Gender Influence Study on Communication Style

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of the article is to analyze the difference in communication style in men and women. The experimental group consists of 60 respondents (30 men and 30 women), aged between 20 and 30 years. The questionnaire on "Communication Style Analysis" contains 60 items with True / False dichotomous answers. The dependent variable of the study is the communication style and the independent variable is gender. The aim of the research is to determine the causal relationship between gender and communication style.

KEYWORDS: communication style, assertive communication style, passive communication style, aggressive communication style, non-assertive communication style

Introduction

"In the broadest sense, we speak of communication every time a system or a source influences another system, in this case a recipient, through alternative signals that can be transmitted through the channel that connects them" (Osgood 1987). The article "Gender differences in aggression as a function of challenge – A meta-analysis" (Bettencourt & Miller 1996) analyzes several experimental studies that highlight differences in behavior between the sexes in terms of aggression (Eagly & Steffen 1986 in Frody, Hyde 1984 and White 1983). Older studies tend to highlight the role of biology in human aggression (e.g., Maccoby & Jacklin 1974) as opposed to current ones that question the role of the biological (e.g., Adams 1992 in Bentos 1992).

Regardless of the role that biological factors play, theorists argue that gender and cultural norms are differentiators of aggression (e.g. Bandura 1973 in Berkowitz 1989).

Communication has the role of putting people in touch with each other, in the environment in which they evolve. In the communication process, through the content of the message, the aim is to achieve certain goals and convey meanings.

J.J. Van Cuilenburd, O. Scholten, G. W. Noomen define communication as "a process by which a transmitter transmits information to the receiver through a channel, in order to produce certain effects on the receiver". In other words, each communication process has a specific structure represented by a certain type of relationship developed by the sender-message-receiver trinomial.

Effective and efficient communication depends largely on the way we communicate, ie the style of communication. Style is not an exclusive property of literary texts it is specific to any act of communication.

The style of communication refers to the set of particularities of manifestation, characteristic of a person, in the act of communication. Style designates:
- The specific ways of receiving /decoding the message;
- Personal ways of processing /interpreting messages;
- The specific ways of expressing the answer, the personal particularities of feedback.

All these derive from the uniqueness and individuality of the human being, being the expression of the human personality. The communication style is:
- An indicator of how a person structures their world of social relations;
- An indicator of the way information is processed and this information is transformed into behavioral facts, into practical, social, evaluative judgments.

The communication style is determined by three variables:

- The person's attitudes, as constant ways of relating it to social life, to peers and to oneself;

- Learned communication models - assertive, non-assertive, aggressive (with its passive-aggressive variant), manipulative;

- Temperament, as a type of nerve cell reactivity.

Four styles of communication are recognized:

- Non-assertive (passive running attitude)

- Aggressive (attacking attitude)

- Manipulator (attitude of manipulation, as a compensation for one's own weaknesses)

- Assertive (constructive attitude)

Objectives, hypotheses and variables

1. Objectives

The study aims to investigate the influence of independent variables (cause): gender and age, on the dependent variable (effect): communication style, highlighting whether there are significant differences determined by gender in terms of communication style.

2. Assumptions and variables

1. General research hypothesis (H1): There are significant differences between females and males, in terms of communication style;

2. Operational / working hypothesis of the research: Males have a preference for aggressive style, while females use, mainly, non-assertive style;

3. Null hypothesis (HO): There are no significant differences between females and males in terms of communication style.

Experimental design

1. Participants

To perform the experiment, we randomly selected two samples of 30 people: a sample of girls and a sample of boys. Both samples are made up of students from the Universities of Bucharest, aged between 20-30 years.

Before applying the questionnaire, the participants were informed about the experiment individually about the purpose of the study (making a research report), about the importance of sincerity in formulating the answers given and about how to answer (True / False).

2. Tools and Procedure

Instruments

To conduct the research we used the S.C. (Communication styles). The test is relevant for the 4 fundamental styles of communication (assertive, non-assertive, aggressive and manipulative). The results were processed with SPSS.

The experiment includes two main variables: the score obtained in the test (dependent variable) and the gender of the participants, this being the independent variable. Participants were randomly selected in the 20-30 age groups so that age did not act as a parasitic variable.

Procedure

Respondent samples were independent, with no control group. The tool used in data collection was a Communication Style Analysis Questionnaire, consisting of 60 items with dichotomous responses.

