



Exploring Emotional Intelligence, Soft Skills, and Communication Effectiveness in Moroccan Socio-professional Contexts: A Quantitative Study

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Abstract: Effective communication is crucial in Moroccan socio-professional contexts. This study explores the interplay between emotional intelligence, soft skills, expression techniques, and communication effectiveness in Moroccan workplaces and interpersonal interactions. Drawing on theories by Goleman, Bradberry, and Greaves, we investigate how individuals with heightened emotional intelligence navigate diverse scenarios in Morocco, adapting their communication styles to cultural norms. Soft skills like adaptability and empathy are examined for their contributions to communication effectiveness within the unique Moroccan context. Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory guides our exploration of intentional expression techniques, considering socio-cultural nuances. Gardner's multiple intelligences theory broadens our understanding of communication beyond linguistic intelligence, particularly relevant in Morocco. Employing a quantitative survey method with Likert scale items tailored to Moroccan socio-professional settings, our results deepen comprehension of how emotional intelligence and soft skills shape communication dynamics. This research bridges theory and practice, offering insights into effective communication within Moroccan contexts and providing a basis for tailored interventions.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, soft skills, communication effectiveness, Coordinated Management of Meaning, quantitative survey.

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective communication and the cultivation of soft skills stand as essential pillars in navigating the complexities of modern-day interactions, be it within professional realms or personal relationships. It is widely acknowledged by researchers and thought leaders that these elements wield a profound influence on individual growth, organizational dynamics, and societal interactions.

In the dynamic landscape of today's workplaces and interpersonal dynamics, the ability to communicate effectively serves as a cornerstone for success. Key concepts such as emotional intelligence, as championed by Goleman (1995), extend our understanding of communication beyond mere verbal expression. Emotional intelligence encompasses the nuanced comprehension and regulation of emotions, both within oneself and others, playing a pivotal role in leadership, teamwork, and overall workplace effectiveness.

Furthermore, the significance of communication in high-stakes scenarios is underscored by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, and Switzler (2002) in their work "*Crucial Conversations*." They emphasize the criticality of mastering communication skills for navigating challenging discussions, resolving conflicts, and nurturing positive relationships, particularly in elevated situations.

Bradberry and Greaves (2009), renowned for their contributions to emotional intelligence research, shed light on the indispensable role of soft skills in personal and professional development. Soft skills encompass a spectrum of interpersonal attributes such as empathy, adaptability, and communication proficiency, all of which are instrumental in fostering effective collaboration, leadership, and overall emotional intelligence.

Expanding the horizons of intelligence, Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (1983) acknowledges that cognitive abilities encompass not only linguistic but also interpersonal and intrapersonal dimensions. This broader perspective underscores the essentiality of soft skills in crafting well-rounded and effective communicators.

Expression techniques, comprising both verbal and non-verbal elements, form the foundation of effective communication. Tannen (1990), a linguist specializing in gender and communication, sheds light on how distinct communication styles influence understanding and relationships. Pearce's Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory (1980) delves into how individuals construct shared meanings through communication, emphasizing the deliberate nature of expression.

This research endeavours to unravel the intricate interplay between effective communication, soft skills, and expression techniques. By synthesizing the insights of these esteemed researchers, we aim to deepen our understanding of how these elements underpin success in the workplace, enrich interpersonal relationships, and shape societal interactions. Through this exploration, we seek to unearth practical strategies for enhancing communication proficiency and nurturing meaningful connections across diverse spheres of life.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

While considerable research has underscored the importance of effective communication, soft skills, and expression techniques, there remains a need for a more understanding of their dynamics. The existing literature, as illuminated by leading scholars in the field, provides valuable insights, yet certain gaps persist, necessitating further exploration.

One pressing issue centers on the practical application of soft skills and expression techniques in real-world scenarios. Despite the acknowledgment of their significance by researchers such as Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves, there is a gap in our understanding of how individuals can consistently harness these skills to navigate the complexities of diverse interpersonal and professional contexts. Daniel Goleman's emphasis on emotional intelligence prompts the question of whether individuals with heightened emotional intelligence are better equipped to adapt their communication strategies to varying situations. This leads to a broader inquiry into the specific soft skills that contribute most significantly to effective communication, a topic that has yet to be comprehensively addressed in the existing literature.

