

## Identifying and Classify Success and Failure Factors in International Business Negotiations with Iranian Merchants

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### Abstract

Business is not easy with one country. It requires understanding the style of business negotiation with that country, and the negotiation process is the most critical factor in predicting success or failure in business negotiations. Therefore, negotiating across cultures requires comprehension of the differences. Due to Iran's position in a strategic region of the world, which is in the Middle East, it has the potential to expand trade with other countries. In the current research, the success and failure factors in international business negotiations is classified using Friedman test. This study consists of two sections: qualitative and quantitative that calls a mixed approach. The output of the qualitative section was the design of the research questionnaire, and in the quantitative section, the research findings illustrated that among the 39 success factors, the importance of good personal relationships, the Iranians' need for products, the merchant's knowledge of Iranian business practices, and the among the 31 failure factors, the lack of Iranian budgets, the unwillingness of Iranians to demand Good financial and communication failure are the most important factors identified in the success/failure of negotiating with the Iranians. Due to the findings of this study and the cultural characteristics of Iranians, items have been suggested for the proper management of these factors while negotiating with Iranians.

**Keywords:** International Business Negotiations, Iranian Merchants, Iran Culture, Commerce Knowledge, Success and Failure Factors.

### 1. Introduction

Iran has its own individual culture like all other societies, which is of different values. These values, which are at the heart of the culture of Iranian society, have a profound effect on all Iranian social behaviors and determine their orientation (Venous, Azadarmaki and Karami, 2011). Furthermore, this country's growing economic market has increased the interest of other countries in trade with it. On the other hand, commerce with a country is not easy and should be identified as the style of business negotiations with that country. The variables considered in the style of negotiating with countries include cultural issues, business attitudes, dominance on language, politics, history of the country, negotiation strategy, advertising, and procurement; these factors can cause success in business relationships with a country (Martin and Larsen, 1999). That stands to the reason why many countries lose their international projects due to the limited knowledge of their negotiators. Therefore, they should have a proper understanding of the style of negotiation, culture, and behavior in any country (Rhode, 2010). Culture is a significant variable affecting international trade negotiations. Cultural values and norms can influence the success or failure of negotiations (Christopher, Maria and Syed, 2005).

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Received 3 September 2020; Received in revised form 15 November 2020; Accepted 30 November 2020

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Identification of the culture and customs of a country are one of the key elements when it comes to the development of commercial relations and connections with the country. During negotiation between two countries with different cultural backgrounds, failure to consider these differences can play a hindrance role in business negotiations (Shahdadnejad and Nakhaei, 2011). It is claimed that Iranians are people with a high-context culture (Hall, 1976), and cultural characteristics affect the communications and business negotiations colossally (Yeganeh, 2011). Given this significance, this paper aims to identify the factors of success and failure in international trade negotiations with Iranian merchants from the foreign merchants' perspective.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Influence of culture on the negotiation style**

Negotiation is a process in which two or more sides have opposing views related to a decision based on mutual interest (Zartman, 1978). When two parties meet, this is an intercultural confront because they have different methods of understanding, discovering, and creating reality, so all negotiations are intercultural (Martin, Mayfield, Mayfield and Herbig, 1998). Furthermore, when international trade negotiations fail, "this failure is often attributed to cultural misunderstandings" (Palich, Carini and Livingstone, 2002). Culture is comprised of features or attributes of acquired behavior, and is transmitted through signs, which might be human-made, and forms distinguished differences between groups. In addition, the core of culture is based on historical and traditional aspects and their values (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952). Hernandez-Requejo & Graham (2008) define the culture by its components, such as values, religious rituals, intellectual signs, and processes. In addition, many scholars have discussed the components of culture, language, religion, social culture, values, and communication (Griffin and Pustay, 2005). The afore-mentioned various definitions for culture reveals the complexities that increase the understanding of a particular culture of a country, especially during international business negotiations (Usunier and Lee, 2009). Research results demonstrate the impact of culture on business negotiations (Brett, 2007). Cultural characteristics have significant effects on business communication and negotiation (Yeganeh, 2011). Cultural differences result in four types of international challenges in trade negotiations: language, non-verbal behaviors, values, thinking, and decision making (Graham, 2003). The three aroused basic issues in intercultural communication are a misperception, misinterpretation, misevaluation (Gamsriegler, 2005).

