas, K.W. Conflict and conflict management: Reflections and update, 2006.

³¹ Thomas, K.W. Conflict and conflict management: Reflections and update, 2006.

³² Thomas, K.W. Conflict and conflict management: Reflections and update, 2006.

³³ Thomas, K.W. Conflict and conflict management: Reflections and update, 2006.

³⁴ Thomas, K.W. Conflict and conflict management: Reflections and update, 2006.

principled bargainer is capable of divorcing the person from the problem, allowing them to pursue choices based not on emotional attachment or competitive impulse, but rather on cold objective criteria³⁵.

The rational actor and game theory

The last section addressed the various styles of negotiator that exist. To some extent this spoke to the question of how psychology affects negotiation. In this section, we will briefly examine another perspective of negotiation, namely its status as a game. In other words, we will present a short outline of game theory and its relevance to negotiation. To some degree, we have already noted this in our discussion of distributive versus integrative negotiation. Both, you will recall, were referred to alternatively as win-win or win-loss games.

Game theory is a theory concerned with the modelling of strategic and tactical interactions between two or more players within the context of a definitive set of rules or laws and possible outcomes. Just as with negotiation in general, game theory is found in a variety of contexts, finding utility in psychology, politics, sports, and possibly most commonly in the economic and commercial sphere. It is taught in many of the world's leading centres of financial education and has proven a valuable instrument in assisting in the analysis of commercial negotiation processes and decisions. Indeed, game theory as a scientific field of note only began to emerge in the middle of the twentieth century, most notably with the work of Hungarian-American mathematician John von Neumann, and this relative novelty is one of the factors that drives its contemporary popularity³⁶.

As Osborne (2004) notes, each time a situation arises in which two or more parties are engaged in

³⁵ Thomas, K.W. Conflict and conflict management: Reflections and update, 2006.

³⁶ Osborne, M.J. An introduction to game theory, 2004

an interaction that involves pay-outs and quantifiable consequences, game theory can be applied to determine the most probable and efficient results. Let us be precise about some of the terminology one is likely to encounter³⁷.

A game in game theory is classed as a set of circumstances for which their result is dependent on the actions and reactions of two or more participants or players. The players themselves are strategic and or tactical decision makers. The strategy a player employs is a total plan of action, possibly including an arsenal of tactics, given the set of possible outcomes laid out in front of them. The pay-out to a player is the result of playing such a game, while the information set is a label for the information available to a player at any moment throughout the course of the game³⁸.

As the title to this section attests and as one no doubt surmised given the definitions in the previous paragraph, game theory assumes, as does a large proportion of economic and social scientific theory today, that a rational actor is involved at all times. That is to say, players are not guided by emotion, and are entirely focused on maximizing their advantage³⁹, i.e. gain the optimal pay-out. This implies that players or at least the game itself has factored in all potential outcomes.

In the sales negotiation environment, sales people strive to optimise their pay-outs in a number of ways, but one crucial component in determining their ability to do so is the degree to which both or either side are in possession of a sufficient degree of information. This will necessarily guide both their strategy and tactical application of that strategy. Strategic games of this sort comprise

³⁷ Osborne, M.J. An introduction to game theory, 2004

³⁸ McNulty, D. The Basics of Game Theory 2019

³⁹ McNulty, D. The Basics of Game Theory 2019

of interactions between players who both contemplate the best plan of action⁴⁰. In other words, there is room to move on both sides. What actions the customer will take given this information will be purely based on the information at hand and the value they place on particular results.

One might be critical of a theoretical framework that reduces tactics and negotiating processes to mere rational action in the light of information control, and the rational actor model upon which it rests has certainly proven remarkably controversial. Nonetheless, its focus on pay-outs and information imbalances, and its clarity of framing can provide food for thought during the negotiation process. With those brief asides on the personalities of negotiators and the framing of negotiation contexts complete, we are now in a position to address the central focus of our paper, i.e. negotiation tactics. In the following section we address these in a little more detail.

Negotiation tactics

We now return once more to negotiation tactics with our focus this time not on definitions but on outlining a significant number of practical examples. As we shall witness, negotiation tactics are typically, although by no means exclusively so, one of the methods of choice for those engaged in distributive negotiation⁴¹.

Absent authority:

Such a tactic allows one of the negotiating parties to claim that the figure or body of authority is not present at the negotiation. This is an asymmetric negotiation scenario whereby the arbiter of rejection or acceptance is not available for negotiation.⁴²

⁴⁰ McNulty, D. The Basics of Game Theory 2019

⁴¹ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁴² Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

Active silence:

This tactic, also known colloquially as the awkward silence, is introduced so as maximize discomfort for the opposing party and encourage them to make the next step⁴³.

Auctions:

In an auction, multiple parties are pitted against each other. When one party believes they could lose out, their desire for the product or service often increases. To some extent, one might view this as a type of loss aversion, something we will briefly return to in a following chapter. A sense of competitiveness can in itself help to drive up prices⁴⁴.

Bigger picture:

This tactic is employed to steer one's negotiating opponent away from minor differences by claiming they are insignificant, while simultaneously highlighting the overall context⁴⁵.

Bogey:

Again, this is a deceptive ploy on the part of one negotiating team. They introduce an issue (or bogeyman) that they claim is of great importance to them only so as to generate the sense that they have made a major concession later in the negotiation. Practical examples include real estate customers suggesting to an agent or seller that a previous property had a large garage, when in reality it was of no interest to them at all. It can be countered by ignoring it⁴⁶.

⁴³ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁴⁴ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁴⁵ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁴⁶ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

Brinkmanship:

This is a technique whereby one of the negotiating parties is vehemently set on the achievement of specific objectives to the point where their opponent is forced to agree or walk away from the negotiation. In other words, one party is pushed to the brink of what they would accept⁴⁷.

Cards on the table:

This is a more integrative negotiating tactic and one that is anchored in trust between the negotiating parties. Here one states one's position and objectives honestly⁴⁸.

Change up:

A change up involves a substitution of your lead negotiator in an effort to appear that your team are starting afresh.⁴⁹

Chicken:

This well-known tactic is akin to brinkmanship. In a game of chicken, negotiators propose extreme options to force their opponent to back down or chicken out so to speak. Often the proposal is a bluff⁵⁰.

Compromise:

This tactic focuses on identifying proposals for which both negotiating parties need to give up

⁴⁷ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁴⁸ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁴⁹ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁵⁰ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

something⁵¹.

Defence in depth:

This negotiation tactic is predicated on a negotiating team forming various layers of decision-making authority, through which a negotiating opponent has to get. At every layer, concessions may be exacted⁵².

Deadlines:

Again, a rather self-evident tactic, here one party provides a time limit for a final decision, in so doing pressurizing their opponent into a swift and often hasty reply⁵³.

Delay:

Delaying is another time-related tactic. Given access to enough time, one party can begin to postpone and interrupt the negotiation process or indeed, merely indicate the possibility of doing so. By way of example, customers can often avail of the opportunity afforded them by salespeople having to meet deadlines by just dangling the possibility of delay⁵⁴.

Divide and conquer:

This is yet another well-known tactic, where one negotiating party attempts to foment hostility and disarray amongst the members of the opposing group⁵⁵.

⁵¹ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁵² Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁵³ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁵⁴ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁵⁵ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

Dry well:

This tactic, as you might expect, requires one party to display the fact that they have nothing else to offer – their well is well and truly dry⁵⁶.

Escalating demands:

This tactic is particularly hostile and necessitates responding to concessions with ever-increasing requests and demands⁵⁷.

Fear of missing out:

This tactic is used a great deal by retailers in the form of stock clearances or buy by a certain date offers. The implication is that if one does not agree to the offer or price now, the deal will be put at risk⁵⁸.

Fear, uncertainty and doubt:

This tactic necessitates negotiators labelling alternatives to their proposals as somehow of dubious character. Large retailers can avail of this tactic when in competition with smaller retailers⁵⁹.

Final push:

As the name suggests, the tactic of a final push requires a negotiating party to request a minor

⁵⁶ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁵⁷ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁵⁸ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁵⁹ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

concession, such as an additional company perk, just before signing on the dotted line⁶⁰.

Flinch:

The name of this tactic is once again highly suggestive. This tactic involves signalling, often by physically flinching, that you are taken aback by your opponent's proposal or offer⁶¹.

Give out wins:

In such circumstances, negotiations are structured so as to convince the other side that they have won. Again, listing products at higher prices permits the customer the belief that they have come out well from the negotiation⁶².

Good guy/ bad guy:

This old police interrogation routine of good cop/ bad cop is somewhat clichéd on screen nowadays. Nevertheless the tactic still has merits in the world of negotiation, encouraging cooperation with a more amenable negotiating partner when faced with a more hostile approach⁶³.

Highball/ lowball:

This tactic necessitates the initial setting of extreme proposals, in an effort to provide an anchor for movement. It has the advantage of allowing that party to seem more reasonable when they make subsequent concessions, but it runs the risk of immediately turning off the opposing party

⁶⁰ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁶¹ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁶² Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁶³ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

to any deal⁶⁴.

Higher authority:

Higher authority is a tactic that implies that one negotiating party has access to the immediate superiors of the other party. In establishing that in the minds of the other party, they can sometimes feel pressured into making a decision⁶⁵.

Late objections:

Similar to the final push tactic, late objections tactics involve the introduction of new barriers to a deal at the final moment⁶⁶.

Mirroring:

Mirroring involves the imitation of the gestures, mannerisms, and or speech of the opposing party so as to foster a sense of trust between groups. It can cause the recipient to believe that their opponent is very attentive to and understanding of their needs⁶⁷.

Nibbling:

This tactic requires asking for additional minor concessions just before the deal closes. In essence it is simply a repetitive final push, somewhat akin to the Lieutenant Columbo line, ``just one more thing``⁶⁸.

⁶⁴ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁶⁵ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁶⁶ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁶⁷ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁶⁸ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

Objections:

The objection tactic is one of the less nuanced tactics listed here, and merely involves mentioning why the deal on offer is not conducive to your needs⁶⁹.

Objection handling:

This represents the other side of the coin to the tactic of objections (or objection raising as we might call it). It is a rather nebulous all-encompassing term and can include addressing the concerns raised by objector, or simply ignoring them. As one no doubt supposes, this is a highly context-specific tactic⁷⁰.

Pitches:

The tactic of pitching offers involves the outlining of the pluses of agreeing to a deal and the minuses of not agreeing⁷¹.

Question goals:

This tactic necessitates one party questioning the objectives of the other, not only to get clarification but also on occasion to sow seeds of doubt in their minds regarding their position.⁷²

Request an offer:

In certain contexts, it may be advantageous for negotiating parties to really cajole their opponents into making an offer. It immediately gives them access to the train of thought of their opponent

⁶⁹ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁷⁰ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁷¹ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁷² Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

and puts one in a more dominant position vis-à-vis information access.⁷³

Reversals:

This tactic involves reverse psychology. The negotiating party asserts the reverse of what they want. This can lead to more possibility for deception further into the negotiation process⁷⁴.

Selective listening:

This tactic involves one chooses to hear what one wants to hear rather than facing the reality. One might be reminded of a current day world leader for a prime example⁷⁵.

Snow job:

The motivation for this moniker is the image of an avalanche of information. One negotiating party seeks to overwhelm its opponent by flooding them with so much information they have problems processing and prioritizing it all. The use of jargon can also add to the confusion⁷⁶.

Standout offers:

This tactic covers the situation where negotiating parties propose various unremarkable offers along with a more standout offer. This is in the hope that their opponents will be attracted to it⁷⁷.

Take back:

Once more the name of this tactic is suggestive of its meaning. In the take back scenario, the

⁷³ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁷⁴ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁷⁵ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁷⁶ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁷⁷ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

negotiator gives something only for it to be withdrawn later in the process⁷⁸.

Which of these tactics constitute effective sales negotiation tactics one might ponder? Which would prove effective? In that regard, we recall Brown's description of effective negotiation as that which would produce a wise agreement, meet the legitimate interests of both parties, resolve all conflicting goals and interests in a fair and just manner, be efficient and ameliorate or at least not hurt the relationship between both the parties⁷⁹. Is this true in light of the analysis of negotiation theory we have just conducted? It would seem not, given the competitive nature of purely distributive negotiation say. Maybe we should be restricted to saying that effective negotiation can be viewed from the vantage point of one side of the negotiation table, and of both sides. Therefore, we could more readily accept that for at least one party in a zero-sum game of negotiation, there seems to be effective tactics one may employ.

Sales negotiation

The last of the topics we need to address before we proceed to our analysis is that of sales negotiations. As of this point, we have addressed the nature of negotiation, negotiation tactics, and very briefly addressed the nature of effective negotiation tactics. Nonetheless, we might wish to go one further and identify whether sales negotiations display a unique character versus all other types of negotiation.

As Spacey declares, "sales is the process of establishing relationships, discovering needs, presenting solutions and closing deals. It is a branch of marketing that is focused on the revenue critical phase of engaging customers to reach commercial agreements"⁸⁰. In the following

⁷⁸ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

⁷⁹ Brown, R. W. (n.d.). *Sales Negotiation skills*, 2019

⁸⁰ Spacey, J. Examples of Negotiation Tactics, 2019.

treatment we borrow liberally from Perkov and Primorac (2016) and their treatment of negotiation as a crucial component of sales⁸¹.

Their analysis begins with the observation that in the commercial realm, negotiation is a process that is conducted between management and staff, employers and employees, professionals and clients, within and between companies, and between agencies and the public at large, and can relate to ``trade transaction, contracts or bargains of any kind``⁸². Negotiation, is, akin to our outline earlier, to be viewed as a ``problem-solving process in which two or more people voluntarily discuss their differences and attempt to reach a joint decision on their common concerns``.⁸³ Despite its focus on compromise, each party nevertheless, strives to achieve advantages throughout and especially at the end of the process. Typically, this process involves frequent interaction and communication between the parties so they can reach the most optimal solution for both parties. However, as Gosselin notes, ``this interaction stops to be negotiation when one party is physically, psychologically or politically incapable of saying “no”⁸⁴.

The authors then proceed to cite Lisanin (2004) and their stress on the importance of the preparation and planning phase of sales negotiation. Indeed, they state that this stage contributes in the range of seventy to ninety percent to the eventual success of sales negotiations. This certainly causes pause for thought in light of our emphasis here on tactical skills. Let us explore in a little more depth this stage and the subsequent sequencing of the sales negotiation framework they outline in the following paragraphs⁸⁵.

⁸¹ Perkov, D. & Primorac, D. Business Negotiation as a crucial component of sales, 2016.

⁸² Perkov, D. & Primorac, D. Business Negotiation as a crucial component of sales, 2016.

⁸³ Perkov, D. & Primorac, D. Business Negotiation as a crucial component of sales, 2016.

⁸⁴ Gosselin, T. Practical negotiating: tools, tactics and techniques, 2007

⁸⁵ Lisanin, M. T. Pregovaranje kao poslovni proces koji dodaje vrijednost, 2004

So, what does the preparation and planning phase of sales negotiation consist of for the authors? Well, primarily, its role is to indicate and examine all sources of information regarding the sale, including not only the customer, but the organizational requirements of the company one is working for and a host of other issues. Furthermore, during this phase, one negotiating team seeks to identify the wishes, exigencies and opportunities sought by the opposing party to the negotiation. They warn that both sides need to enter the negotiation recognizing these factors; in other words, this phase provides an opportunity to reflect on the logic in the said requirements and desires of their counterparts, and therein lies the foundation for the capacity for integrative negotiation. That is not to say that distributive negotiation strategies and tactics might not emerge during the process or any integrative negotiation would necessarily succeed, but that it permits of at least the possibility of there emerging common ground.