3. Database Structure

Figure 1. Database Structure

Results and interpretations
1. Descriptive statistics

Statistics

	genul respondentilor	varsta respondentului	profesia respondentului	scorul obtinut la stilul nonasertiv	scorul obtinut la stilul agresiv	scorul obtinut la stilul manipulator	scorul obtinut la stilul asertiv	interpretarea scorurilor
N Valid	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	1,5000	22,7333	1,2167	6,0500	6,0167	5,5667	11,1000	4,1333
Std. Error of Mean	,06509	,42511	,07167	,38870	,42286	,31115	,29082	,13120
Median	1,5000	21,0000	1,0000	6,0000	6,0000	5,0000	11,0000	4,0000
Mode	1,00ᵃ	20,00	1,00	4,00	8,00	5,00	11,00	4,00
Std. Deviation	,50422	3,29286	,55515	3,01086	3,27544	2,41019	2,25268	1,01625
Variance	,254	10,843	,308	9,065	10,729	5,809	5,075	1,033
Skewness	,000	1,160	2,518	,559	,281	1,155	-,985	-,978
Std. Error of Skewness	,309	,309	,309	,309	,309	,309	,309	,309
Kurtosis	-2,070	,097	5,228	-,377	-,975	1,294	1,177	3,644
Std. Error of Kurtosis	,608	,608	,608	,608	,608	,608	,608	,608
Range	1,00	10,00	2,00	11,00	12,00	11,00	11,00	5,00
Minimum	1,00	20,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	1,00	4,00	1,00
Maximum	2,00	30,00	3,00	13,00	13,00	12,00	15,00	6,00
Sum	90,00	1364,00	73,00	363,00	361,00	334,00	666,00	248,00

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown
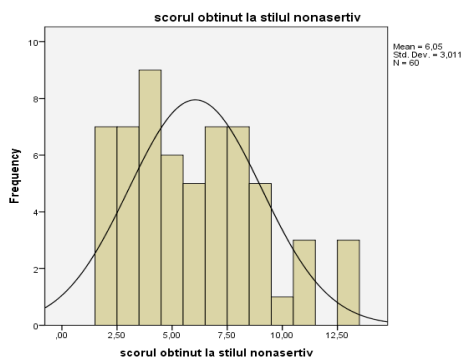
Figure 2. Descriptive statistics

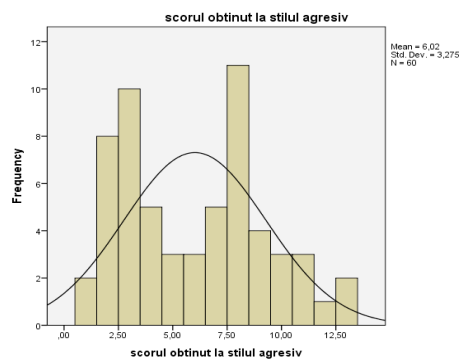Figure 3. Score obtained at the non-assertive style
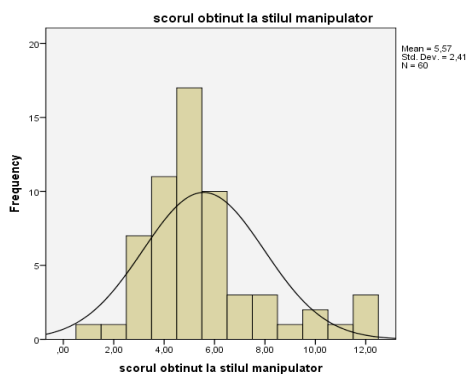

Figure 4. Score obtained at the aggressive style

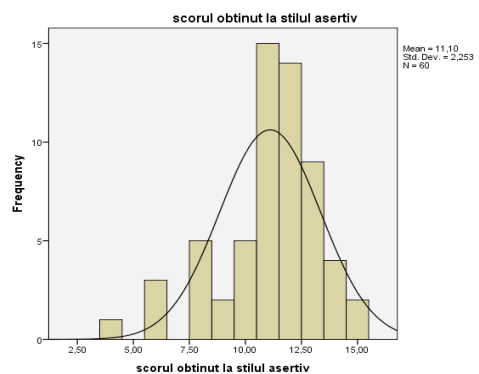Figure 5. Score obtained at the manipulative style

Figure 6. Score obtained at the assertive style

Correlations

			scorul obtinut la stilul nonasertiv	scorul obtinut la stilul agresiv	scorul obtinut la stilul manipulator	scorul obtinut la stilul asertiv	interpretarea scorurilor
Kendall's tau_b	scorul obtinut la stilul nonasertiv	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,072	,366**	-,135	-,027
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,453	,000	,170	,801
		N	60	60	60	60	60
	scorul obtinut la stilul agresiv	Correlation Coefficient	,072	1,000	,150	,056	,325**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,453	.	,128	,569	,002
		N	60	60	60	60	60
	scorul obtinut la stilul manipulator	Correlation Coefficient	,366**	,150	1,000	-,116	,047
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,128	.	,249	,669
		N	60	60	60	60	60
	scorul obtinut la stilul asertiv	Correlation Coefficient	-,135	,056	-,116	1,000	-,130
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,170	,569	,249	.	,234
		N	60	60	60	60	60
	interpretarea scorurilor	Correlation Coefficient	-,027	,325**	,047	-,130	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,801	,002	,669	,234	.
		N	60	60	60	60	60
Spearman's rho	scorul obtinut la stilul nonasertiv	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,101	,453**	-,184	-,023
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,444	,000	,159	,860
		N	60	60	60	60	60
	scorul obtinut la stilul agresiv	Correlation Coefficient	,101	1,000	,200	,063	,403**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,444	.	,125	,633	,001
		N	60	60	60	60	60
	scorul obtinut la stilul manipulator	Correlation Coefficient	,453**	,200	1,000	-,147	,066
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,125	.	,263	,615
		N	60	60	60	60	60
	scorul obtinut la stilul asertiv	Correlation Coefficient	-,184	,063	-,147	1,000	-,138
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,159	,633	,263	.	,292
		N	60	60	60	60	60
	interpretarea scorurilor	Correlation Coefficient	-,023	,403**	,066	-,138	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,860	,001	,615	,292	.
		N	60	60	60	60	60