Therefore, an effective and successful negotiation is tremendously dependent on the understanding of the negotiator's approach and characteristics. In international negotiations, even understanding the other party's culture is a challenging task (Torres, 2011). Usually, when two parties in negotiation collaborate well in negotiations, they are more successful. In other words, when both sides utilize the problem-solving strategy, there is a higher chance of success (Akgunes, Culpepper and Austin, 2012). The road to success in the negotiations is "preparing, preparing, and preparing". Some introductory actions done by intercultural intermediaries are essential for the successful outcome of a negotiation (Hendon et al., 1996).

### **2.2. Negotiating with Iranians**

Reviewing the literature in the field of negotiation both generally and particularly in Iran demonstrates a significant gap in domestic and foreign studies. In this section, some of the researcher's findings are presented concerning negotiations with Iranians. Iran is a society with orientation and tendency towards the past (Yeganeh, Su and Sauers, 2007; Daniel and ebrary, 2001). According to Inglehart & Baker, Iran is considered as a traditional and religious community (Inglehart and Baker, 2000). Iranian culture has traditionally been under the influence of religion and belief in God, and ultimately typifies the maintenance of a passive relationship consistent with natural forces (Pattberg, 2009). A particular and typical form of indirect and misleading languages in Persian culture is "Taarof," which can be translated as politeness; however, it is much deeper and more critical. Taarof is an implicit concept containing a wide range of sophisticated and very polite terms that should not be interpreted as the word's literacy. In Taarof, "Yes" and "No" might mean the opposite. Like many western countries, this type of border-based communication is utilized as a strategy to deceive the other side. "Exaggeration" is another technique used by Iranian during negotiations, which is often used to capture the attention of the other party (Hoveyda, 2003; Beeman, 1986). In other words, Iran's communication styles are

ambiguous and field-oriented. Ambiguity in communications is deeply rooted in many facets of Iranian society, such as language, literature, history, religion, and politics. The Persian language is full of words that contain ambiguous, different, and even contradictory meanings. Persian literary masterpieces such as Hafez's poems are known for a high level of ambiguity and contradiction so that they can be interpreted very differently. In fact, the Iranians, even in their daily communications, use a broad spectrum of contradictory and vague metaphors, allegories, imaginations, and symbols that need to be interpreted (Hall, 1976). As a very traditional culture, the Iranians are making vigorous attempts to change the negotiating path by building friendly relationships with negotiators (Beeman, 1986). Connell (2006) aver that Iran's negotiators care a lot about justice during the negotiations.

The Iranians advance slowly and tend to defer the time. Due to the tendency to reconciliation and subjugation, Iranian negotiators generally have the inner will to count on such factors as God, the supernatural forces, and faith to express various phenomena. They have a strong belief in God or divine providence and use the phrase "if God wills" in their plans. Moreover, reliance on divine providence can prevent them from pursuing the plans. History has proven the Iranians to be so pragmatic that they can keep their authority open and make great agreements (Yeganeh, 2011). Iran is a top-down society; it means that the flow of information is released from the top and rarely comes from down. Leaders tell people what they expect, and people adapt themselves to the expectations. Iranians do not act against the flow of information. Unless their head appears weak, and people do not rise and do not tell the truth to the heads (Rhode, 2010). The Iranians do not shut the doors after the deal brings made. One of the recognizable technical characteristics of the Iranian negotiators is that bargaining goes on even after they have agreed. The stage after the negotiations is the implementation of an agreement, or even re-discussing the issues previously agreed upon due to "changes in conditions" (Bar, 2004). What matters more to Iranians is to survive. The Iranians often bargain for their protection, and not due to be aligned with those who are contemplated (Rhode, 2010).