Moreover, the authors highlight the desirability of pre-deciding what should and should not be disclosed during the negotiations. A minimum acceptable outcome to the negotiation should be laid out and if the situation demands it a maximum return also. Anticipation of possible route maps to resolution or indeed potential problems to success should be a core part of the planning stage.

The authors are also careful to note distinctions in the possible preparation plans of negotiators of a distributive inclination versus those who will engage in an integrative approach. This might lead to different attitudes toward seemingly trivial concerns such as determining the location in which negotiations will take place, considering the numbers of people who should be involved in the negotiating process, and the identifying what roles they should assume.

The lead sales negotiator in both circumstances should nevertheless, be careful to provide clarity

to other negotiating team members in regard to the potential for alternative negotiating styles, provide a deadline for achieving agreement, either fully or partly, and provide notice to them on what flexibility will be permitted in the negotiation process or what concessions may or may not occur. They may also wish to be precise about any potential recourse to a non-negotiated settlement, i.e. what is the best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA) between the groups, and finally, they may wish to identify, especially for more inexperienced team members zones of possible agreement (ZOPA) for which they should dedicate particular attention to throughout the negotiations to come.

The next stage of the negotiation process is evidently going to be the negotiation session itself. All attempts to reduce anxiety and to express a desire for a successful should be relayed to the other party right from the outset. These sessions to a large extent essentially begin with bureaucratic concerns such as ratification of agendas, presentation of relevant discussion points for the negotiation, and the outlining of both parties starting points, before they proceed to the meat on the bones of the interaction.

The following phases concern the presentation of concrete proposals and discussions thereof. During this phase, the elucidation of arguments, possible answers to problems, concessions and other sundry items are ultimately exchanged with the other negotiating party. Different points of view begin to emerge, and the authors suggest that negotiators should at all times be mindful that for any concessions they provide, they should extract at least an equivalent form of redress.

The author's preference for the integrative approach is nonetheless rather apparent. They cite Cohen's assertion that ``agreements or solutions are mutually beneficial and satisfying``⁸⁶ in the

⁸⁶ Cohen, S. Negotiating skills for managers, 2002.

context of the ``supportive and pleasant environment`` of an integrative negotiation setting⁸⁷. Both sides get to win of course. By contrast, those engaged in a distributive negotiation or those inclined to do so, are minded to prepare various traps for their opponents, and to ponder a number of ways in which to establish a power dynamic in their favour. They will seek out ``manipulative techniques which will help achieve pressure and dominance over the other side``⁸⁸.

As they note, such approaches cannot possibly contribute to the construction of confidence or nurturing of a trusting relationship between both parties to the negotiation process. Recourse to the ``use of pressure, unverified information and weak arguments`` will necessarily lead to the possibility of public discrediting and the furthering of distrust. To some extent the authors come close to enjoining the readers to maintain personal integrity. This is for the expressed purpose of keeping open the chance to migrate from a distributive negotiating environment to an integrative one. They are also keen to note the importance for negotiating parties of knowing when to quit negotiations in time so as not to let temporary hostilities or deadlock hinder the possibility of finding a more favorable solution in the long term.

The authors next turn to the strategies and best practices and tactics of sales negotiations. Again, they underscore the necessity for negotiators to gain an understanding of the other side`s point of view. However, they also highlight a need to comprehend their counterpart`s strategic and tactical traits. They then cite the work of Grant and their outline of the best practices, best strategies and most effective tactics to achieve success in the negotiation process⁸⁹.

These are as follows; firstly, the sense in sharing information. Grant states that negotiation is

⁸⁷ Cohen, S. Negotiating skills for managers, 2002.

⁸⁸ Cohen, S. Negotiating skills for managers, 2002.

⁸⁹ Grant, A. Give and take: why helping others drives our success, 2014.

often characterized by negotiators being on their guard and reluctant to reveal their hand to their negotiating counterpart⁹⁰. Grant counters that while many believe that this is the smart course of action, again trust is not fostered, and outcomes tend to be unnecessarily less optimal⁹¹. Parties to negotiations, he claims are generally conducive to trusting those who demonstrate trust in them. In other words, Grant emphasizes the golden rule of doing unto others what one would like done unto themselves⁹². This openness can he says be extended, and indeed may merely include, such seemingly unimportant information as hobbies, personal frailties, all in an effort to create the positive atmosphere required of an integrative negotiating environment.

On a related point, Grant points to the desirability of ranking one`s priorities and letting the other side know this ranking⁹³. This, he claims, allows for the opportunity for both parties to be in full possession of information that is particularly important to the establishment of compromise. With such transparency, there is more chance for a successful outcome to emerge.

He then points to the self-same advice mentioned by Perkov and Primorac themselves, i.e. that a negotiator should always enter a negotiation knowing target prices and walk-away terms⁹⁴. The target price is that price over which their negotiating counterpart will refuse to accept and will end negotiations. Grant posits that allowing the other side to open the bidding so to speak is a tactical mistake⁹⁵. Making the first offer, he states, although at first glance seems to offer the other side an information advantage, nevertheless, demonstrates clarity of purpose and sets one

⁹⁰ Grant, A. Give and take: why helping others drives our success

⁹¹ Grant, A. Give and take: why helping others drives our success

⁹² Grant, A. Give and take: why helping others drives our success

⁹³ Grant, A. Give and take: why helping others drives our success

⁹⁴ Grant, A. Give and take: why helping others drives our success

⁹⁵ Grant, A. Give and take: why helping others drives our success, 2014.

up in an apparently dominant position in the negotiation⁹⁶. Furthermore, it anchors the price around which negotiations will invariably fluctuate around. Care should be taken to provide a good initial (anchor) price. The example of real-estate sales are raised where a below-market price might conjure up in the mind of a buyer the image of a dilapidated property, while a too highly priced property might dissuade any interest from potentially interested parties. Ideally, a buyer in such a scenario should offer a first bid close to but not at the guide price.

The next sales tactic to become familiar with and adapt to, according to Grant, concerns situations where it has proven impossible to issue the first offer in a sales negotiation process⁹⁷. Extreme care must be taken not to be seduced by cognitive biases such as the anchoring effect. The negotiator needs to be guarded about going too low, too quickly when responding to any initial bid. The initial response should be made based on the information the negotiating team were in possession of prior to the onset of negotiation. Indeed, if there is a wide discrepancy in bids, the second bidder might well succeed in re-anchoring the sales negotiation in favour of their price by indicating the unworkability of the first bidder's initial offer.

In allusion to a point made earlier, Grant points to the desire of every negotiator to feel they came out well from the negotiations⁹⁸. ``Every buyer wants to feel they got a good deal [and] every seller wants to feel as if they drove a hard bargain``⁹⁹. In other words, parties to the negotiation process feel more satisfaction when there is some give and take and to and fro. In a somewhat surprising piece of advice, he suggests that first offers should be rejected in accordance with the

⁹⁶ Grant, A. Give and take: why helping others drives our success, 2014.

⁹⁷ Grant, A. Give and take: why helping others drives our success, 2014.

⁹⁸ Grant, A. Give and take: why helping others drives our success, 2014.

⁹⁹ Perkov, D. & Primorac, D. Business Negotiation as a crucial component of sales, 2016.

prior observation, even if they meet the desired objectives¹⁰⁰.

Finally, he points to the necessity to establish a strategic basis upon which the negotiator can confidently base their tactical approach. Some of the various strategies for negotiation that he quotes are as follows¹⁰¹:

1. Problem solving: both parties commit to examining and discussing issues in detail when entering into long-term agreement which warrant scrutiny.
2. Contending: persuade your own negotiating party to offer concessions to your desired outcome if you are in one-off negotiations.
3. Yielding: concede a point that is of little importance to you but seems vital to the other side.
4. Compromising: both negotiating parties forgo their ideal objectives.
5. Inaction: buy for time to ponder the other side's proposals, or to gather more information and change tactical tack.

The work of Perkov and Primorac (2016) points to some of the particular issues a sales negotiator versus a non-sales negotiator experiences¹⁰². Indeed, granted their primary analysis is rather limited in scope, namely an investigation of fifty Croatian sales negotiators and their approaches to sales negotiations, they do provide some evidence of the importance of not only self-confidence and a positive demeanour, but also tactical skill sets in the drive for successful negotiations¹⁰³. The reader should be keenly aware of the biases in the literature just cited, but their citing of tactics and tactical awareness as keys to negotiation success is noteworthy and

¹⁰⁰ Perkov, D. & Primorac, D. Business Negotiation as a crucial component of sales, 2016.

¹⁰¹ Grant, A. Give and take: why helping others drives our success, 2014.

¹⁰² Perkov, D. & Primorac, D. Business Negotiation as a crucial component of sales, 2016.

¹⁰³ Perkov, D. & Primorac, D. Business Negotiation as a crucial component of sales, 2016.

ubiquitous in sales negotiation literature. That concludes our investigation of the relevant literature. In the following chapter, we address the nature of our analysis hereon and the philosophy underpinning it.

Chapter 3 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

In this chapter, we will outline in detail the research methodology and methods we will follow during the course of our analysis. However, before we begin let us underscore the difference between research methodology and research methods that is commonly misconstrued. In simple terms, we might say that the former provides the justification for the particular research tools or techniques one uses, i.e. the methods. The following table based once more on that presented by Surbhi does a relatively good job at summarizing the differences¹⁰⁴.

Table 2: Research Method versus Research Methodology

Basis of comparison	Research method	Research Methodology
Meaning	Implies the techniques employed by the researcher to conduct research	Signifies the way to efficiently solve research problems
What is it?	Behaviour and instrument used in the selection and construction of the research technique	Science of understanding how research is performed methodically

¹⁰⁴ Surbhi, S. The difference between distributive negotiation and integrative negotiation, 2019.

Encompasses	Carrying out experiments, testing, surveys etc.	Studying different techniques which can be utilized in the performance of experiments, tests, surveys etc.
Comprise of	Different investigative techniques	Entire strategy towards achievement of objective
Objective	To discover solution to the research problem	To apply correct procedures so as to determine solutions

So now let us address the actual methods we will duly apply during our case study. Research of the social scientific variety found in this paper can be categorized into two broad categories, qualitative and quantitative. As one might suspect from the name, the former is a scientific method of observation which seeks to collect non-numerical data¹⁰⁵. It attempts to uncover the answers to why and how phenomena occur in contrast to how often they occur, which is the purview of quantitative research¹⁰⁶. One particular variety of qualitative research is the case study, an example of which one finds in this paper later. This method of enquiry in theory provides potential for more in-depth analysis.

Whereas qualitative research is primarily concerned with motivations and underlying attitudes, the central concern of quantitative research is the establishment of generalized numerical trends

¹⁰⁵ Babbie, E. The Basics of Social Research, 2014.

¹⁰⁶ Berg, B.L. & Howard, L. Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences, 2012.

and patterns. To some extent, in-depth understanding gives way to widespread applicability¹⁰⁷. In this paper, we attempt to capture some of the benefits of both approaches. In the following paragraphs we will outline what approaches we will specifically employ and highlight some of their potential problems.

As alluded to above, the first of these is a brief qualitative analysis of the nature of sales techniques that English language schools in Ireland seem to have adopted. This will not directly address the issue of how effective the negotiation tactics they employ are, but it will hopefully present us with an insight as to what their beliefs in that regard are.

Let us now turn to considerations of the statistical nature of the analysis that follows. As we hinted at earlier, our case study of the English language school market in Ireland also includes analysis of the responses to a questionnaire that we sent out to current and prospective language school students at a mid-price range school in Dublin. We are thus minded to present some of the potential advantages and disadvantages of employing the humble questionnaire.

We will begin with the advantages and in particular with those that pertain to the research we carried out. Firstly, they are typically an inexpensive method of compiling data. In our case, the costs involved nothing more than printing the questionnaires. Secondly, they provide a readily available option to acquire vast amounts of data relatively easily. We were, for example, in a position to survey the opinions of approximately two hundred respondents in just two days. Thirdly, even without deep statistical knowledge, one is often able to uncover trends and important insights just with a cursory glance at the results. The fourth advantage we might cite has already been alluded to, i.e. that they are eminently scalable. Fifthly, if carried out with

¹⁰⁷ Babbie, E. *The Basics of Social Research*, 2014.

quantitative analysis in mind, they offer an efficient way of categorizing large amounts of respondents and respondent answers. Sixthly and finally, they can offer the potential for anonymity for the respondent if so required, something we will come back to shortly.

The literature is replete with examples of the potential pitfalls of using questionnaires as a source of data collection¹⁰⁸. One example we might cite is perhaps best illustrated by the old British sitcom based on the interactions of the civil service and government *Yes, Prime Minister* and a dialogue in the said show between the cabinet secretary Sir Humphrey Appleby and the principal private secretary to the UK prime minister, Bernard Wooley¹⁰⁹. We can think of nothing that captures the potential deliberate and subconscious manipulations that survey questionnaires may contain than the following conversational exchange on the topic of leading questions.

In the scene in question, Sir Humphrey seeks to demonstrate that the government can sway survey respondents to both support and at other times oppose the reintroduction of national service for young adults. We begin with Sir Humphrey's attempt at garnering a positive response.

Appleby: *Are you worried about the number of young people without jobs?*

Wooley: *Yes*

Appleby: *Are you worried about the rise in crime amongst teenagers?*

Wooley: *Yes*

Appleby: *Do you think there is a lack of discipline in our comprehensive schools?*

¹⁰⁸ Phillips, M. Problems of questionnaire investigation, 1941.

¹⁰⁹ Gordon, D.T. , 2014.

Wooley: *Yes*

Appleby: *Do you think young people welcome some authority and leadership in their lives?*

Wooley: *Yes*

Appleby: *Do you think they'll respond to such a challenge?*

Wooley: *Yes*

Appleby: *Would you be in favour of reintroducing national service?*

Wooley: *Yes*

And now for his attempt at a contrary response.

Appleby: *Are you worried about the danger of war?*

Wooley: *Yes*

Appleby: *Are you worried about the growth of armaments?*

Wooley: *Yes*

Appleby: *Do you think there is a danger in giving young people guns and teaching them how to kill?*

Wooley: *Yes*

Appleby: *Do you think it is wrong to force people to take up arms against their will?*

Wooley: *Yes*

Appleby: *Would you oppose the reintroduction of national service?*

Wooley: *Yes*

And there you have it – two diametrically opposed positions. This oft-cited comedic example is an illustrative dramatic portrayal of the problems the author of a questionnaire is bound to encounter. Such problems are manifestations of what behavioural economists and psychologists refer to as the framing effect.¹¹⁰ A now oft-cited example from the world of medicine is rather more serious and puts into sharp relief the importance of asking the right questions. When presented with the question of whether to undergo or forego surgery when the survival rate is 90%, patients invariably chose to undergo the surgery. However, when another group of patients were presented with the statistically equivalent fact that the mortality rate for their potential surgery was 10%, patients showed greater reluctance to acquiesce to the encouragements of the doctors.¹¹¹

These two examples, one from on-screen, the other from the hospital, exemplify just one of the problems that those charged with draughting questionnaires need to keep in mind. A plethora of other considerations need to be examined. In this regard, we might turn to Kahneman and Tversky and their work in the field of so-called prospect theory and behavioural economics.