To address these gaps, this research aims to answer the following key questions:

- a. To what extent do individuals with higher emotional intelligence exhibit intentional and context-sensitive expression techniques in diverse professional scenarios?
- b. How does emotional intelligence influence the intentional adaptation of non-verbal communication in various communication contexts?
- c. What role do intentional and context-sensitive expression techniques play in contributing to effective communication in professional settings?
- d. In what ways do soft skills, particularly adaptability and active listening, intersect with intentional expression techniques, and how do they collectively contribute to communication effectiveness?

By exploring these research questions, we seek to contribute to a deeper understanding of the practical implications of soft skills and expression techniques in communication, addressing the gaps highlighted by leading researchers in the field. This research endeavours to offer insights that are not only theoretically grounded but also hold practical implications for individuals, organizations, and educators aiming to enhance communication skills and foster meaningful connections.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

At the core of our conceptual framework lies the multifaceted interplay between emotional intelligence, soft skills, and intentional expression techniques. The framework has evolved through empirical findings and theoretical integration, shedding light on the dynamics that shape effective communication in diverse professional scenarios.

Drawing from Goleman, Bradberry, and Greaves' Emotional Intelligence (EI) model, the framework acknowledges the pivotal role of self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management as integral soft skills. Our study provides empirical support, revealing that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to exhibit intentional and context-sensitive expression techniques.

Informed by W. Barnett Pearce's CMM theory, the framework emphasizes communication as a coordinated process of meaning-making. Statistical findings, particularly positive ratings in the conscious adaptation of non-verbal communication, align with CMM principles. This integration suggests that individuals with elevated emotional intelligence engage in intentional and context-sensitive expression techniques, contributing to the construction of shared meanings in professional interactions.

The framework acknowledges the intersection of soft skills, such as adaptability and active listening, with intentional expression techniques. The positive ratings in conscious adaptation of non-verbal communication underscore the practical implications of these intentional expressions. This intersection highlights how individuals strategically employ intentional expression techniques to enhance adaptability and active listening, collectively contributing to effective communication.

Integrating Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, particularly interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences, broadens our understanding. The framework recognizes that individuals leverage diverse forms of intelligence to inform their intentional expression techniques, emphasizing the rich tapestry of soft skills in communication.

In summary, the evolved conceptual framework synthesizes empirical findings and theoretical insights, providing a nuanced understanding of how emotional intelligence, soft skills, and intentional expression techniques collectively shape effective communication in professional settings. This framework invites further exploration and application, offering a robust foundation for enhancing communication proficiency across diverse contexts.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

Effective communication is a dynamic interplay of emotional intelligence, soft skills, and intentional expression techniques, intricately shaping interactions in diverse professional scenarios. This research embarks on a nuanced exploration, guided by refined research objectives and hypotheses. Our first objective is to unravel the extent to which individuals with elevated emotional intelligence showcase intentional and context-sensitive expression techniques, aligning with the principles of Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory. Building on this, the second objective delves into the specific influence of emotional intelligence on intentional adaptation of non-verbal communication across various communication contexts. Moving forward, the third objective seeks to illuminate the practical implications of intentional and context-sensitive expression techniques in contributing to effective communication within professional settings. Lastly, the fourth objective delves into the intersection of soft skills, particularly adaptability and active listening, with intentional expression techniques, unraveling their collective contribution to communication effectiveness. These objectives guide our refined hypotheses, fostering a focused exploration of the intricate connections between emotional intelligence, soft skills, and intentional expression, laying the groundwork for a deeper understanding of effective communication dynamics.

In the intricate landscape of effective communication, our research is driven by refined hypotheses that illuminate the foundational elements influencing the dynamics of interpersonal interactions. At the core of our exploration is the hypothesis that individuals with higher emotional intelligence will exhibit intentional and context-sensitive expression techniques, echoing the principles of Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory. As we delve into the specific influence of emotional intelligence on intentional adaptation of non-verbal communication, our second hypothesis aims to unravel the nuanced connection between heightened emotional intelligence and intentional expressions across diverse communication contexts. The third hypothesis directs our attention to the practical implications of intentional and context-sensitive expression techniques, probing their role in contributing to effective communication within the professional realm. Completing this framework is our fourth hypothesis, navigating the intersection of soft skills—particularly adaptability and active

listening—with intentional expression techniques, as we seek to understand their collaborative impact on communication effectiveness. These hypotheses serve as guiding beacons, shaping our inquiry into the intricate relationships that underpin effective communication, paving the way for a comprehensive exploration of these essential dynamics.

5. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The survey instrument is carefully crafted to measure emotional intelligence components, specific soft skills, expression techniques, and perceived communication effectiveness. Likert scale items are employed to gather quantitative data on participants' self-perceptions and behaviours.

The quantitative survey methodology chosen for this research not only aligns with the research objectives but also offers a systematic, efficient, and statistically rigorous approach to exploring the intricate relationships within the realms of emotional intelligence, soft skills, expression techniques, and communication effectiveness. The methodological choices made underscore the commitment to obtaining reliable and generalizable insights that contribute to the broader understanding of effective communication across diverse contexts.

This quantitative study conducted among profiles such as students, university professors, professionals with white collar jobs and others such as doctors, nurses and engineers with a sample size (N) of 200. The data collection tool employed is a combined questionnaire incorporating closed questions to provide additional insights. Data analysis adheres to descriptive statistical principles using the Excel spreadsheet software.

6. RESULTS

Among the 200 participants in the study, 47% are female; 36% belong to the category of students, 29% are “white collar”, whereas 23% are professors. 36% of all respondents are aged between 45-54, 25% are aged 18-24 and 35-44, 14% belong to the category of 25-34. Whereas 5% are aged 55 years and above.

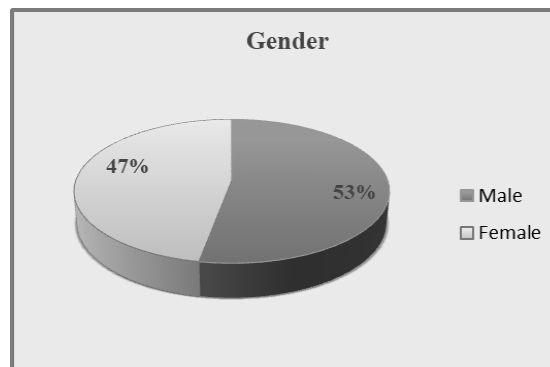


Fig1. Distribution of responses regarding their gender

A balanced representation of gender was achieved with 53% male and 47% female respondents. The age distribution is diverse, with a significant representation across various age groups.

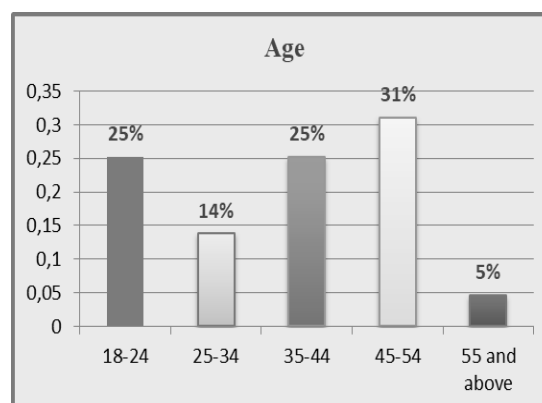


Fig2. Distribution of responses regarding their age

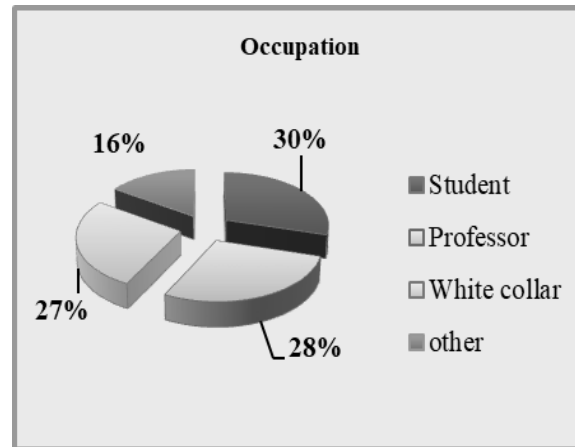


Fig3. Distribution of responses regarding their occupation

The respondents are varied in occupation, with a mix of students, professionals, and other categories