Regarding the desire for survival, the Iranians tend to curb actions or deviations that may disturb alliances and dependency or traditional order. In other words, Iranian negotiators tend to refrain from clear language, and do not clearly express their ideas and desires; Iranians advance slowly and tend to postpone time (Yeganeh, 2011). Negotiations are opportunities to taking others over, showing off power and defeating rivals (Rhode, 2010). The Iranians are known for long-term negotiations. They think that the longer the negotiations last, the more chance they have to change things in their favor. Shi'a's inner belief about the virtue of patience also affects this tendency (Bar, 2004). Limbert (2008) sees conversation with Iranians difficult and perhaps unpleasant. However, he avers that several points are worth remembering and may deter misperceptions that would undermine previous efforts in negotiating with the Iranians. The points that Limbert has pointed out renegotiations with Iran are:

- It is difficult to negotiate with Iran, but it is worth doing.
- Establish the related criteria of goals, regardless of legislation.
- Be aware of Iran's rich civilization, its current weakness, and the dissatisfaction that appeared in the last decades or centuries.
- Select the intermediaries judiciously.
- Talk to the right people (choose the right people to talk to)
- Let the Iranians define what their national interests mean.
- Give credit to Iranian partners for their intelligence.
- Expect a case based on vague and uncertain claims.
- Expect the show-off, political show, and status gestures.
- Remember that the power is respectful as weakness is counted miserable.
- Understand that justice is fundamental.
- Expect that hands, which is a person who is outside of the story, play a significant role.

### **3. Methodology**

Based on the above and given the current research has been conducted aiming to search for the factors of success and failure in international business negotiations with Iranian merchants, the type of present research is

composite-exploratory, the type of research based on purpose is applicable and methodology is survey-descriptive, and to collect the research data were used interview and questionnaire. In this regard, eight foreign merchants, who had the experience of negotiations with Iranian merchants, were interviewed face-to-face or via phone. An available sampling method was used to conduct interviews to utilize the more experienced people in negotiating with Iranian merchants. In the first phase of the current research, according to the literature, the factors important in the success and failure of trade negotiations for other countries, and then the factors present in international trade negotiations with the Iranians, were collected. In the second phase, the research interviews were conducted using theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation, and in the third phase, the interviews were coded. In the third phase, the identified factors by other researchers were matched with the factors extracted from the interviews and the literature of research. In this study, the final factors contained questionnaire were obtained in three stages:

- Identified factors by other researchers;(Stewart and Keown,1989; Leung and Yeung,1995; Alizadeh Sani, Tabibi and Kavousi, 2015).
- review of the research literature on the international trade negotiations of Iran and the emphasized factors by the researchers in the process of this area.
- Exploratory interview with a few exporters to Iran (China, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates) as well as importers from Iran (China, UAE, and Republic of Korea). The success and failure concepts extracted from the research interviews are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

**Table 1. Extracted Succeed Concepts from Research Interviews based on the present findings**

The honesty of the Iranians in the negotiations	The sensitivity of Iranian merchants during the negotiations
Iranian loyalty	Iranians’ innovation during the negotiations
Mandatory Commitment of Iranians	Long-term relationships after the negotiation
Discussion about the business topic in informal meetings	Respect for the old negotiators by the Iranians
The Iranians’ seriousness	The Iranian merchant’s full attention during the negotiation
Emphasis on Iranian merchant’s justice and neutrality	Iranian hospitality
Respectful behavior of Iranian merchants during the negotiations	

**Table 2 Extracted Failure Concepts from Research Interviews based on the present findings**

The conservatism of the Iranians	The Iranian negotiator's attention to details
Iranians' short-term strategy	Revision of the previous subject after agreement by Iranian merchants
Iran's refusal to speak clearly	Use of psychological pressure by the Iranians in negotiations
The ambiguous demands of Iranian merchants	Instability in their position during negotiations
Selfish and inappropriate behavior of Iranian merchants	The importance of price instead of quality for the Iranians
A long-term period of negotiation	The loud voices of the Iranians during the negotiations to consolidate their words
Deferring the negotiations by Iranian merchants	The difference between the Iranian word and action during the negotiation

Then, by comparing and combining the results of the interviews as well as the items of Leung and Yeong questionnaire (1995), and Alizadeh et al.(2015), a questionnaire containing 39 items of success and 31 items of failure was designed. This pluralism in collecting data increased the validity of the questionnaire content. In this questionnaire, to identify and prioritize the factors, we asked the merchants to rate the factors of success in international trade negotiations with Iranian merchants, in terms of importance, from 1 (very trivial) to 5 (very important). The statistical population of this study is the merchants of the countries with the most export and import interactions with Iran, which include the three countries with the most amount of export to Iran such as China, UAE, and Republic of Korea, and the three highest importers from Iran, which was China, Iraq, and the

United Arab Emirates. Considering that the number of commercial companies trading with Iran is likely high, limiting them is an important point for this research. Hence, the three countries high in imports and exports were chosen through international exhibitions nationwide, reputable traders' websites, companies available in Iran trading with the merchants in the mentioned countries. Commercial and have been selected. A total of 500 questionnaires were submitted to the members of the statistical population, out of which 410 questionnaires were received that 390 were analyzable. Cronbach's alpha was 0.95 for the reliability of data measurement tools, which indicates the reliability of the questionnaire.