¹¹⁰ Kahneman D. Thinking fast and slow, 2013.

¹¹¹ Kahneman D. Thinking fast and slow, 2013.

Amongst that host of other cognitive biases that can influence the responder to a questionnaire is another phenomenon they have cited frequently in their work, i.e. anchoring, the tendency of people to be unduly influenced by information that is presented first. Contextualizing the phenomenon to the world of sales, highly pertinent to our discussions to follow, it has been demonstrated that people tend to form a focal point in their minds on the initial price offering in a negotiation that serves to frame all further bids and discussions¹¹².

More run-of-the-mill concerns also exist. Respondents may provide untruthful replies and or they might not answer all or any of the questions. Indeed, they may simply misinterpret the questions. These were of particular concern to us given the international nature of the respondents and the fact that for none of them was English their first language. All efforts were made to simplify the language of the questions, and to ensure translations were available when there was any potential for confusion. While we cannot be entirely certain that this allayed all concerns, we are satisfied that we did the best we could.

A final and very important set of issues concerning questionnaires and general data collection has captured the public conscious in recent times, namely the right to privacy of those whose data has been used. In the context of Ireland, we were mindful of the recently introduced General Data Protection Regulation¹¹³. This legislation adopted by the European Council in 2016 and introduced in 2018 sought to harmonize data protection law across the member states of the European Union and the European Economic Area. In so doing, institutions, government bodies, companies and a host of other public and private bodies were forced to consider to a greater

¹¹² Kahneman D. Thinking fast and slow, 2013.

¹¹³ GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), 2018.

extent their policies concerning the rights of their consumers vis-à-vis their personal data.¹¹⁴ It is a little

So, what does being compliant with the said regulations entail? Well, firstly one has the right to be informed in a transparent, intelligible format what it is the data will be used for. Secondly, the participant has the right to access the data if they so wish. They also have the right to erasure of their data and to the restriction of its processing. This spirit of care with data called upon us to ensure all participants were duly informed of the nature of research, were informed of how the data would be employed, and were informed of how it could potentially be accessed.

Having addressed the problems of questionnaires, let us now address the statistical techniques we typically employ in their analysis. When analysing data of the kind often provided by questionnaires, we can avail of both descriptive and inferential statistics. The former is concerned with the analysis of data that allows for the uncovering of patterns and does not concern itself with the establishment of conclusions; in other words, they are purely descriptive.¹¹⁵ We might well be interested in the mean values and or the distributional spread in our collected data and descriptive statistical measures allow us to do just that.

Inferential statistics, as the name attests to, allows for extrapolation of statistical measures of samples of data to the general population at large.¹¹⁶ These generalizable capacities are undoubtedly of great import to the social scientist. Without them, we would need to examine unfeasibly large numbers of data points. However, there is a danger in characterizing a sample as representative of the population. Is the sample in fact truly representative? Are we likely to get

¹¹⁴ GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

¹¹⁵ Rumsey, D.J. *Statistics for dummies*, 2016.

¹¹⁶ Rumsey, D.J. *Statistics for dummies*

highly skewed results? Hence, the inferential statistician often makes use of measures such as confidence intervals, and estimates of various sample parameters just to make sure. Sampling remains though as much an art as it is a science. These are real issues that we must return to later, but with these concerns fresh in our minds, let us proceed now to our case study of the English language school market.

Chapter 4 – PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Case of study

The Importance of the English Language School Market

As just mentioned, throughout this chapter we will seek to analyse effective sales negotiation tactics in the Irish English language school market. However, before we begin, let us highlight the importance of the sector to the Irish economy and seek to underline the relative strength of the Irish market versus its global competitors. This will lend support to our contention that greater understanding of effective sales negotiation tactics by Irish schools and education agencies is of utmost importance.

The figures we cite stem from a Marketing English in Ireland (MEI) report from 2016¹¹⁷. It stated that Ireland had the greatest number of English-language students per capita of any country. Indeed, it came in fifth in the actual number of students studying in its schools with 120,000. That compares to the United Kingdom with 635,000, the United States of America with 169,000, Canada with 154,000 and Australia with 173,000. Needless to say, all five of these have populations which are significant multiples of the Irish population.

¹¹⁷ MEI (Marketing English in Ireland), 2018.

Of those students who did come to Ireland in 2016, the majority were from Italy and then Spain with 78% of all students coming from the European Economic Area. The average stay of international students was 5.3 weeks which compared favourably to that of a student staying in the United Kingdom at 3.8 weeks. In other words, students coming to Ireland tend to stay longer than in other competitor markets. ¹¹⁸

The 122,000 international students represented an 11% increase on the 2015 figures and it was estimated by the Irish Department of Education that the English language market contributed approximately €760 million to the economy. In 2017, there was a further rise of 8% according to the MEI with students coming from 118 countries worldwide. Again, the figures for length of stay were healthy with the total number of student weeks spent in Ireland totaling 772,684, 19% higher than 2016. ¹¹⁹

While we cannot be certain how Brexit and other global events will affect these numbers, it seems safe to say that it remains a market of significant importance to the economy, given that if one were to include spending on tourism activities, transport, restaurants etc. the actual financial contribution to the economy might be much higher. Thus, keeping apace with trends in effective sales negotiation tactics would seem extremely important for not only the schools themselves but for the economy at large.

Sales Negotiation Tactics in the English Language School Market

As we observed in our review of sales negotiation tactics, a plethora of options are available to sellers of products and services. What of the situation in respect to sales negotiation tactics

¹¹⁸ MEI (Marketing English in Ireland), 2018.

¹¹⁹ MEI (Marketing English in Ireland), 2018.

employed by the English language school market?

Well given the paucity of material pertaining to the sales negotiation tactics employed by the English language school market worldwide, let alone in the Irish context, we might seem to be stuck in an impasse. Let us nevertheless proceed and see how far we can get employing some ingenuity and indirect analysis.

Firstly, we should identify what types of sales negotiations do such schools engage in. Putting aside all non-student related sales, it would seem that there are three distinct categories of sales negotiations they engage in. The first of these requires an intermediary between school and student, i.e. an agency. The second set of sales negotiations that the schools are engaged in are negotiations with students overseas, and the third is that of face-to-face interactions with direct-from-the-street footfall. One might also wish to delve deeper into those categories and subdivide overseas negotiations say into those with schools, universities, or indeed directly with the student. Nonetheless, having outlined all this we would be none the wiser vis-à-vis the question posed in the title to this paper.

Recall however, that negotiation is a two-way street. It takes two to tango as they say and by examining student behaviour vis-à-vis course price negotiations with schools, we may indirectly discover what tactics schools are and should be employing in an effort to increase their market share. We will return to the contrary, namely the tactics students should employ in their negotiations later in the chapter. The only avenue available to us seemed to be direct questioning of the preferences of students and this is precisely what we did. In the following subsection, we investigate the type of survey questions we posed.

Questionnaire

Before we provide for the results of the said questionnaire, let us first mention how it was that we obtained the data we did. The respondents all came from a mid-price range school in the north city centre of Dublin and were all given the choice to opt in to being surveyed. We will return to the implications in the following chapters, but first let us take some time to list off the information we were seeking to obtain. While doing so, we will attempt to provide justifications for those questionnaire design.

The questions asked were as follows:

1. What is your nationality?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your sex?
4. If you were in the process of buying an English language course in Ireland, what would be your preferred method of contact?
5. How long would you consider the initial conversation between you and the sales agent should be?
6. Would you prefer that you or the sales agent talked more during the initial conversation?
7. What factor is the most important for you when considering buying an English course?
8. Which question posed by the sales agent would most encourage you to buy an English course?
9. What influences your decision to buy a course more – the company or school itself or the sales agent?

10. Do you know what a negotiator is?

11. Would you prefer to buy an English course from a sales negotiator or from a sales expert?

Before we explore the results of the questionnaire, let us examine the reasons why those questions were the ones we chose in the first place.

The first three questions we asked were standard questions, looking for the nationality, age and sex of the participants. Nevertheless, they did represent important data we wished to uncover. Copious studies have pointed to the fact that for the different groupings within these categories, negotiation processes can take on a different character. (Janosik, 1987) (Kimmel et al., 1980) (Rubin et al., 1991) (Small et al., 2007) We were thus interested in uncovering any potential preferential trends amongst those groups.

The fourth question as you recall asked if one were in the process of buying an English language course in Ireland, what would be one's preferred method of contact. The answers available to the respondents on the questionnaire were as follows: by facebook, by whatsapp, by Instagram, by phone, or face-to-face. We were particularly interested in whether the answers to this question allowed us to uncover any general trend emerging amongst younger students.

The fifth question concerned the duration of any potential first communication of sales agent and student. With this question, we were interested in the extent to which students might be susceptible to various time-related negotiation tactics if they were to be applied.

The sixth question provided a chance for an insight into the tactics a typical student might like to impose during a sales negotiation, whether subconscious or otherwise. Again though, these

thoughts of ours were purely in the realms of speculation at this point.

The seventh question offers us information on the priorities of students when considering selecting a given course. We were interested in seeing whether our preconceptions would be vindicated or not. To some extent if that was the case, one could view it as a window into the student's thought processes and thus an opportunity for information imbalance in the sales negotiation in favour of the seller.

Questions eight and nine focused on the extent to which sales agents could influence the decisions of the prospective students being as they were concerned with what questions they could pose which would have greatest impact and with the relative importance of the sales agents versus the school itself. The final two questions sought to capture the students' awareness of negotiation tactics or lack thereof. So, what of the results?

Questionnaire results

The results to the questionnaire were as follows. Sixty-three people replied and the nationality, age and sex breakdowns are presented in figures 1 and 2 below. As one can see by far the largest percentage of respondents hail from Latin America. Unquestionably, our sample is small and biased significantly in favour of the non-EU market. This latter point contrasts with the fact pointed out earlier that EU students make up the vast majority of students in the English language school market in Ireland. Extra care must thus be taken when make any inferences from such data.

Figure 1: Numbers of respondents in terms of nationality and sex

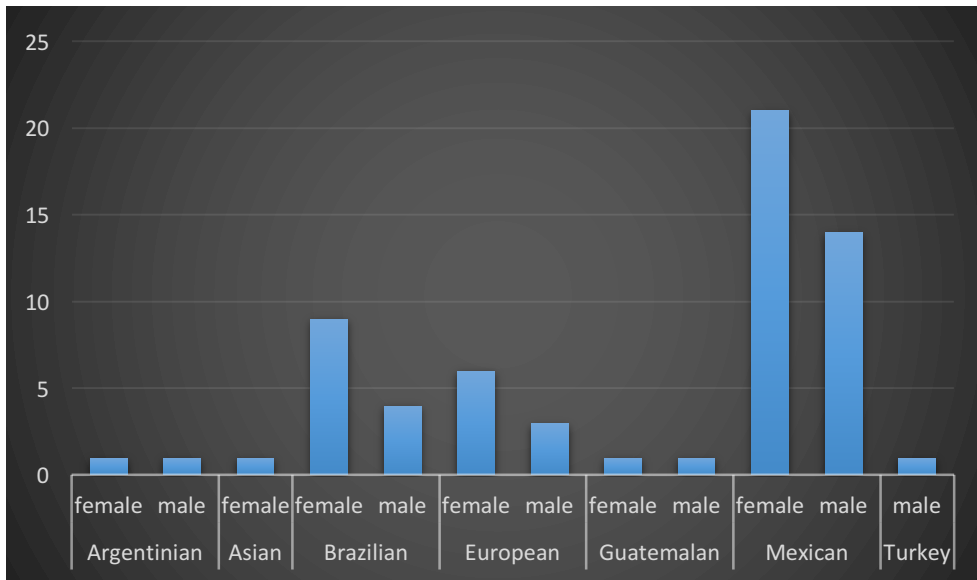


Figure 2 seems to suggest that at least in respect of age, the sample is somewhat more representative.

Figure 2: Numbers of respondents in terms of age

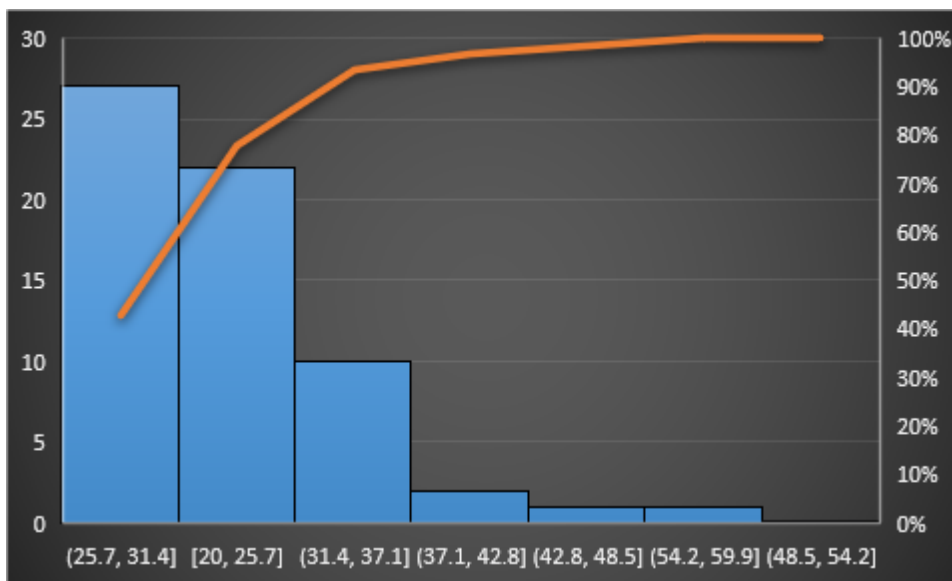


Figure 3: Would you prefer that you or the sales agent talked more during the initial conversation?

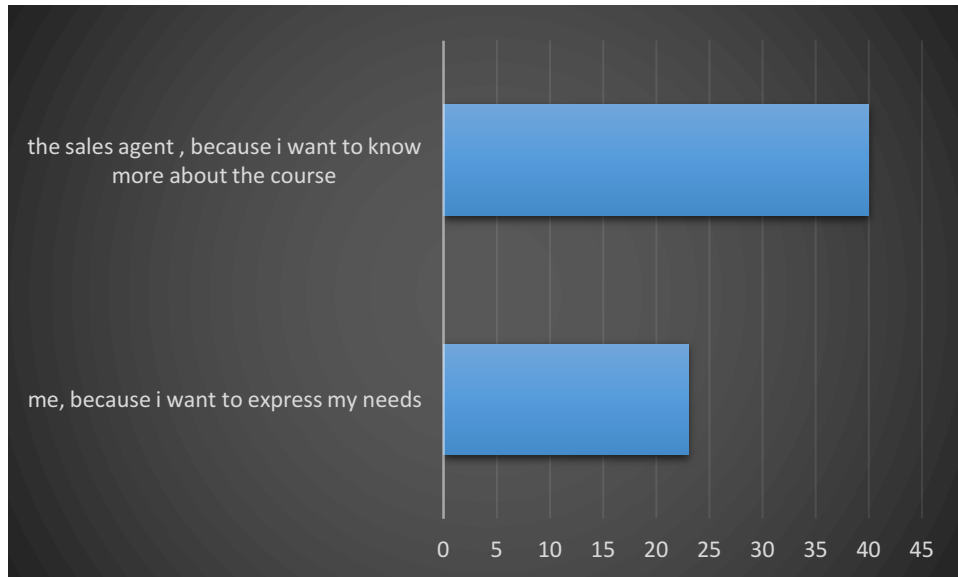


Figure 3 demonstrates that only approximately 36% of respondents wished to be the one that dominated any initial conversation with a sales agent, with 64% choosing to go with the option of the sales agent on account of wanting more information about the course.