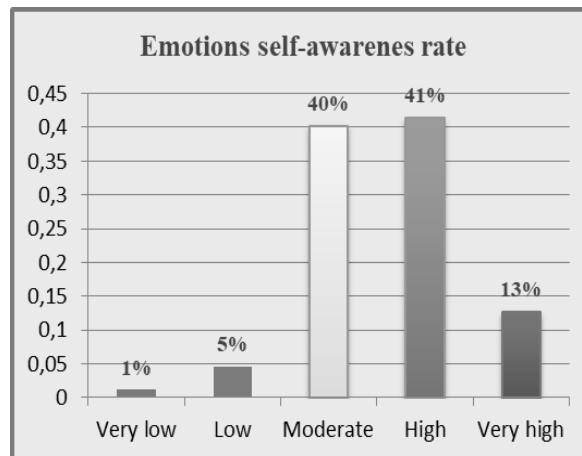


Fig4. Distribution of responses based on emotions self-awareness rate

Individuals with higher self-awareness of their emotions demonstrate better communication effectiveness. 41% of respondents rated their self-awareness as “High”. This supports the hypothesis suggesting a positive relationship between self-awareness and potential communication effectiveness.

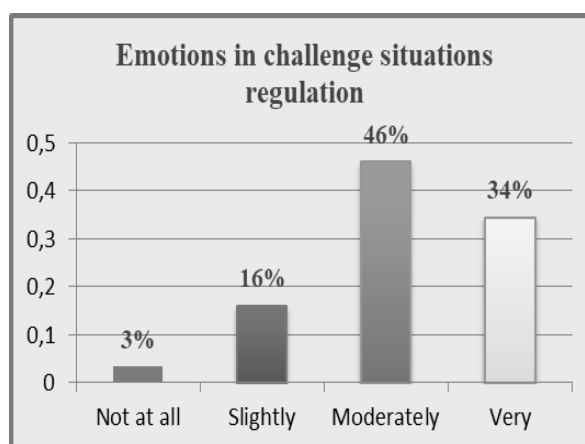


Fig5. Distribution of responses based on the ability to regulate emotions in challenging situations

The ability to regulate emotions in challenging situations positively correlates with perceived communication effectiveness as 40% of respondents reported being able to regulate their emotions “Very” effectively. The results indicate a potential positive correlation supporting the idea.

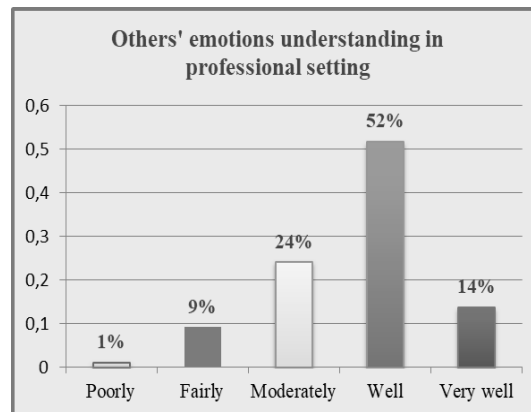


Fig6. Distribution of responses regarding understanding others' emotions in professional settings

Understanding the emotion of others in a professional setting positively correlates, associated with communication effectiveness. 52% of respondents claimed to understand others' emotions "Well". This supports the idea suggesting a positive link between understanding others' emotions and communication effectiveness.

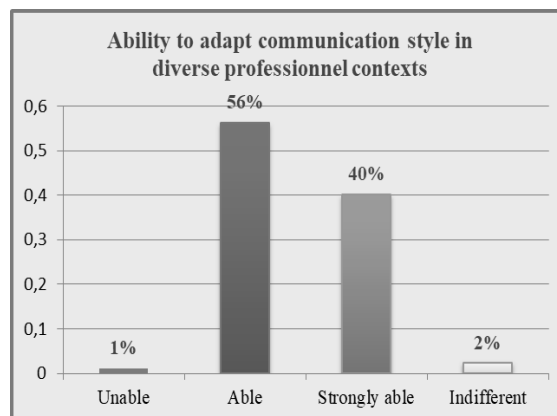


Fig7. Distribution of responses based on the ability to adapt communication style in diverse professional contexts

Individuals with a higher ability to adapt communication styles in diverse contexts perceive themselves as more effective communicators. In this respect, 56% of respondents rated themselves as "able", whereas, 40% rated themselves as "strongly able" to adapt their communication style. This data supports the idea suggesting a positive relationship between adaptability and perceived communication effectiveness.