Table 2 illustrate the ultimate factors determined after the interviews as well as the moderation of other researchers' works, which are, in fact, the same items of the questionnaire.

**Table 3. Success Items in International Business Negotiations with Iranian Merchants**

Nice personal relationships	Iranian loyalty
Merchants knowledge from Iranian business approaches	Mandatory Commitment of Iranians
Transparent Requirements and Requests	Iranian's concentration on long-term relationships
Use the old friend's approach	Face to face meetings instead of telecommunications
Iranians need for other products	Discussion about business issues in informal meetings
The uniqueness of Iranian products	The initial introduction of the company, products, and members of the Iranian team (sending proposals before negotiations)
Iran's tendency for good financial offerings	Use of a large negotiating team
Iranian access to foreign currency	Use of mental pressure
Iranians 'desire to sell at a good price	Ease of payment
Gift and Tour Services	Iranians' seriousness
Preparation of the Iranian team	Emphasis on Iranian merchant's justice and neutrality
The patience of the Iranian team	The sensitivity of Iranian merchants during negotiations
The technical expertise of an Iranian company	Iranians' innovation during business negotiations
The Iranians' ability to fulfill the transportation needs	Iranian hospitality
acquaintance with the social customs of Iranians	Respectful behavior of Iranian merchants during negotiations
Merchants knowledge of the political and economic conditions of Iranians	Long-term relationships after the negotiation
The honesty of the Iranians in the negotiations	Respect for the old negotiator by the Iranian
Use of a representative or mediator by the Iranians	Consistency with the law during negotiations
Good translator on the other side	The Iranian merchant's careful attention during the negotiation
The Iranians tendency to arrange business trades such as (goods return)	

*Based on (Leung and Yeung,1995; Alizadeh Sani, Tabibi and Kavousi,2015) and research findings*

**Table 4. Failure Items in International Business Negotiations with Iranian Merchants**

Iran's budget deficit	Language barrier
Iranians' lack of intimacy	The Iranian negotiator's attention to details
The lack of real need of Iranian for other products	Revision of the previous subject after agreement by Iranian merchants
Failure in communications	Use of psychological pressure by the Iranians in negotiations
Iranian's unwillingness to good financial offering	Instability in their position during negotiations
Different business practices	The importance of price instead of quality for the Iranians
Lack of stress control by the Iranian team	The loud voices of the Iranians during the negotiations to consolidate their words
Lack of knowledge about old friendship	The difference between the Iranian word and action during the negotiation
The Iranians' shortage in foreign currency	The conservatism of the Iranians
Lack of preparation by the team	Iranians' short-term strategy
Iranians' fame for their opposition to the provisions of the contract	Iran's refusal to speak clearly

Iranians' inability of lower prices	The ambiguous demands of Iranian merchants
Offering a similar product immediately by the Iranian team	Selfish and inappropriate behavior of Iranian merchants
Not using various intermediaries in different negotiation styles	A long-term period of negotiation
Different goals	Deferring the negotiations by Iranian merchants
Differences in social customs	

*Based on (Leung and Yeung,1995; Alizadeh Sani, Tabibi and Kavousi, 2015) and research findings*

#### 4. Findings

The sample demographic data about gender, age, negotiation experience with Iran, business partners, are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. Demographic information of statistical population**