Figure 4: If buying an English course in Ireland, what would be your preferred method of contact?

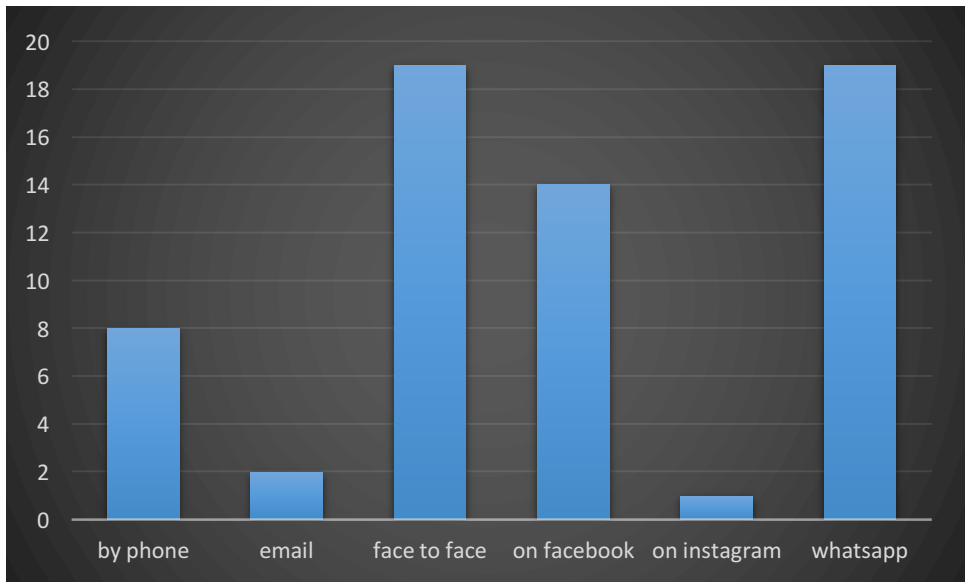


Figure 4 shows no great preference for any particular method of contact with a messaging provider whatsapp garnering exactly the same figure as face-to-face interactions. Perhaps a little surprising is the poor performance of email capturing the preference of just two of the sixty-three respondents.

Figure 5 displays the rather unsurprising result that the two most significant factors influencing student choices are the reputation of the school and the relative low price of the course. What might be a little surprising is the size of the discrepancy between the two figures with price representing the main concern of about 29% of the sample and school reputation constituting 54%.

Figure 5: What factor is the most important for you when considering buying an English course?

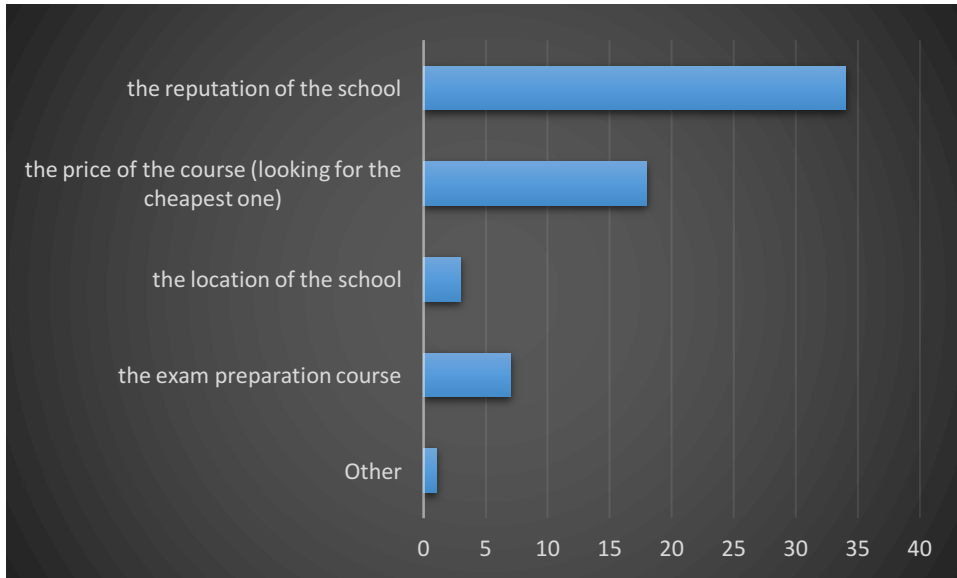


Figure 6 shows that 78% of respondents wished to speak for at least ten minutes when conversing for the first time with a sales agent.

Figure 6: How long would you consider the initial conversation between you and the sales agent should be?

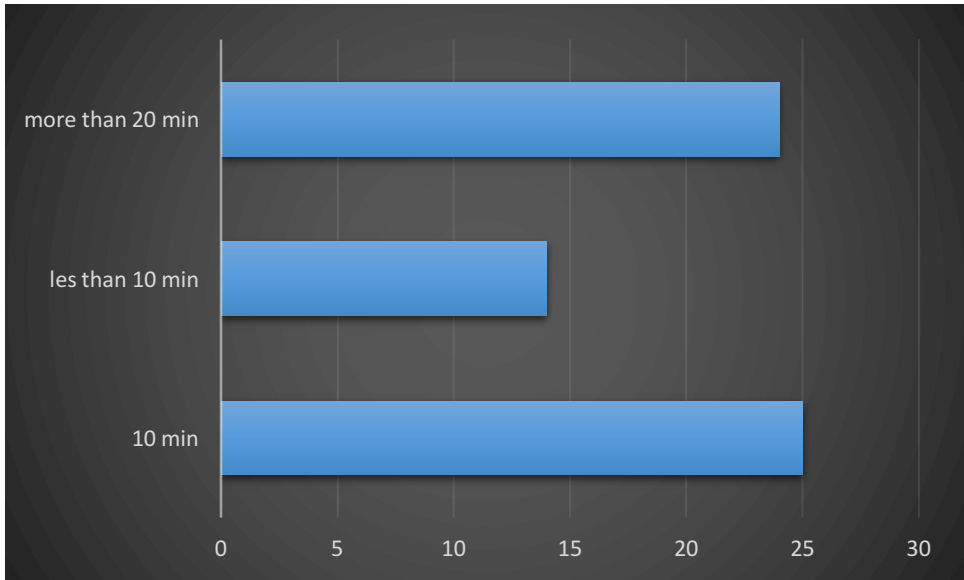
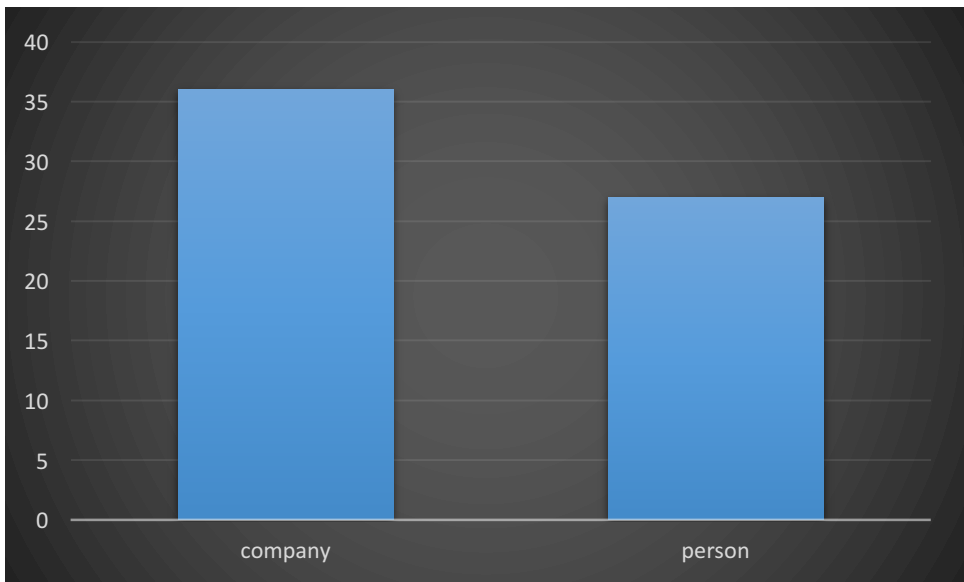


Figure 7: What influences your decision to buy more – the nature of the company (school) or the person (sales agent)?



As we can see from figure 7, there is no great difference between the how much influence the

school itself seems to have over that of the sales agent.

Figure 8: Do you know what a negotiator is?

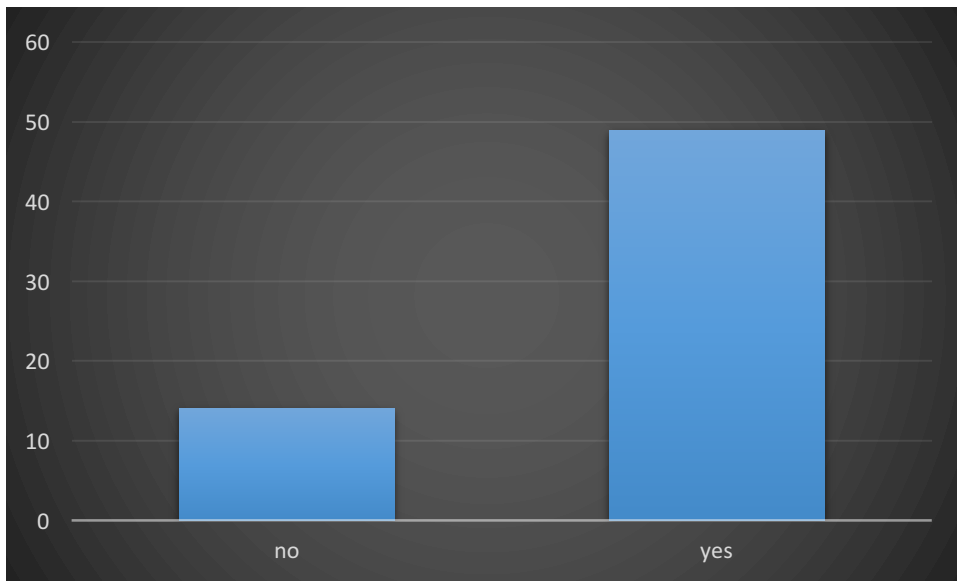
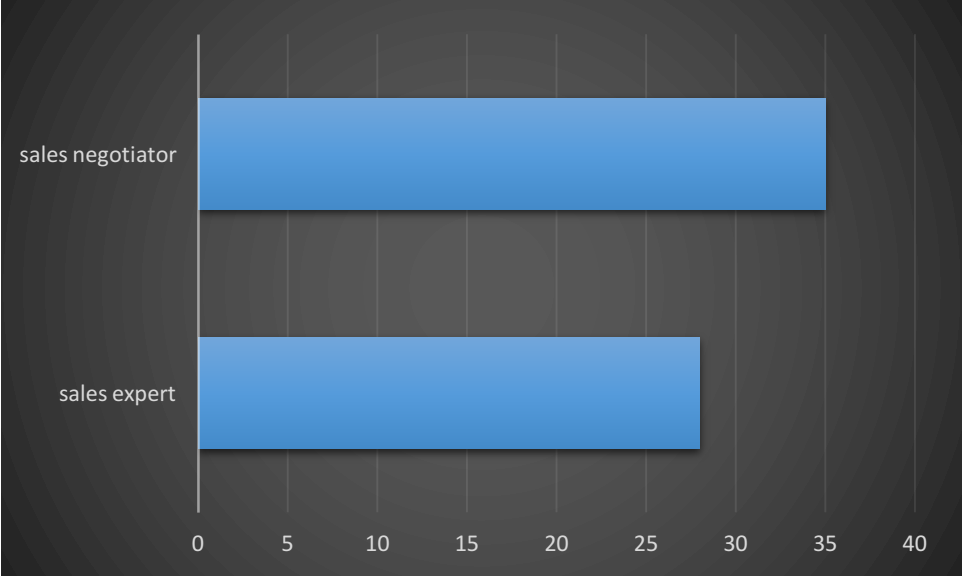


Figure 9: Would you prefer to buy an English course from a sales negotiator or a salesperson?



Figures 8 and 9 reveal a surprisingly high number of respondents are keenly aware of what it is a negotiator is, while 55% of them would wish to deal with one when in the process of buying an English course.

Chapter 5 – ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

As mentioned, the dearth of literature in respect to the subject area in question was always going to present major challenges. Nonetheless, as we expressed earlier, it was our belief that by examination of prospective student responses to a variety of questions we might be able to bypass this stumbling block and arrive at some useful findings. Nevertheless, even before we began our questionnaire, we were wary that we might be proceeding up a dead end. For instance, as was alluded to above, there are serious issues of concern with the sampling procedure we were forced to apply.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, there was lack of randomness in the sampling procedure we employed. Firstly, all respondents in the sample came from a mid-price range school in Dublin. This might skew any inferences we make in regard to other price brackets and other regions of Ireland or indeed Dublin. Furthermore, the data highlight the uniformity of nationality in our respondents, again, something which could render any inferences we might make incorrect. And finally, a sample size of sixty-three is scarcely one with which we can be confident is truly representative.

With that being said, there may be some accidental benefits of the profile of respondents to the questionnaire. Given it is overwhelmingly Latin American, at least we might be better positioned to comment on potential effective sales negotiation tactics with respect to that market. So, with those huge health warnings in mind, we will proceed with a closer look at the findings as apply to the topic of our paper. That is to say, can we extrapolate anything about (Latin American) students' behaviour for example within a sales negotiation environment given the data presented in the previous chapter and in addition, is it possible to suggest possible paths to greater sales

success for English language schools.

As we stated, the first three questions we asked were about nationality, age and sex. Now let us look at whether any trends in the sample data emerge when we break the data down per those three categories. The first inspection we will make is whether where you come from, your age or your sex alters to any extent your view on how long an initial question by a sales agent should be.

Figure 10: Nationality versus how long would you consider the initial conversation between you and the sales agent should be?