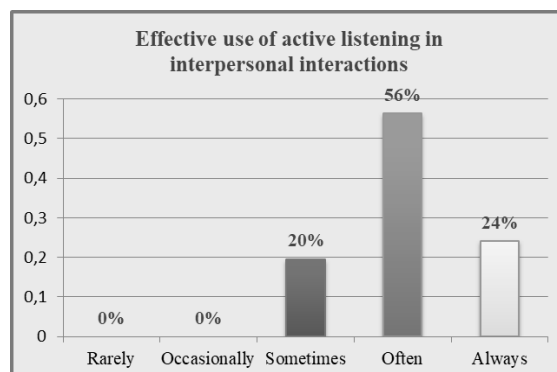


Fig8. Distribution of responses regarding the effective use of active listening in interpersonal interactions

Effective use of active listening in interpersonal interactions positively correlates with perceived communication effectiveness as 56% of respondents reported using listening "often". This supports the assumption related to a potential positive correlation between active listening and communication effectiveness.

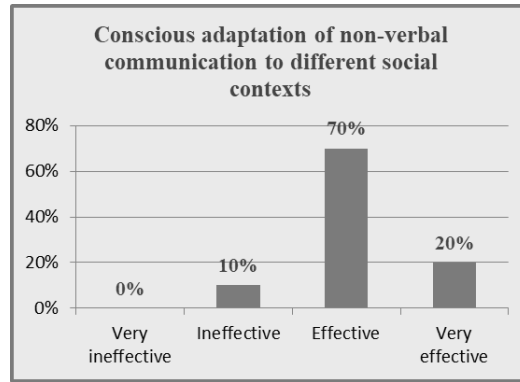


Fig9. Distribution of responses based on conscious adaptation of non-verbal communication to different social contexts

Conscious adaptation of non-verbal communication to different social contexts positively correlates with perceived communication effectiveness in the sense that 70% of the respondents reported non-verbal communication as “effective” or “very effective” for 20% of them. This result actually supports the hypothesis suggesting a positive correlation between conscious adaptation of non-verbal communication and perceived effectiveness.

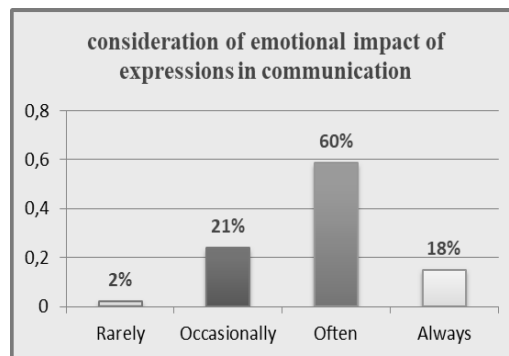


Fig10. Distribution of responses based on consideration of emotional impact of expressions in communication

60% of the respondents consider the emotional impact of expressions in communication frequency as “often”. This indicates a positive association between considering emotional impact and perceived effectiveness.



Fig11. Distribution of responses regarding the self-perceived communication effectiveness in professional settings

Individuals who perceive themselves as effective communicators believe their communication has a positive impact on others as 60% of the respondents rated themselves as “effective” while 34% rated themselves “very effective”. This result actually supports the hypothesis suggesting a positive link between self-perceived effectiveness and perceived impact on others.

7. DISCUSSION

Let’s delve deeper into the interpretation of statistical findings in the context of Goleman’s emotional intelligence model and the Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory.

7.1. Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Model

A significant percentage of respondents reported having “high” or “very high” self-awareness. In the context of Goleman's model, high self-awareness suggests an individual's ability to recognize and understand their own emotions. This foundational element is crucial for effective communication as it enables individuals to navigate and express their feelings appropriately.

A notable number of respondents, as well, reported being able to regulate their emotions with a significant percentage stating they can do so “effectively” or “very effectively”. Effective self-regulation, according to Goleman's model, allows individuals to manage their emotions in challenging situations. This skill is vital in professional contexts, contributing to a composed and thoughtful communication style.

Furthermore, a considerable proportion of respondents claimed to understand the emotions of others in professional settings, with a high percentage rating themselves as understanding "Well" or "Very Well." This high social awareness aligns with Goleman's emphasis on recognizing and understanding others' emotions. This ability enhances interpersonal communication, facilitating empathy and consideration for others' perspectives.