Variable	Dimension	Quantity	Percent	Variable	Dimension	Quantity	Percent	
Gender	Man	288	73.80	Business Partner	Partner	64	16.40	
	Woman	102	26.20		No partner	326	83.60	
		390	100.00			390	100.00	
Age	Less than 25 years	0	0.00	Business experience	Less than 4 years	0	0.00	
	25-30	67	17.20		4-6	231	59.20	
	30-35	125	32.05		6-8	102	26.20	
	35-40	99	25.50		8-10	16	4.10	
	40-45	47	12.05		More than 10 years	41	10.50	
	45-50	31	7.90					
	More than 50 years	21	5.30					
		390	100.00			390	100.00	
Type of communication	Exporter to Iran	133	34.10	Country	China	178	45.6	
	Importer from Iran	51	13.10		Korea	138	35.4	
	Exporter-Importer	137	9.50		Arab	74	19	
	no answer	69	43.30					
		390	100.00			390	100	

#### 4.1. Testing hypotheses

Friedman's test was used to test the hypotheses. The objective of the Friedman test is to identify and rank the significance of international trade negotiations items for success and failure in the trade negotiations with Iranian merchants from Chinese, Korean, and Arab merchant's points of view. Hence, the hypotheses predicated on the equality of the average importance rank among the success and failure items were tested, and the results are presented in

Table 6, respectively, also the prioritized items of success and failure are shown in Table 7 and Table 8, respectively. The considered hypotheses are as following:

- **Hypothesis 1:** The success items with Iranian merchants are not the same in terms of importance.
- **Hypothesis 2:** The success items with the Iranians are not equally important in the Chinese merchant's perspective.

- **Hypothesis 3:** The success items with the Iranians are not equally important in the Korean merchant’s perspective.
- **Hypothesis 4:** The success items with the Iranians are not equally important in the Arabian merchant’s perspective.
- **Hypothesis 5:** The failure Items with Iranian Merchants are not the same in terms of importance.
- **Hypothesis 6:** The failure items with the Iranians are not equally important in the Chinese merchant’s perspective.
- **Hypothesis 7:** The failure items with the Iranians are not equally important in the Korean merchant’s perspective.
- **Hypothesis 8:** The failure items with the Iranians are not equally important in the Arabian merchant’s perspective.

**Table 6. Testing research hypotheses**

Zero Hypothesis	Chi-Square	Sig	Result
The equality of the importance ranks average among success factors	883/1489	0/000	Rejected the zero hypothesis/confirmed the hypothesis 1
The equality of the importance ranks average among success factors in Chinesees merchants’ points of view	584/670	0/000	Rejected the zero hypothesis/confirmed the hypothesis 2
The equality of the importance ranks average among success factors in Korean merchants’ points of view	329/513	0/000	Rejected the zero hypothesis/confirmed the hypothesis 3
The equality of the importance ranks average among success factors in Arab merchants’ points of view	759/371	0/000	Rejected the zero hypothesis/confirmed the hypothesis 4
The equality of the importance ranks average among failure factors	733/307	0/000	Rejected the zero hypothesis/confirmed the hypothesis 5
The equality of the importance ranks average among failure factors in Chinesees merchants’ points of view	699/131	0/000	Rejected the zero hypothesis/confirmed the hypothesis 6
The equality of the importance ranks average among failure factors in Korean merchants’ points of view	255/139	0/000	Rejected the zero hypothesis/confirmed the hypothesis 7
The equality of the importance ranks average among success factors in Arab merchants’ points of view	873/105	0/000	Rejected the zero hypothesis/confirmed the hypothesis 8

As shown in

Table 6, regarding the meaningful level of 0.000, hypothesis zero is rejected. This rejection means that at least two groups are meaningfully different among all the groups.

**Table 7. Prioritization and the importance of success factors in international business negotiations with Iran**

No	Success factors (in order of importance)	Average rating
S1	Nice personal relationships	28.45
S2	Iranians need for other products	25.05
S3	Merchants' knowledge of Iranians business practices	34.28
S4	Iran's desire for good financial offerings	24.07
S5	Long-term relationships after the negotiation	24.04
S6	Transparent requirements and requests	23.89
S7	Iranians’ concentration on long-term relationships	23.77
S8	Iranians’ access to foreign currency	23.40
S9	Ease of payment	22.58
S10	Iranians' tendency to sell at a good price	22.15
S11	The honesty of the Iranians in the negotiations	21.69
S12	Face to face Meeting instead of telecommunications	21.64
S13	The Iranian merchant’s careful attention during the negotiation	21.17
S14	Mandatory Commitment of Iranians	20.89
S15	Respectful behavior of Iranian merchants during the negotiations	20.86