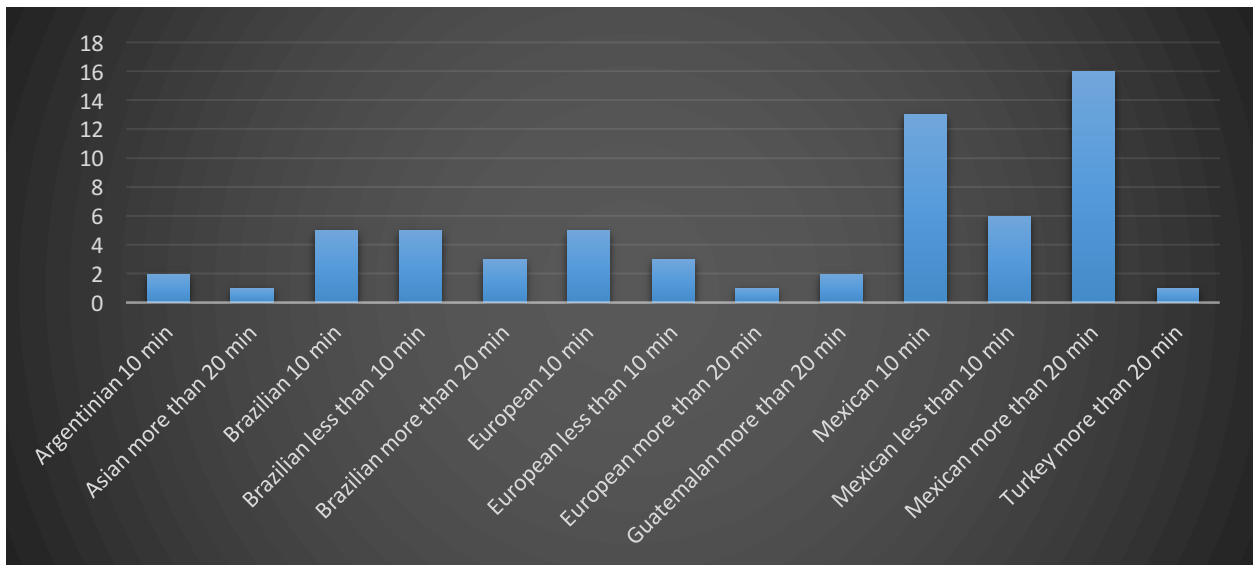


Figure 11: Age versus how long would you consider the initial conversation between you and the sales agent should be?

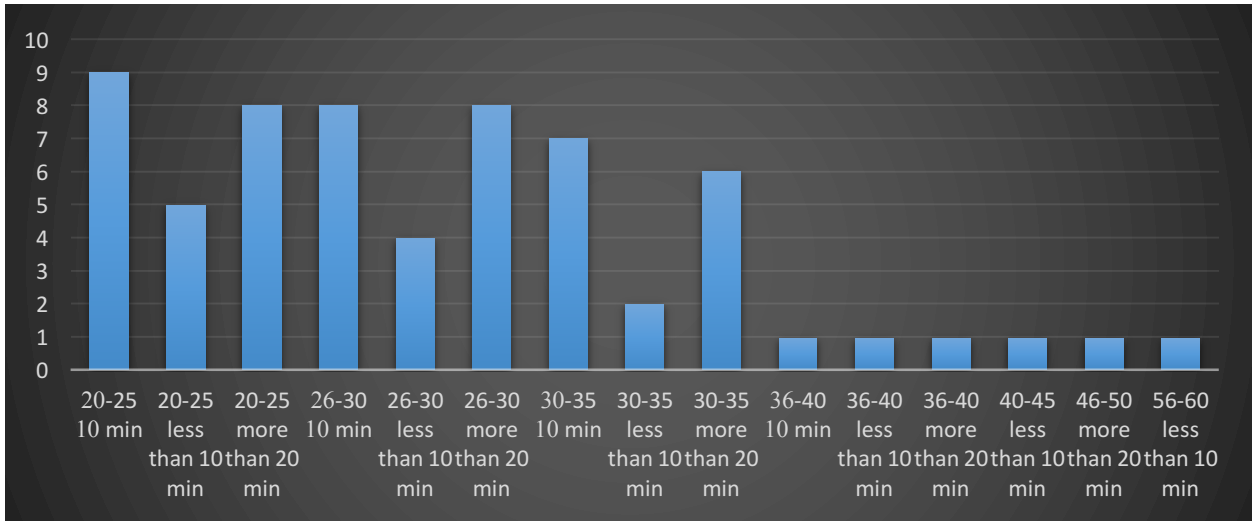
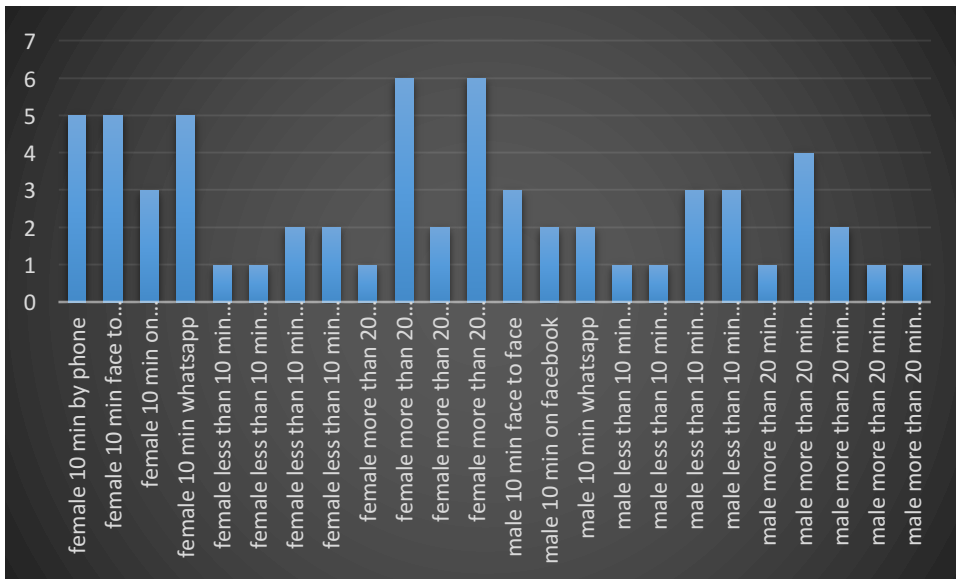


Figure 12: Sex versus how long would you consider the initial conversation between you and the sales agent should be?



While one is tentative to underscore any discernible pattern based on such limited sampling, there is a difference in our admittedly small sample between Mexicans versus Europeans and Brazilians. We would like to examine whether the desire for greater talking time by Mexicans versus a desire for less talking time for other nationalities was maintained in a larger poll. If it were, what effect might that have on school and indeed customer sales negotiation tactics? Well, if cognizant of a desire amongst the Mexican student say for longer conversational time, the school negotiator might start to employ time-related negotiation tactics. For example, the school negotiator might throw in a deadline, or a limited special offer as per a fear-of-missing-out approach. Likewise, those students who wish to take their time might think of delay tactics as a bargaining counter.

When one examines the question versus age, we can spot a decided across-the-board reluctance to opt for shorter conversations, with all the age ranges opting against the less than ten-minute conversation except the two one-responder older categories, forty to forty-five, and fifty-six to sixty. Again, one would sorely wish to replicate such an analysis with a larger sample. Finally, there seems to be no discernible difference between men and women, when one accounts for the different size sample sizes of the two sexes (see figure 1 above).

We turn now to the question of whether there is any distinction within these groups vis-à-vis their preferences for initial contact; via phone, email, face-to-face interaction, Instagram or whatsapp.

Figure 13: Nationality versus If buying an English course in Ireland, what would be your preferred method of contact?

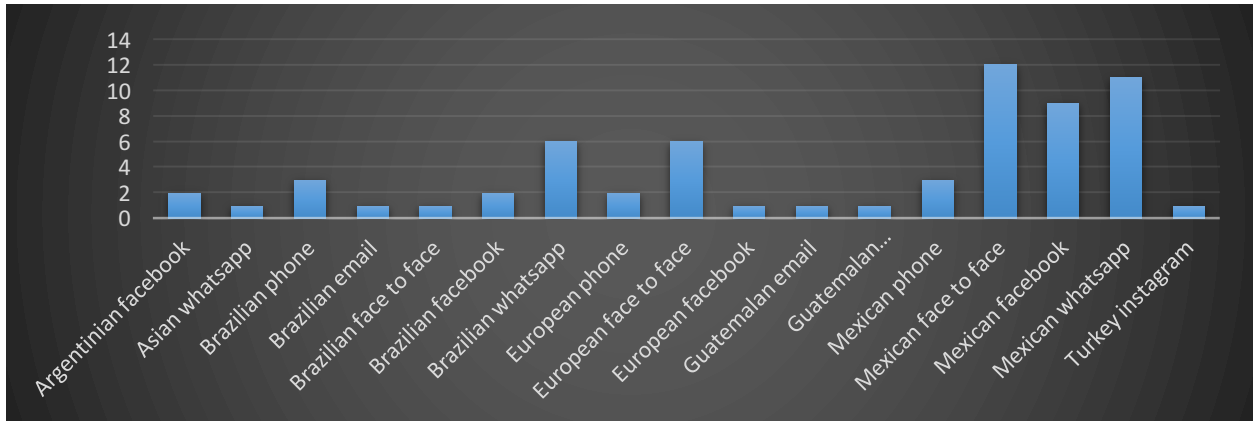


Figure 14: Age versus If buying an English course in Ireland, what would be your preferred method of contact?

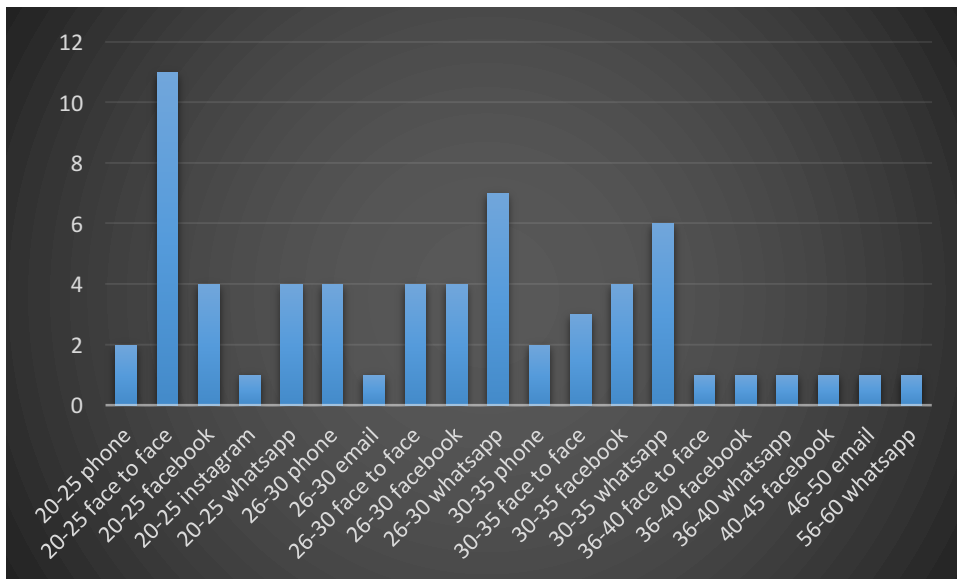
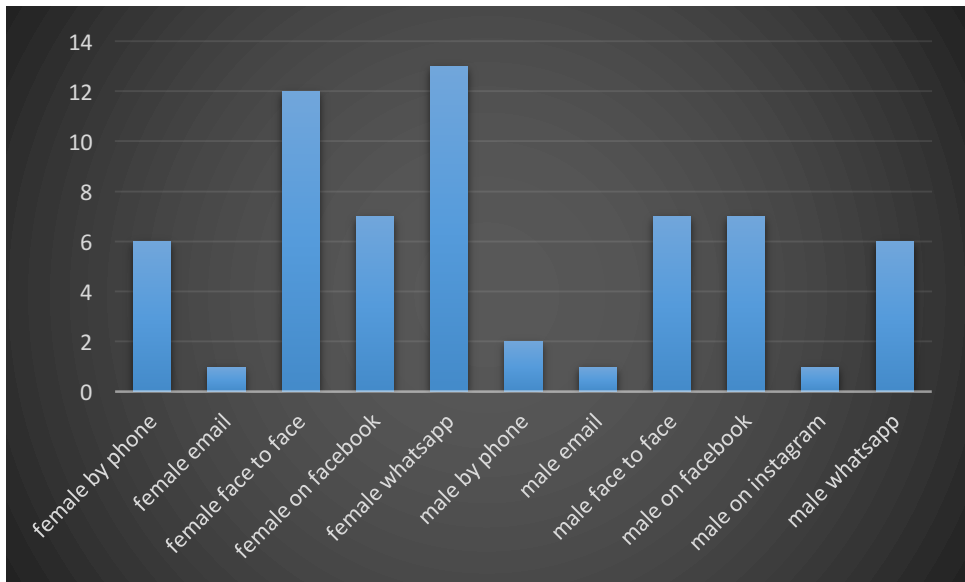


Figure 15: Sex versus If buying an English course in Ireland, what would be your preferred method of contact?



Nothing really stands out from figures 13, 14 and 15 except possibly the robustness of the preference for face-to-face communication. This manifests itself even in the lowest age category within the sample, twenty to twenty-five year olds but is also evident in the Mexican and European categories. Nonetheless, when we look at figure 15, we might detect a trend away from face-to-face communication towards messaging services such as whatsapp. Clearly, we would need more data and indeed, longitudinal data at that.

As regards how this data could affect attitudes to sales negotiation tactics, one can not definitively say. However, as just alluded to, if there is a trend emerging away from face-to-face interactions, then the repertoire of negotiation tactics seems to dwindle. School owners need to be particularly mindful of this especially if they are those that rely on an integrative and collaborative negotiation style as a means of sealing the deal.

Figure 16: Nationality versus Would you prefer that you or the sales agent talked more during the initial conversation?

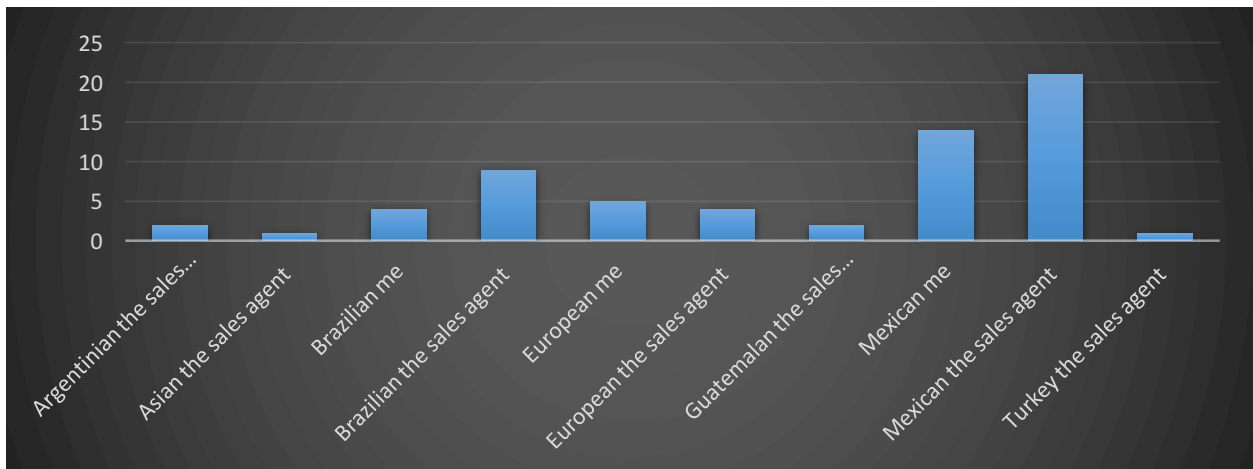


Figure 17: Age versus Would you prefer that you or the sales agent talked more during the initial conversation?