Finally, the ability to adapt communication styles, reported by a significant number of respondents, supports effective relationship management. In fact, relationship management involves adapting communication styles to build positive interactions. The statistical findings suggest that individuals with high emotional intelligence, as measured by Goleman's model, may excel in fostering positive relationships through effective communication (Goleman, 1995).

7.2. Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) Theory

The statistical analysis has revealed positive ratings in the conscious adaptation of non-verbal communication, indicating that individuals exhibit a heightened awareness and deliberate adjustment of their non-verbal expressions in various communication scenarios. Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory posits that communication is not merely a transmission of information but a dynamic and coordinated process where individuals collaboratively construct shared meanings. In this light, our findings align with the core tenets of CMM theory, suggesting that individuals engage in a coordinated effort to shape the meanings attributed to their expressions.

Our research points to a potential correlation between high emotional intelligence and intentional, context-sensitive expression techniques. Individuals with elevated emotional intelligence levels may demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the social context in which they communicate. This heightened awareness enables them to tailor their expressions intentionally, fostering clearer and more meaningful communication.

The integration of CMM theory enhances our understanding of these findings, emphasizing that effective communication goes beyond individual actions. It involves a shared process of meaning-making, where intentional and context-sensitive expression techniques contribute to the construction of shared understandings. This insight underscores the intricate interplay between emotional intelligence, intentional expression, and effective communication, offering a holistic perspective on the dynamics of human interaction in professional settings.

8. CONNECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings provide an integrated understanding of the relationship between emotional intelligence and communication. Individuals with high emotional intelligence, characterized by self-awareness, self-regulation, and social awareness, are more likely to engage in effective communication by adapting soft skills. These connections have practical implications for designing interventions and training programs. Tailored programs can be developed to enhance emotional intelligence components, fostering better communication skills and promoting the intentional and context-sensitive use of expression techniques. By connecting findings to established theories, our research contributes to the ongoing discourse on emotional intelligence and communication. It reinforces the theoretical foundations laid by Goleman and CMM theorists, adding empirical support to their concepts.

9. CONCLUSION

In unravelling the complexities of effective communication, this research embarked on a journey through the interwoven realms of emotional intelligence, soft skills, and intentional expression techniques. Grounded in the foundational Emotional Intelligence model proposed by Goleman, Bradberry, and Greaves, our exploration delved into the pivotal role of self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management as integral soft skills shaping communication dynamics.

Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory, championed by W. Barnett Pearce, underscored the intentional aspect of expression techniques. Recognizing that individuals co-create meaning through communication, our framework illuminated how intentional expressions, both verbal and non-verbal, contribute to the construction of shared meanings. The emphasis on considering the social context and tailoring expressions emerged as a key facet in fostering clearer and more meaningful communication.

Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences broadened our understanding, acknowledging diverse forms of intelligence, particularly focusing on interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. The integration of Gardner's perspective highlighted the rich tapestry of soft skills individuals employ, offering unique avenues for effective communication based on their distinct intelligences.

The Crucial Conversations model, as elucidated by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, and Switzler, reinforced the significance of soft skills in managing high-stakes communication. Dialogue, active listening, and emotional regulation emerged as crucial components, underlining the importance of these skills in navigating challenging communication scenarios and ensuring successful outcomes.

As our research unfolded, the empirical journey through a quantitative survey methodology provided invaluable insights. The results not only affirmed the interconnectedness of emotional intelligence, soft skills, and intentional expression but also unveiled the nuanced ways in which individuals leverage these elements in their communication.

In the broader landscape of effective communication, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of how individuals can enhance their proficiency by strategically developing and applying soft skills and expression techniques. The implications extend to practical strategies for organizations, emphasizing the cultivation of emotional intelligence, tailored training programs, and the recognition of diverse intelligences as essential components of fostering effective communication across various contexts.

In conclusion, our exploration signifies not just the culmination of a research endeavour but an invitation to continue probing the intricate fabric of communication. As we navigate the ever-evolving landscape of human interaction, the role of emotional intelligence, soft skills, and intentional expression techniques remains paramount, guiding us toward a future where communication thrives as an art informed by understanding, empathy, and adaptability.

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