No	Success factors (in order of importance)	Average rating
S16	The technical expertise of an Iranian company	20.48
S17	Iranian loyalty	20.18
S18	The ability of Iranians to fulfill the transportation needs	20.10
S19	Use the old friend approach	19.90
S20	Emphasis on Iranian merchant's justice and neutrality	19.75
S21	Merchants' knowledge of Iran's political and economic conditions	19.70
S22	The uniqueness of Iranian products	19.54
S23	Respect to the old negotiator by Iranian	19.31
S24	Iranians' seriousness	19.06
S25	Consistency with the law during negotiations	18.39
S26	The initial introduction of the company, products, and members of the Iranian team (sending proposals before negotiations)	18.38
S27	Iranians' innovation during business negotiations	18.28
S28	Good translator on the other side	18.18
S29	Iranian hospitality	18.16
S30	Use of agent or mediator by Iranians	18.07
S31	The sensitivity of an Iranian merchant during negotiations	17.97
S32	Discussion about business issues in informal meetings	17.96
S33	The patience of the Iranian team	17.45
S34	Your acquaintance with the social customs of Iranians	17.42
S35	Prepared by the Iranian team	16.88
S36	Iranians' tendency to arrange business transactions such as (goods return)	16.36
S37	Use of a big negotiating team	14.00
S38	Use of mental pressure	13.29
S39	Gift and tour services	13.29

Now, to answer the question that “what is the difference between the importance and ranking of items from foreign merchants’ points of view,” Table 7 demonstrates that item 1 (nice personal relationships), item 2 (Iranians’ needs for our products) and item 3 (your knowledge of Iranian business approaches), are the most important items respectively, and the items 39 (gifts and service tours), item 38 (use of mental pressure) and item 37 (use of a big negotiating team) are the least important items of success in negotiations from foreign traders’ perspective.

**Table 8. Prioritization and the importance of failure factors in international business negotiations with Iran**

No	Success factors (in order of importance) Sample number: 390	Average rating
F1	Iran's budget deficit	18.49
F2	Iran's unwillingness to good financial offering	18.19
F3	Failure in communications	17.95
F4	The shortage of foreign currency for the Iranians	17.83
F5	Lack of intimacy of the Iranians	17.67
F6	The more weight of price instead of quality for the Iranians	17.04
F7	Lack of real need for Iranians to the other products	16.93
F8	Iranians are known for their opposition to the subjects of contract	16.93
F9	Deferring negotiations by Iranian merchants	16.88
F10	The inability of Iranians for lower prices	16.73
F11	Not knowing about old friendship	16.63
F12	Various goals	16.39
F13	A long period of negotiation	16.29
F14	Language problem	16.21
F15	Unselfish behavior of Iranian merchant	16.18
F16	Instability and lack of change in their position during negotiations	16.17
F17	The ambiguous demands of Iranian merchant	16.07
F18	Offering a similar product impulsively by the Iranian team	16.07
F19	Different business approaches	15.94
F20	The Iranian negotiator's attention to details	15.89
F21	Lack of use of different intermediaries in negotiation styles	15.85



No	Success factors (in order of importance) Sample number: 390	Average rating
F22	Lack of preparation by the team	15.44
F23	Revision of the previous subject after an agreement by the Iranian merchant	15.17
F24	The difference between the Iranian word and action during the negotiation	15.10
F25	Lack of stress control created by the Iranian team	14.92
F26	Iran's refusal to speak clearly	14.75
F27	The loud voice of the Iranians during the negotiations to consolidate the words	14.71
F28	Iranians' short-term strategy	14.30
F29	The conservatism of the Iranians	14.26
F30	Use of mental pressure by Iranians in negotiations	14.12
F31	Differences in social customs	13.90

Table 8 also illustrates that the most important failure items in international trade negotiations with Iranian merchants include the items 1 (Iran's lack of budgets), item 2 (Iran's reluctance to good financial demand), item 3 (failure in the communication) respectively. Also, the least important items of failure in business negotiations with Iranian merchants are the items 31 (lack of knowledge about old friendship), 30 (differences in social customs), and 29 (use of mental pressure by Iranians in negotiation), respectively.