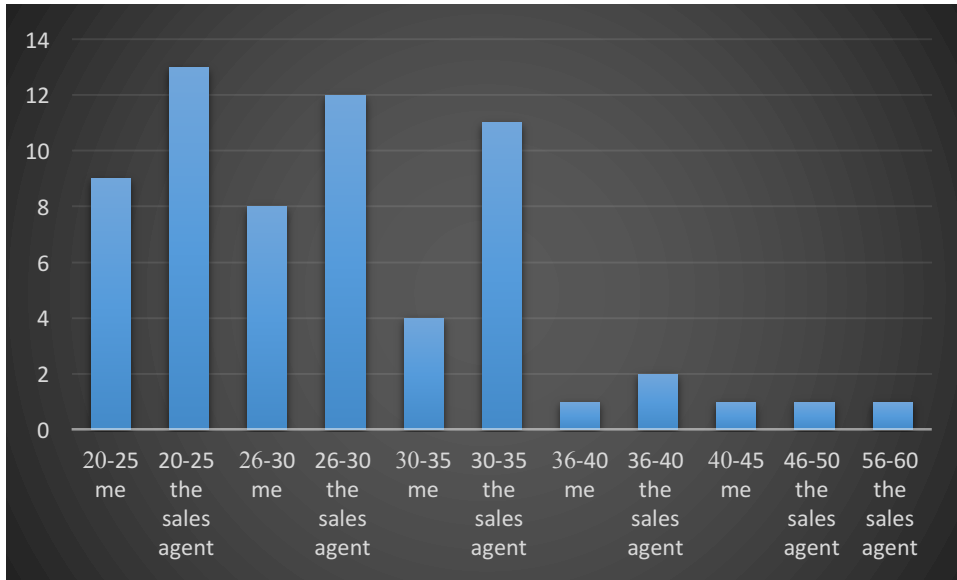
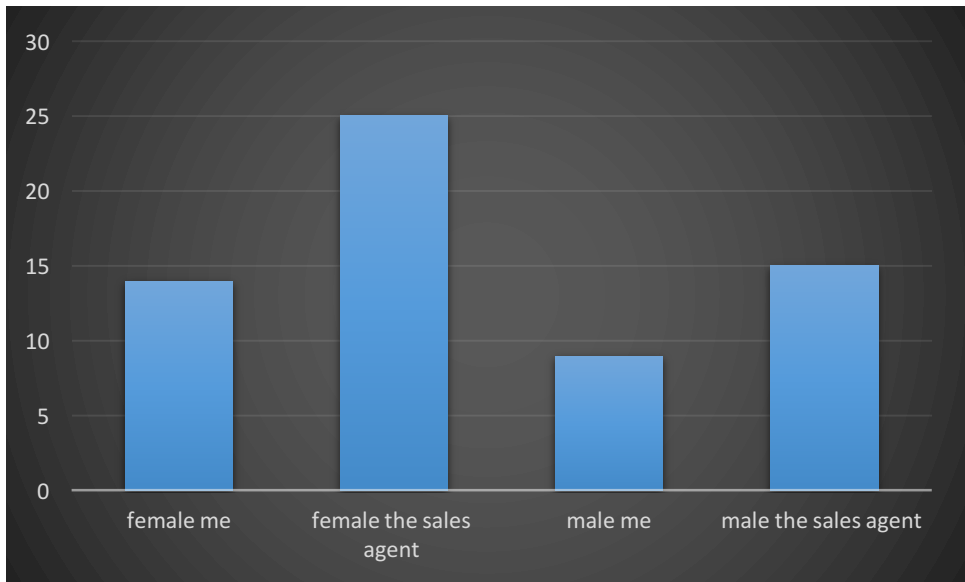


Figure 18: Sex versus Would you prefer that you or the sales agent talked more during the initial conversation?



Figures 16, 17 and 18 provide for some obvious results. In all but one category, namely European students, do respondents favour the sales agent dominating the talking time during the initial meeting. This clearly provides an asymmetric temporal advantage to the school negotiators if they are smart in how they employ it. Lest they get carried away though, we still need to see if this finding translates to a larger sample. Furthermore, there still remains a large cohort of students who prefer the opposite. The trick for both the schools and the student is to be able to identify this early in the sales negotiation.

Figure 19: Nationality versus What factor is the most important for you when considering buying an English course?

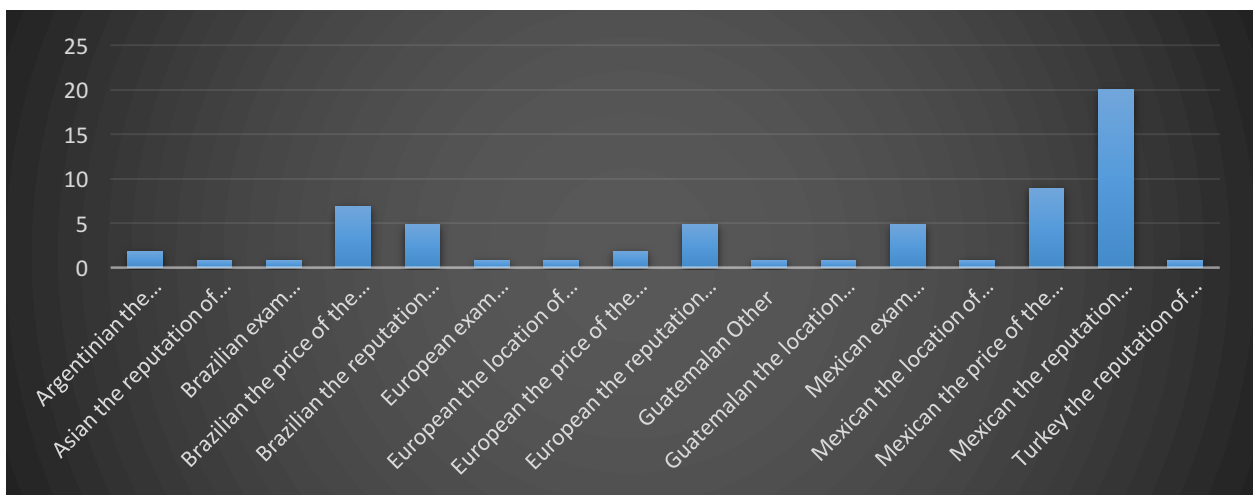


Figure 20: Age versus What factor is the most important for you when considering buying an English course?

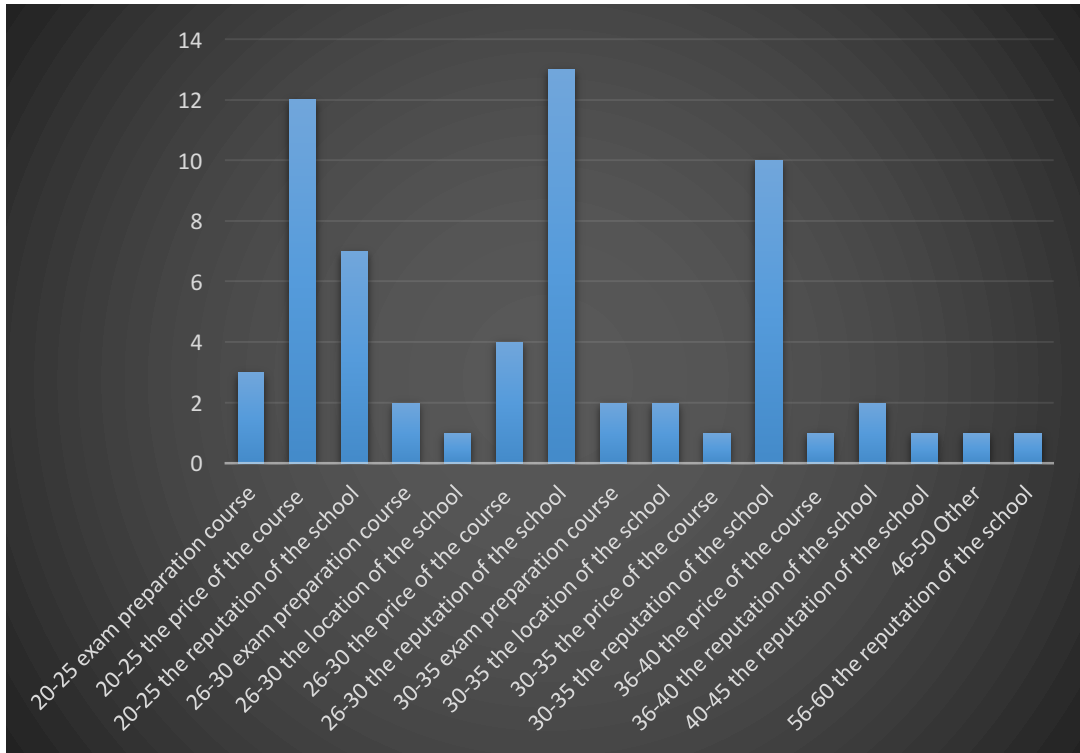
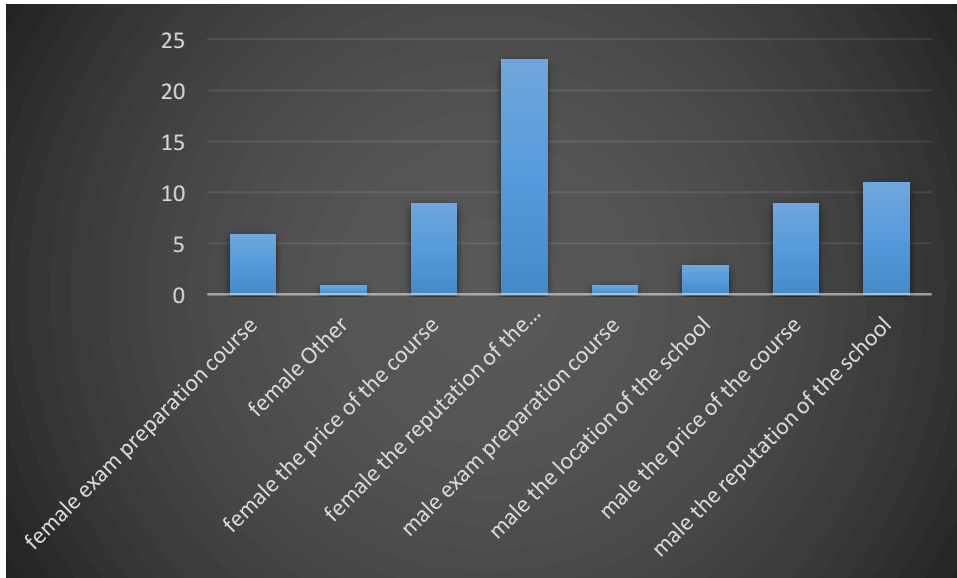
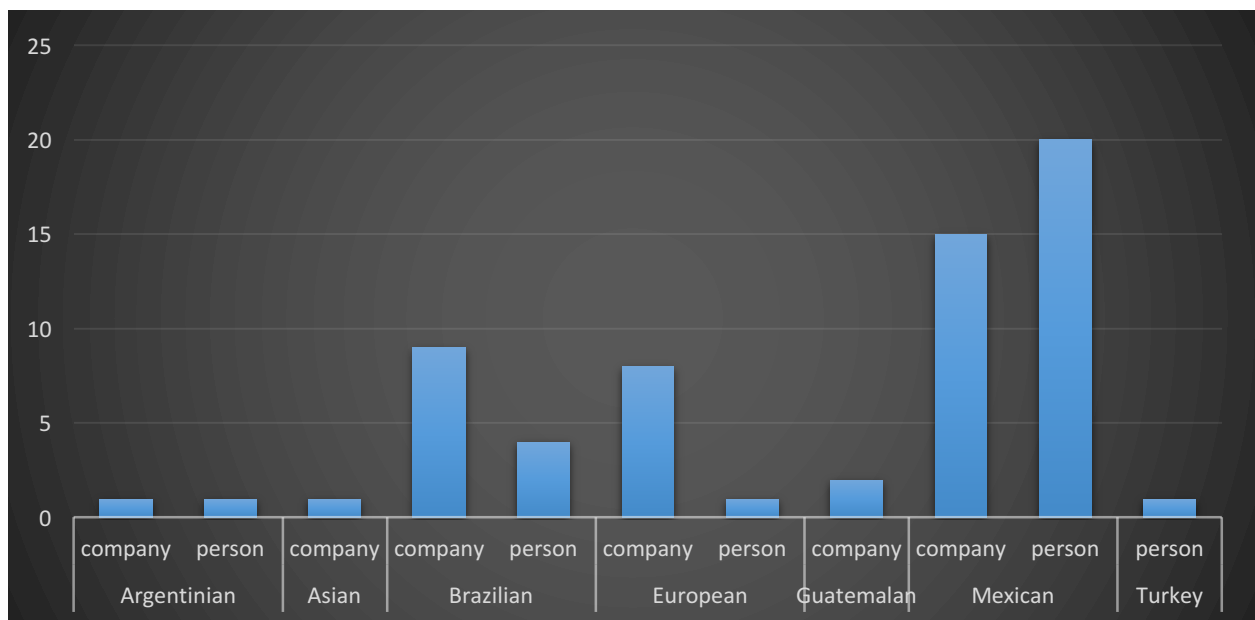


Figure 21: Sex versus What factor is the most important for you when considering buying an English course?



Figures 19, 20 and 21 uncover important knowledge about the respondents' considerations during the buying process. Again, stressing caution about the validity of our claims based on such a small and somewhat skewed sample, there do seem to be some trends we can detect. Price is shown to be the single most important factor for prospective Brazilian students, in contrast to prospective Mexican and European students who favour making their decision primarily on the reputation of the school. Sales negotiators, if mindful of these facts, can be much more selective with the repertoire of negotiation tactics they utilize.

Figure 22: Nationality versus Which question posed by the sales agent would most encourage you to buy an English course?



One might feel initially that figures 22, 23 and 24 deal with the same issues as the previous three figures but they are subtly different. With the information here, we are getting direct access to the prospective students' beliefs about what tactics should the sales negotiator pursue to ensure effectiveness. Remembering what we have been saying all along about the fragility of our findings, Figure 22 once more gives some hint at a difference in the negotiation mentalities of the Mexican student and their Brazilian counterpart. Indeed, it is only in figure 22 that we can detect

distinct negotiation preferences. Figures 23 and 24 do not yield any important differences.

Figure 23: Age versus Which question posed by the sales agent would most encourage you to buy an English course?