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 7. Correlations

At the level of the group of participants, we noticed that the gender factor does not have a significant influence on the communication style (assertive, non-assertive, aggressive, and manipulative).

For the assertive style, the difference of the averages between feminine and masculine is not significant, m1 = 11.13 and m2 = 11.07. It follows that gender does not influence the style of communication in this case.

For the non-assertive style, the difference of the averages between feminine and masculine is small, quite insignificant, m1 = 5.70 and m2 = 6.40. In this case, too, gender does not have a determining role for the communication style, but it has some influence.

Group Statistics

	Genul respondentilor	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Scorul obtinut la stilul non-asertiv	Masculin	30	5,70	3,239	,591
	Feminin	30	6,40	2,774	,507

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Scorul obtinut la stilul non-asertiv	Equal variances assumed	,836	,364	-,899	58	,372	-,700	,779	-2,259	,859
	Equal variances not assumed			-,899	56,661	,372	-,700	,779	-2,259	,859

Figure 8. Group Statistics. Independent Samples test (non-assertive style)

For the aggressive style, the difference of the averages between feminine and masculine can be considered significant, m1 = 6.70 and m2 = 5.33. Therefore, in this case we can say that gender influences the communication style, men being more aggressive than women. We mention that the result is influenced by the fact that only one person (male) was assigned the aggressive style as the predominant communication style.

Group Statistics

	Genul respondentilor	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Scorul obtinut la stilul agresiv	Masculin	30	6,70	3,271	,597
	Feminin	30	5,33	3,188	,582

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Scorul obtinut la stilul agresiv	Equal variances assumed	,172	,680	1,639	58	,107	1,367	,834	-,303	3,036
	Equal variances not assumed			1,639	57,961	,107	1,367	,834	-,303	3,036

Figure 9. Group Statistics. Independent Samples test (aggressive style)

For the manipulative style, the difference of the averages between feminine and masculine is insignificant, m1 = 5.63 and m2 = 5.50. Even in this case, gender does not play a decisive role for the communication style.

Group Statistics

	Genul respondentilor	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Scorul obtinut la stilul manipulator	Masculin	30	5,63	2,606	,476
	Feminin	30	5,50	2,240	,409

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Scorul obtinut la stilul manipulator	Equal variances assumed	,027	,871	,213	58	,832	,133	,627	-1,123	1,389
	Equal variances not assumed			,213	56,719	,832	,133	,627	-1,123	1,390

Figure 10. Group Statistics. Independent Samples test (manipulative style)

2. Checking the hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The average level of non-assertive style is higher in women (m = 6.4) than in men (m = 5.7);

The non-assertive style is in direct correlation with the manipulative style;

Hypothesis 2: The average level of aggressive style is higher in men (m = 6.7) than in women (m = 5.3);

Aggressive style is in direct correlation with the total score;

Hypothesis 3: The average level for manipulative and assertive styles is approximately equal for men and women.

The assertive style is inversely correlated with the non-assertive style.

Conclusions

The results obtained from the statistical processing of the data show us that there are no significant differences between the way men and women communicate. We noticed differences in the aggressive style (the difference between male and female averages being the largest = 1.47). We could say that even in the case of the non-assertive style we notice some notable differences (the difference between the masculine and feminine averages being = 0.70. In the assertive and manipulative styles the differences are insignificant.

Thus, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected, the objective of our research being met and the research problem being validated. Given the noticeable differences, in some cases (in the case of aggressive and non-assertive style), we can still admit the research hypothesis that, communication styles differ by gender. It seems that the working hypothesis is also confirmed, as we expected to obtain higher scores in the aggressive style from men and higher scores in the non-assertive style from women, and this assumption proved to be correct.

We can propose, also on this research topic, to increase the number of subjects to see if the differences between the environments are more obvious, the results being statistically significant. At the same time, we could continue on the analysis of communication styles according to age categories, applied to the same subjects throughout their lives, in order to observe if the style changes with age.

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