**Table 9. Prioritization of the success and failure factors from the perspective of merchants in three countries**

Country	Success factors	Failure factors
China	Nice personal relationships	Failure in communications
	Iranians need for other products	Iran's budget deficit
	Merchant's knowledge of Iranian business approaches	Lack of Iranians' intimacy
Republic of Korea	Nice personal relationships	Iran's budget deficit
	Iranians need for other products	Offering a similar product impulsively by the Iranian team
	Iranians' tendency for good financial offerings	The shortage of foreign currency in Iran
Arabic countries	Nice personal relationships	Failure in communications
	Transparent requirements and demands	Iran's budget deficit
	Long-term relationships after the negotiation	Iranians' unwillingness to good financial offering

According to Table 9, from Chinese, Korean, and Arab merchant's perspective, the priority and importance of success items were only the same in the first item, i.e., nice personal relationships. In other words, the merchants of these countries have divergent views when it comes to business negotiations with Iranian merchants. The priority and importance of failing items vary from Chinese, Korean, and Arabians' perspective, or rather the traders in these countries have divergent views with each other about business trades with Iranian merchants.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the current research findings three most significant items in Chinese, Korean, and Arab merchants' perspectives for the success of international business negotiations with Iranian merchants are respectively good personal relationships, Iranians need for other products, and the merchants' knowledge of Iranian business approaches. Based on the research, international merchants must have a good personal relationship with their Iranian counterparts in international negotiations to prove a resounding success. Usually, Iranian merchants may take any action to achieve their goals during the negotiations. Here, the great personal relationships come to the fore so that if Chinese, Korean, and Arab merchants maintain a good relationship with the Iranian merchants during the meetings, they can conduct a successful negotiation. The second most important item by the Chinese, Korean, and Arab merchants to achieve the success of international business negotiations with Iranian merchants is Iranians need for other products. When the Chinese, Korean, and Arab merchants feel the Iranians need for their products, they try to take advantage of the process of negotiations to succeed. The third item is the merchants' knowledge of Iranian business practices. If Chinese, Korean, and Arab traders know about Iranian commercial approaches thoroughly before entering the negotiation, they can make it successful for themselves. Due to these cases, three items are considered as least important in Chinese, Korean and Arab merchants' opinion in the success of business negotiations with Iranian merchants which are service gifts and tours, use of psychological pressure and the use of a big negotiator team. The most critical item in the failure of international

business conversations with Iranian merchants from the eyes of Chinese, Korean and Arab merchants is the lack of Iranians' budget in the negotiations, which may fail in the negotiations. Iranians' tendency to respond to good financial demand is the second most vital item in the failure of international business negotiations with Chinese, Korean, and Arab merchants, and the third most crucial item in this regard is the failure of communications, which is considerable. Iranians communication styles are ambiguous and field-based; hence, the merchants should be completely aware of Iranians' negotiation and cultural styles.

According to Bar's research (2004), when dealing with foreigners, the Iranians expect from their counterparts to respect their hierarchy and accept them. Foreign traders should know that Iranian merchants may be able to speak slowly or loudly, depending on the situation, because Iranian merchants consider respecting the hierarchy as a tool of improving negotiations and trade relations, and foreign traders should pay more attention to this point as they do not care about it tremendously. According to this study, foreign traders believe in a long-term relationship after the negotiations as one of the most important items in business negotiations with Iranian merchants, as proved by Inglehart and Backer, which scored Iran highly in the orientation and tendency for survival in their long-term relationships. This research's findings illustrate that the foreign traders have seen Iranian's conservative behavior trivial when it comes to the failure in negotiations, i.e., it does not affect the negotiations process, which is related to Bar's findings (2004) concerning the time when Iranian distract themselves when facing some vivid paradoxes as if they have not noticed it and do not intend to proceed it. If Iranian merchants are unable to communicate well with international ones in international business negotiations, these negotiations will be proved failed. The least essential items of failure from the perspective of Chinese, Korean, and Arab merchants in international business negotiations with Iranian traders are the use of Iranian psychological pressure by Iranians, the difference in social customs and traditions, and the lack of knowledge about old friendship within the negotiations, which has a little impact on the process of negotiations.