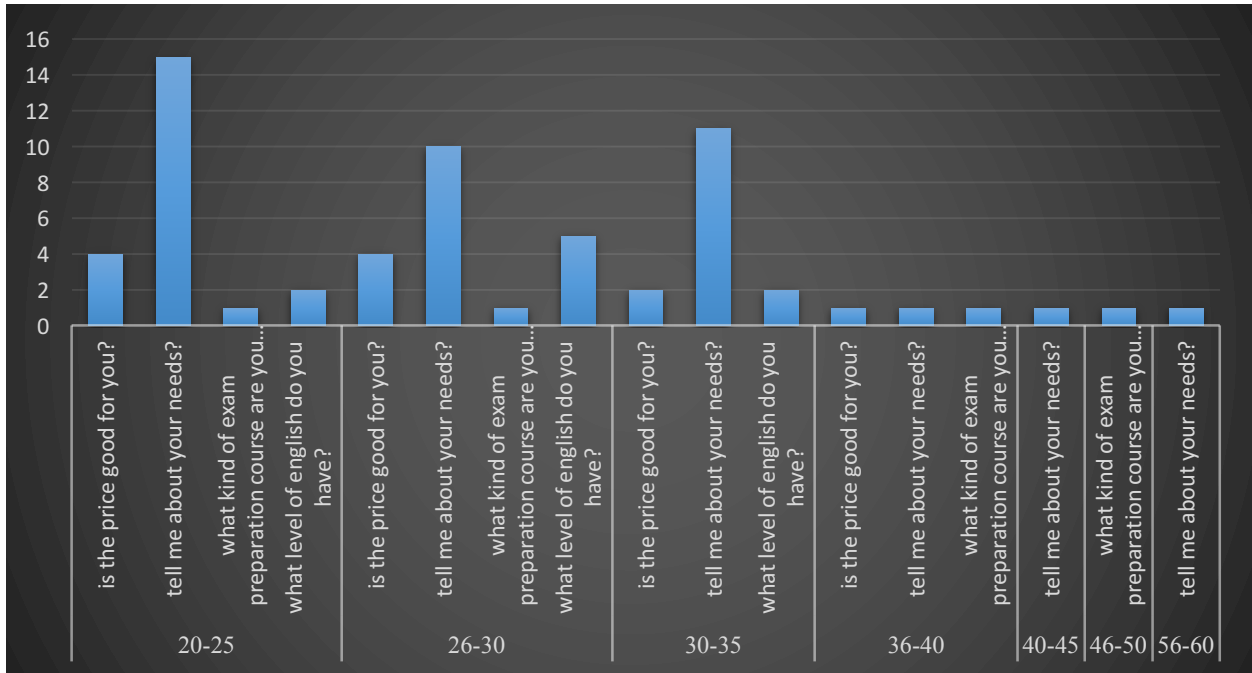


Figure 24: Sex versus Which question posed by the sales agent would most encourage you to buy an English course?

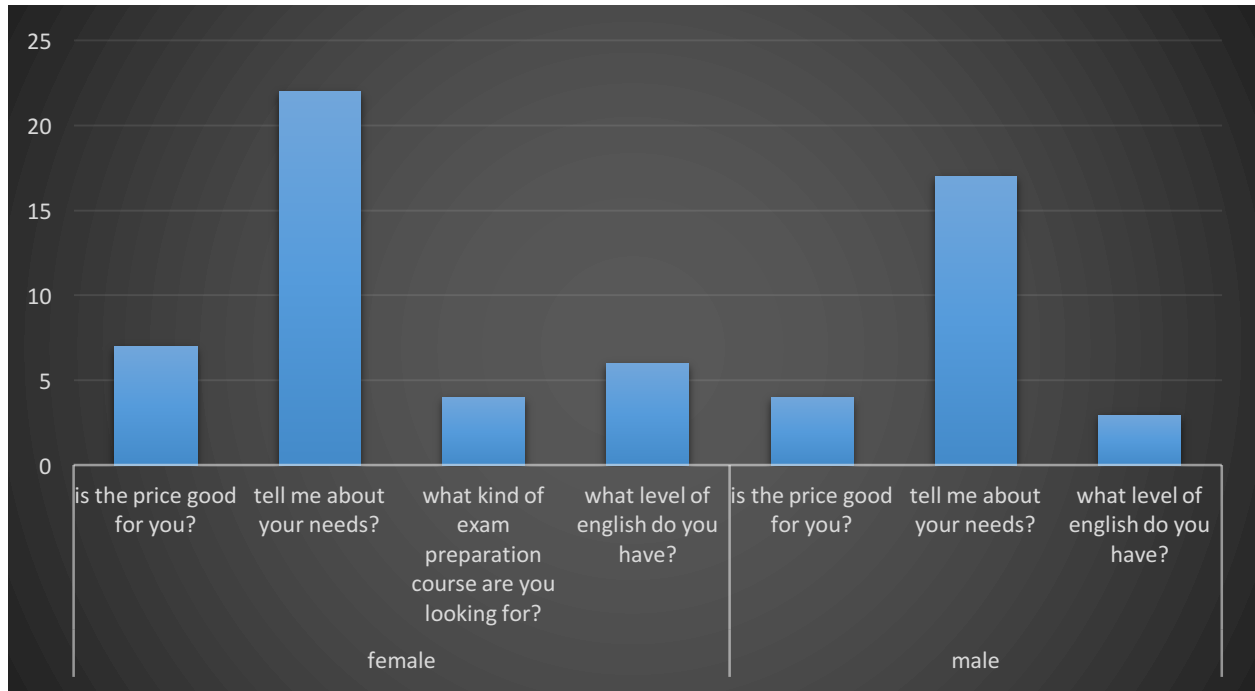


Figure 25: Nationality versus What influences your decision to buy a course more – the company (or school) itself or the sales agent?

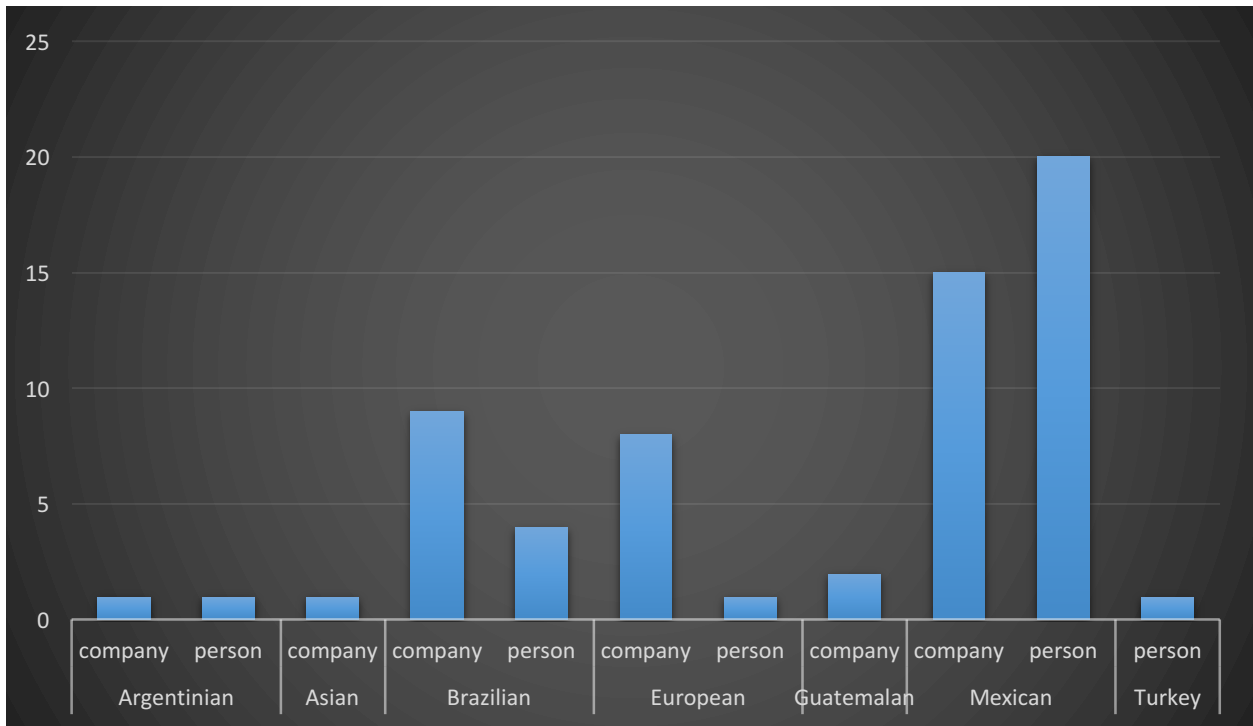


Figure 26: Age versus What influences your decision to buy a course more – the company (or school) itself or the sales agent?

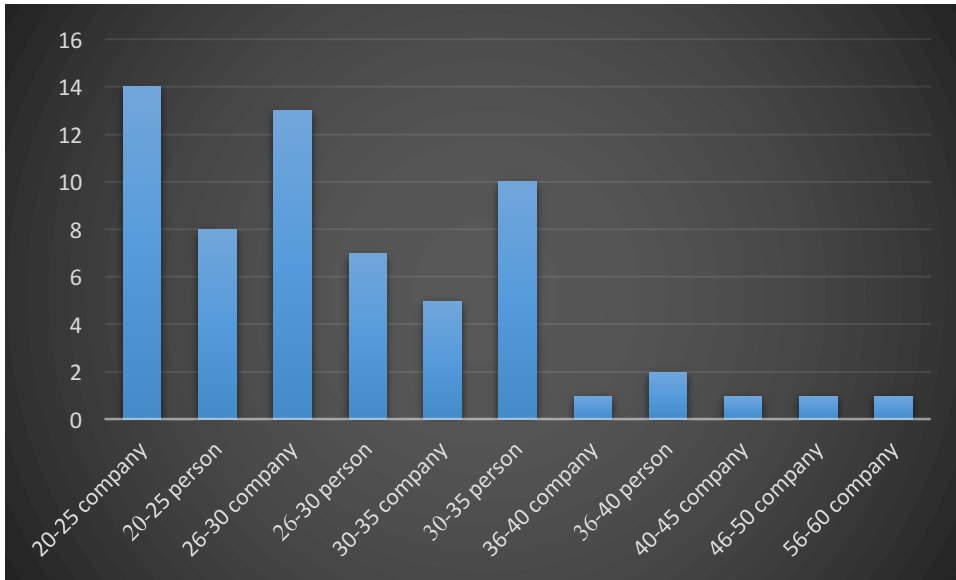
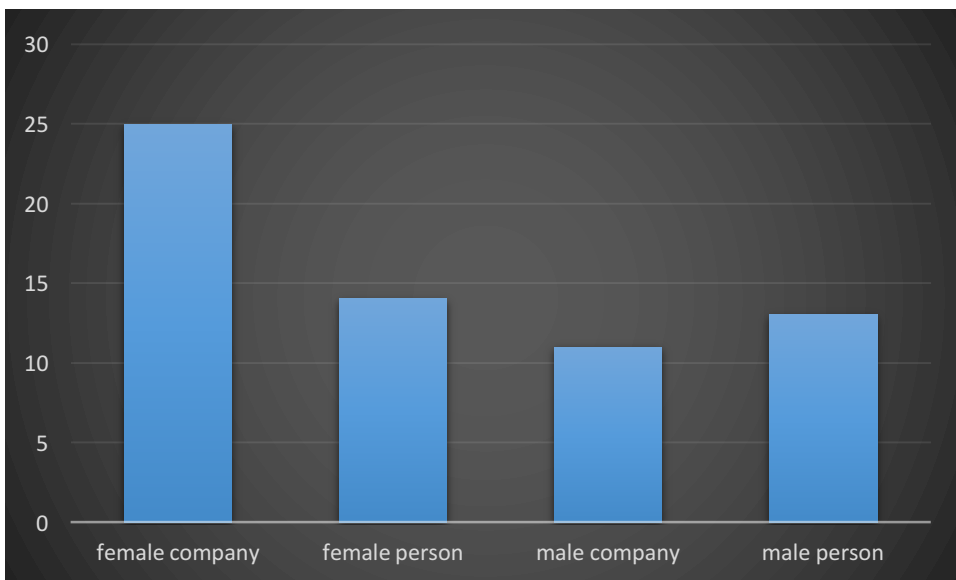


Figure 27: Sex versus What influences your decision to buy a course more – the company (or school) itself or the sales agent?



Figures 25, 26 and 27 give some information on the limitations of sales agent. Nonetheless, there is a suggestion that male potential customers might be more easily convinced by the negotiating skills of the sales negotiator. Nonetheless, as with everything we have claimed so far this assertion comes with the caveat that our sample cannot be said to be particularly random.

Figures 28, 29 and 30 allow us to uncover to some degree the knowledge the potential buyers have of the concept of negotiation. Whilst we cannot know the extent of their knowledge on the tactics such negotiators might employ, it is revealing that almost all categories demonstrate a much higher score for knowledge of than for ignorance of what a negotiator is.

Figure 28: Nationality versus Do you know what a negotiator is?

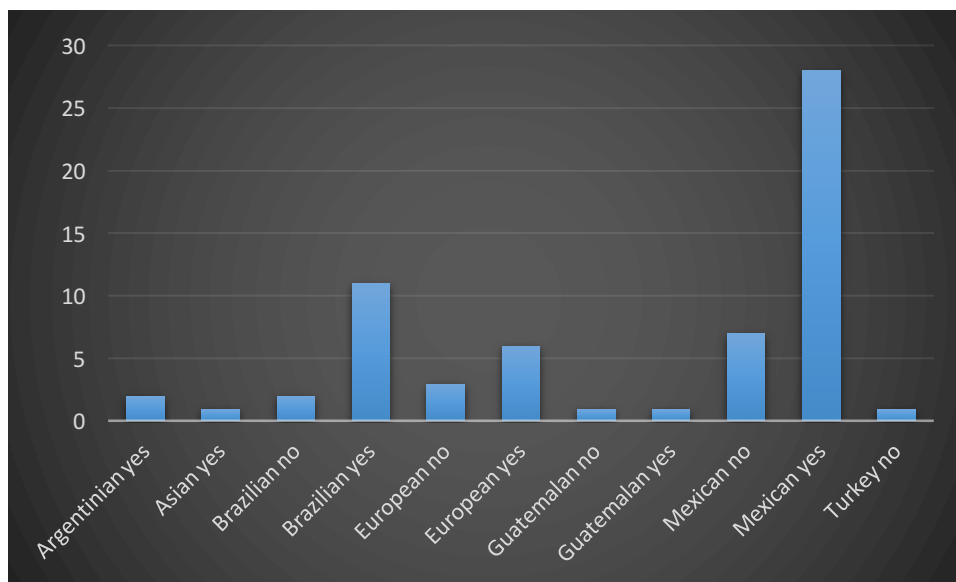


Figure 29: Age versus Do you know what a negotiator is?