The findings of this study indicate that Iranian's honesty has been evaluated as important factors in the foreign merchants' views in their international trade negotiations with Iranian merchants, while Bar (2004) demonstrated that Iranians often utilize beautiful and kind literature when showing sympathy and solidarity. Nevertheless, these words are usually not supported by any action and are often meaningless. Iranians are a connoisseur of trapping people, scamming them, and lacking integrity in negotiations that are not in line with this study's findings. Bar's findings (2004) indicated that Iranians traditionally respect older people, even in negotiations. However, the findings of this study showed that respect for the elderly negotiator by Iranians had been considered a minor factor in commercial negotiations, which needs more attention from foreign traders. Predicated on Yeganeh's research (2011), regarding the tendency to survive, Iranians tend to halt actions or deviations that may conflict alliance and coherence or traditional discipline. In other words, Iranian negotiators are not very keen on clear and eloquent language and do not express their ideas and desires clearly. The findings of this study specify that the item of opaque language is considered as trivial one in the failure of negotiations with Iranians from foreign traders' point of view, which should be stated as a factor in their success in negotiating. Bar's findings (2004) showed that knowing about where the loyalty of Iranians is in the negotiations is very tough. What matters more to Iranians is to survive negotiations, which is related to this study, indicating that Iranians' loyalty is merely important when it comes to the success of trade negotiations to the foreign traders.

John Limbert stated that you need to expect ambiguous and unclear claims from Iranians in the negotiations that are considered as influencing factor on trade negotiations; the findings of this study indicated that the item of ambiguous demands of Iranian merchant is of the least important factors in negotiation failure with no effect on negotiations, and the foreign merchants need to be more precise about these points. Bar's findings disclosed that Iranians know how to wait and gradually reach their goal. Iranians aver that someone who waits will usually win negotiations, while the findings of this study demonstrated that foreign merchants considered this item as a trivial factor for success in an international business negotiation with Iranian merchants, which foreign merchants should be more precise about this point in business negotiations. Based on the study by Limbert (2008), Iranian negotiators might emphasize the term "justice" instead of the known legal commitments. Now, the findings of this study showed that the Iranian's justice and impartiality is an unimportant factor in the success of the trade negotiations. As indicated in various parts of the research, this research is to identify and prioritize

the influencing factors of success and failure in international business negotiations with Iranian merchants. The international business considers an enormous and growing share of the global business.

It is believed that international markets propose such opportunities to companies and merchants to present their products and services on a global scale and reap substantial benefits. When negotiations conduct internationally, the lack of awareness of the other party's culture and expectations in the negotiation will end up with more complicated negotiations. On the other hand, Iran, as a supervisor member in the WTO and the growing economic market, has increased the interest of other countries in trading with Iran. In addition, Iran plays a central role in the most important region of the world, the Persian Gulf, which possesses rich energy resources, dynamic economy. The growing global demand for oil and Iran's role in supplying this has made Iran's relations with other countries more important. As a result, international merchants and negotiators, particularly Chinese, Korean, and Arab traders, should be well-informed about the essential factors for efficient and effective negotiations with Iranian merchants.

### Practical suggestions to foreign merchants

- Traders should know that one of Iranians' success factors in negotiations is their desire for long-term relationships, and they care about communication colossally. To maintain a business relationship with Iranian merchants, they can continue their relationship with them after negotiations.
- To succeed in international business negotiations, traders ought to have good personal relationships with Iranians. Negotiating with Iran is relatively tough. However, it is worth doing, and since the Iranians, due to their very rich civilization, are trying to change the negotiating path towards friendly relations with the negotiators, good personal relationships can result in success with Iranian merchants.
- To avoid failing in international business negotiations with Iranians, the traders must be fully aware of culture, history, styles, and techniques of Iranian negotiators
- Traders should be well-informed about the trade and exchange approaches of Iranians to succeed in business negotiations.
- Traders should know that Iranian merchants utilize the item patience to advance negotiations.
- Traders need to maintain long-term relationships with Iranian merchants during international business negotiations. Predicated on the research, while the component of patience affects long-term relationships, that was ranked as 33rd in priority, traders should pay more attention to that.
- Traders should pay attention to the negotiations delayed by Iranian merchants. While foreign traders see it as a minor factor in failing, if not paid attention, it can be a significant factor in failure.

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