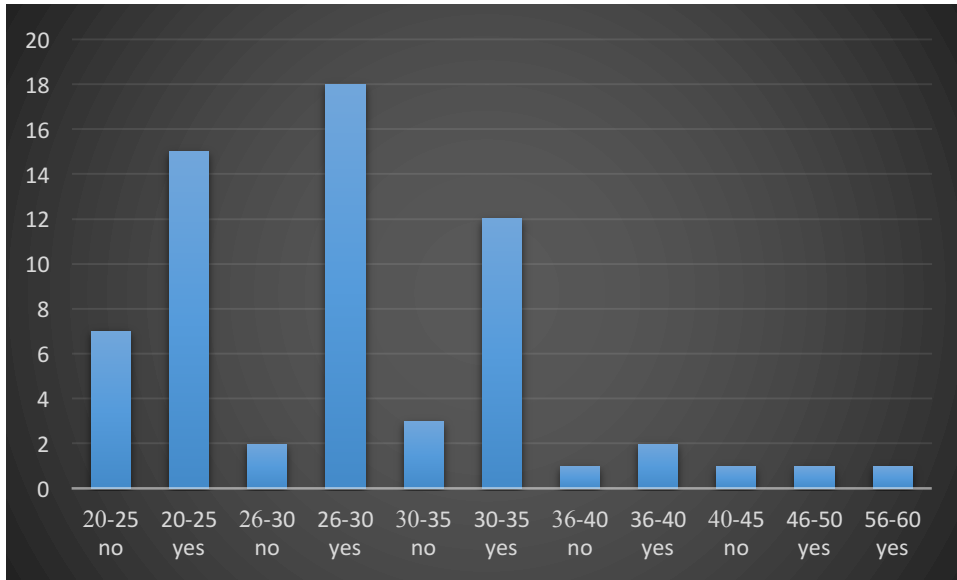
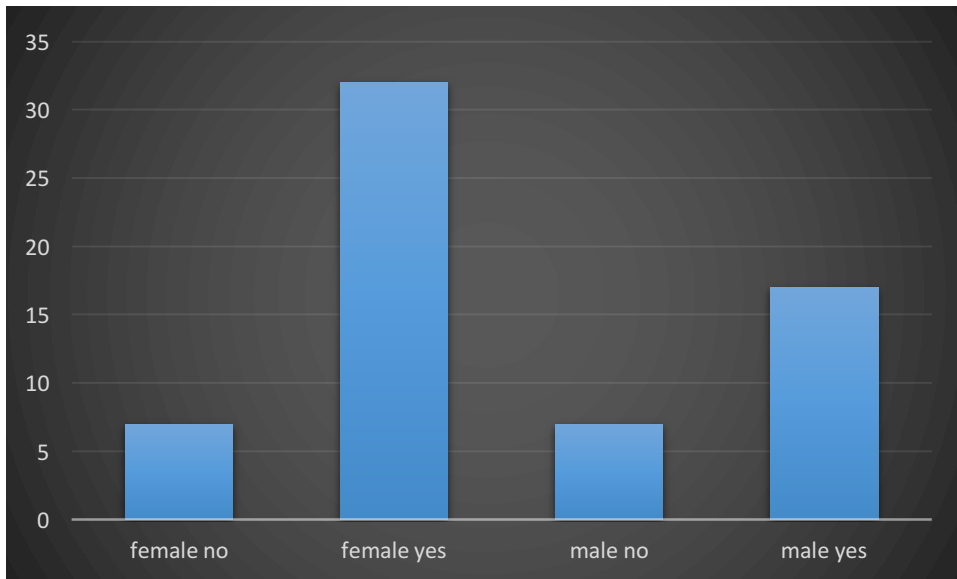


Figure 30: Sex versus Do you know what a negotiator is?



The results of our final question are shown in figures 31, 32 and 33. Here we posed the question of whether the prospective student would be more likely to buy from a purely sales driven personage versus a negotiator. That is to say, would they be more likely to buy from a negotiator whose focus on the negotiation process is paramount versus someone whose focus is directed more towards the end goal. Here our surveying limitations come to the fore. No discernible pattern emerges, and it may be on reflection a more nebulous question than we first anticipated.

Figure 31: Nationality versus Would you prefer to buy an English course from a sales negotiator or from a sales expert?

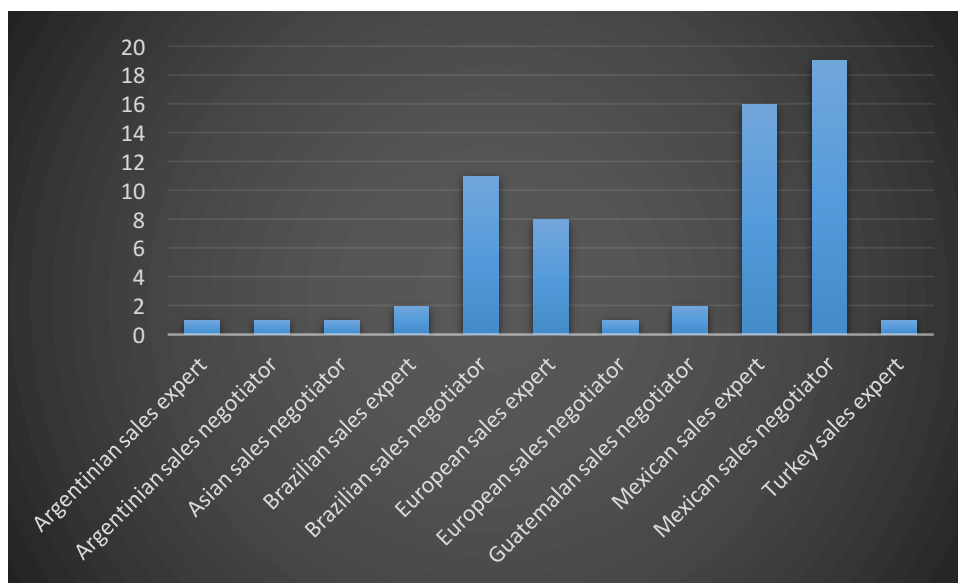


Figure 32: Age versus Would you prefer to buy an English course from a sales negotiator or from a sales expert?

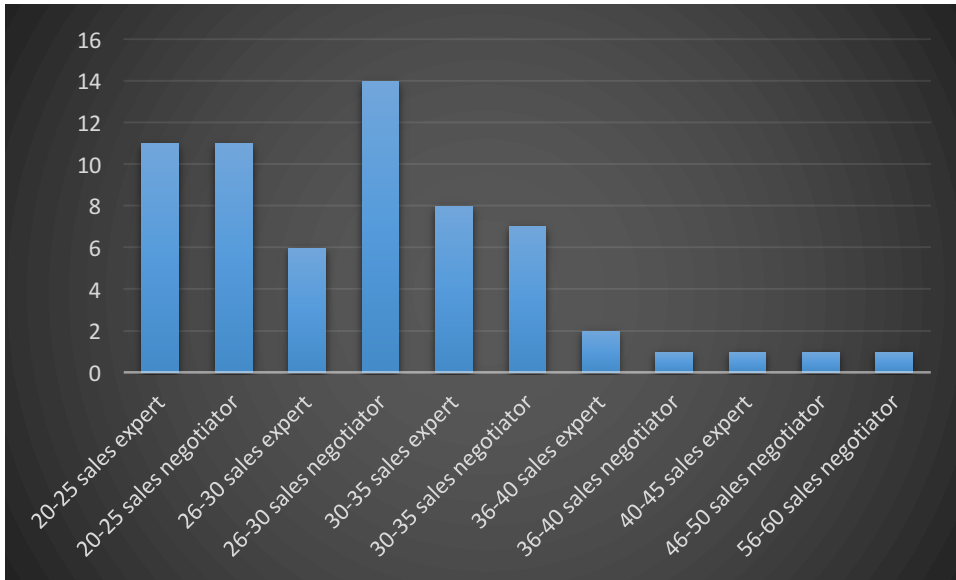
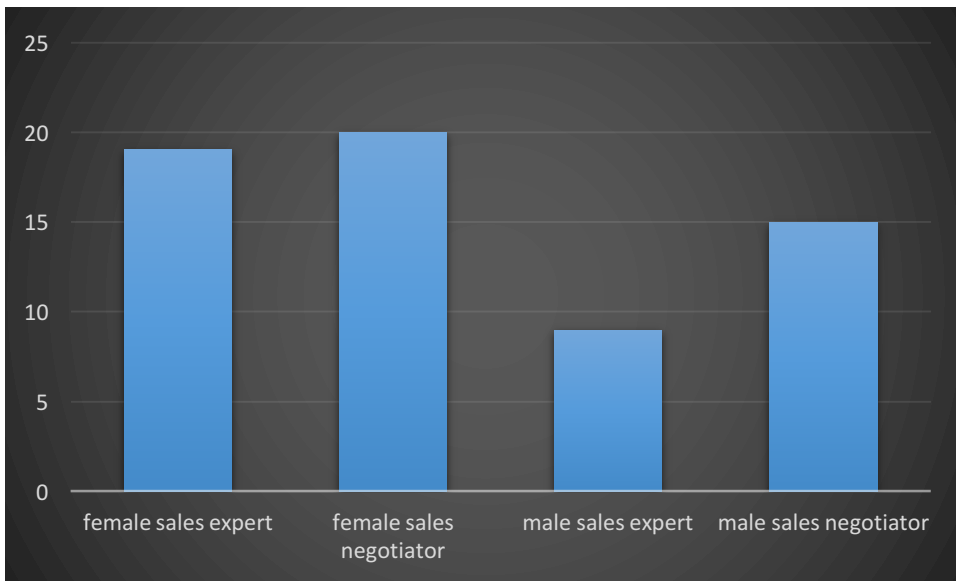


Figure 33: Sex versus Would you prefer to buy an English course from a sales negotiator or from a sales expert?



Having presented and briefly analysed the potential trends and patterns that exist within the data, what conclusions can we draw. That serves as the concern of our final chapter.

Chapter 6 – CONCLUSION

So, what can we say in concluding this paper? What insights have we uncovered in respect to effective sales negotiating tactics and in particular, what insights have we uncovered in respect to how that knowledge might be applied to a particular sector of the economy? In answer to the former, we explored in some depth the pivotal concerns of negotiation theory. We examined the differences in distributive and integrative negotiation processes, and how it is that different characteristics in the style of the negotiator can lead to such negotiation processes. We then outlined a plethora of tactics that a negotiator can employ in a host of different contexts, and which can vary in effectiveness given the negotiation. We also hinted at the pivotal role psychological awareness of your negotiation opponent plays in such processes, referencing as we did in passing the work of prospect theorists and behavioural economists such as Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky.

In answer to the latter question, namely what insights did we find vis-à-vis the potential effectiveness of sales negotiation tactics in the English language school market in Dublin. One of our motivations for doing so was that we have had some personal experience at both sides of the negotiation table so to speak. During our time in Ireland we have both studied in a number of such schools and have furthermore worked in a student agency. This has provided us with a lot of food for thought as to what sales negotiation tactics prove the most effective and what ones prove less so. Nonetheless, our study of the tactics employed and their relative effectiveness within this sector was somewhat less successful than we would have hoped. This, as was laid out in many

places throughout our discussions heretofore, was in no small part due to inadequacies in our surveying techniques and sampling.

It therefore behoves us to once again caution the reader as to any inferences they may draw from the above analysis. Nonetheless, we do feel that our analysis provides the core of a style of enquiry if tweaked and amended could be rather more successful than our efforts. Furthermore, it has hinted at possible differences in respondents' negotiation tactics and appreciation thereof, based on cultural background, age profile and sex. So being mindful of the limitations of our study, what precisely would we suggest in regard to future research?

Well clearly, we would suggest expanding the sample. This means not only providing for a more representative character of respondent, but also to include the school negotiators themselves. We did point to some tentative distinctions even between different Latin American countries, but a more expanded sample size would provide more robust findings no doubt.

As just mentioned we would also suggest attempting to gain greater insight into the sales negotiation tactics used by the schools themselves. We can think of no more direct way of doing this than by simply interviewing owners, managers, and sales employees of such schools. One obvious drawback to this is logistical. There are copious schools in Dublin alone and it is not clear how a truly reflective sample of such schools could be obtained. Moreover, there are other difficulties associated with such interviews.

With interviews there is always a strong possibility for misleading replies, whether conscious or not. How truthful would an owner wish to be about their negotiation tactics and indeed how reliable would their information be even in the case of full disclosure? Lack of clarity can also emerge from these investigative processes and any future research should be crystal clear in

acknowledging this.

What other areas are left open to the researcher? Well future research might well be advised to examine the views of prospective students on particular sales negotiation tactics. This research might well take the form of psychological experimentation, interviews, or further surveys. We would expect this would result in multiple separate examinations. We were mindful that we didn't wish to bombard participants in the questionnaire with too many questions. This typical desire on the part of researchers who pursue the questionnaire approach is one of the major drawbacks of the research method we applied, but it is one that is advisable.

In conclusion, we feel that whilst probably not singularly successful in achieving the objectives set out at the start of our research, we have pointed the interested researcher to potentially fruitful areas to pursue, and to potential pitfalls that lie along the way.

Reflections

In this last section, we will provide a short summary of the experiences we had while writing this paper and outline some of the limitations of our research. Further to this, we will identify what it is that we feel we learnt during the process.

As was alluded to in the main body of the text, we became keenly aware of our statistical limitations very early in the process. We did attempt to sidestep these concerns by approaching our data analysis from the perspective of simple descriptive statistics but clearly this reduces the potential avenues of enquiry we could pursue. As just said, we feel this glaring shortcoming did not hinder the nature of our research completely, but we can see the potential for more statistically skilled researchers to expand on such works in the future. Hopefully, that might include us if our maths-anxiety doesn't get in the way too much.

A further limitation we had was less of our own making and that pertains to the relative dearth of articles or other scholarly works on the narrow field we chose to investigate. This was to some extent a poor choice on our part, but we felt it necessary to do so as we sought to provide some educationally valuable results. The results of that choice are left to the reader to judge but we suspect that they too will highlight that failing.

Regarding the limitations of the survey questionnaire itself, there are a few points we could make. Firstly, it proved a somewhat difficult task to choose the questions we posed on the questionnaire. Indeed, a previous attempt was deemed rather inadequate to our requirements. In this regard, we had to be wary of influencing the potential respondents too much as was cited earlier in our research methodology chapter. This involved taking care in the choice of the questions we asked, the order in which the questions we asked, and the list of multiple choice answers we listed.

Secondly, and this was mentioned at length in earlier chapters, the size of the sample was somewhat lower than we hoped. Again, logistical considerations and financial constraints were largely the key factors in this regard. Clearly, all this leaves our findings as more speculative than we would have wished. On a related point, as oft-cited in our paper, we are cognizant of the lack of diversity in the populations from which we drew our samples. Not only do the bulk of our respondents hail from Latin America but they consist of students whose economic status we could reasonably surmise is somewhat uniform. Nevertheless, we hope that for the Latin American markets (not an insignificant sector) at least our findings hold some positive value.

In respect to the writing of the paper itself, we should highlight above all the importance for a researcher to have a clarity of purpose and provide focused analysis. Unfortunately, we cannot claim to have reached those standards. Nevertheless, we can only hope to learn from our mistakes and do better in the future. We did, however, see a marked improvement in our writing style. This was in no large part down to my English teachers who guided me as to what styles are appropriate in the writing of such papers, but I would like to think it is also down to a very concerted effort on my part to improve. I hope the results of this are demonstrated here and if not, I can only apologise to any of the readers.

In relation to the previous points, we feel our time management skills need improvement. Due to uncertainty over the course of action we would take, we were left in a position that we had precious little time to conduct our research. As such, the process of writing the paper was somewhat less structured than we would have liked. The blame for this lies solely at our door and it proved a rather anxiety-inducing lesson as the final few weeks approached. Furthermore, the fact that we are not a native speaker of English added to the stress. While accepting that we have seen an undoubted improvement in our writing, it was an arduous task and one which to some extent, we are glad has come to an end.

In summary, with everything being said, we found the process of writing this paper to be educational if a little stressful at times, and possibly we need a little time off before endeavouring to attempt to do another one.

Finally, I wish to thank my supervisor Nadia Bhatti whose assistance was invaluable and ask her forgiveness for any possible stress I must have caused during the thesis writing process. I know it must not have been easy. I will be forever grateful.

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