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SAP ERP TEAMS – THE COMMUNICATION BLIND SPOT – A PARADOX OR JUST A COUNTERINTUITIVE RESULT? EVIDENCE FROM PRACTITIONERS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates communication dynamics within SAP ERP implementation teams to examine the existence of a communication blind spot—a phenomenon where individuals remain unaware of their communication deficiencies and their resultant impact on team effectiveness and productivity. Grounded in the key assumption of systemic vulnerability—that a system's overall performance is constrained by its weakest link—our research specifically assesses how communication barriers from the "hardest-to-understand" colleague can affect team results. Data were collected from 51 Brazilian SAP professionals using Dillman's Total Design Method (TDM) questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The instrument comprised 22 questions: 11 single-choice, 5 multiple-choice, 2 open-ended, and 4 ten-point Likert scale items. Respondents rated the communication of their peers as "hard to understand at work," enabling analysis of descriptive statistics and Spearman correlations among variables, with comparative analysis via Fisher's r-to-z transformation. The results corroborate the presence of a communication blind spot, suggesting that unrecognized communication deficiencies in individuals can compromise overall team performance and productivity in SAP ERP projects. Although it seems to be a paradox, it remains unclear and requires future research whether this phenomenon can be treated as a paradox or is just strongly counterintuitive.

KEYWORDS: SAP ERP, paradox, communication, blind spot, productivity, counterintuitive

INTRODUCTION

Background: In today's fast-paced business world, organizations must rely heavily on sophisticated software systems to optimize operations, manage resources, and drive strategic decision-making. Among these systems, SAP Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solutions play a pivotal role, integrating various business processes and ensuring data flow across departments. SAP offers a suite of applications that cater to business needs, ranging from finance, controlling, and human resources to supply chain, treasury, risk management, and customer relations.

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The successful implementation and management of SAP and ERP systems hinge on the expertise of highly skilled professionals. These individuals must possess a deep understanding of the software's technical and functional aspects and, above all, be able to interact and communicate, enabling them to tailor solutions that align with organizational objectives.

Their technical expertise encompasses:

1. System configuration: Configuring systems to meet specific business requirements.
2. Customization and Integration: To customize SAP modules and integrate them with other enterprise applications.
3. Data Management and Analytics: To manage large datasets, perform analytics, and generate insights that drive business strategy.
4. Troubleshooting and Support: To diagnose and resolve technical issues, maintain system reliability.
5. Strategic Alignment: Beyond technical skills, SAP professionals are crucial in aligning technology investments with business goals, ensuring that the system delivers value and supports strategic initiatives.
6. Communicating: To understand the need to offer adequate solutions to the client's specific needs and maintain a high level of clear communication throughout the team to guarantee performance.

As organizations continue to face the complexities of digital transformation, the demand for technical and communication expertise in SAP and ERP systems remains high.

Of course, good communication is essential, no doubt about that. In this study, however, we investigated the possibility that there was more than an isolated problem of miscommunication, but a paradox.

Paradoxes: A paradox is a statement or situation that appears to contradict itself or defy intuition, yet may still hold a fraction of truth or reveal a deeper insight. The concept of paradoxes has been around for centuries, with some of the earliest known paradoxes attributed to the ancient Greek philosopher **Zeno of Elea** (circa 490–430 BCE).

There is not a single scientific work known as the official basis for the definition of paradoxes. However, many paradoxes have been foundational in the development of logic and mathematics. One of the most influential works is **Bertrand Russell's paradox**, introduced in 1901. This paradox revealed fundamental issues in naive set theory and led to significant advancements in mathematical logic.

Paradoxes can be found in various fields such as philosophy, mathematics, and everyday life, and they often provoke thought and discussion because they highlight inconsistencies or ambiguities in our reasoning or perceptions.

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Types of Paradoxes

1. Logical Paradoxes: These involve statements that contradict themselves, leading to a logical inconsistency;
2. Mathematical Paradoxes: These arise in mathematical concepts and can reveal surprising truths or inconsistencies within mathematical systems;
3. Philosophical Paradoxes: These explore contradictions in human experience, raising questions about perception, reality, and knowledge;
4. Practical Paradoxes: These occur in real-world situations, often highlighting conflicts between theory and practice.

Here in this paper, we are identifying this phenomenon as a practical paradox and naming as "The Communication Blind Spot Paradox." It refers to a situation where contradictory or inconsistent messages are sent or received, leading to confusion and an inability to respond effectively. Paradoxes are different from ordinary miscommunication because they have a perpetual increasing paradoxical cycle. This paradox is particularly relevant in complex interpersonal and organizational interactions, such as ERP systems implementation, where clear and consistent communication is crucial to avoid misunderstandings and foster effective relationships.

The perpetual paradoxical cycle, although not limited to this, includes the following.

- Belief of sufficiency: Individuals with strong technical skills may believe that their expertise alone will lead to success, underestimating the importance of communication.
- Communication deficiency: As communication is overlooked, misunderstandings and misalignments occur within teams, leading to poorer collaboration and problem-solving.
- Poor Team Outcomes: The lack of effective communication results in low team performance, reduced productivity, and project delays.
- Bad incentives to neglect communication: As senior professionals, despite their insufficient ability to communicate, keep growing salaries, and participate in projects, they have an incentive to keep prioritizing technical skills over communication.
- Misattribution of Blame: Instead of recognizing communication issues, technical problems are often blamed for poor outcomes, obscuring the true cause.
- Perpetuation of the Cycle: As communication deficiencies are not addressed, the cycle continues, and the initial cause of poor performance becomes increasingly difficult to identify. Moreover, as highly prepared technical professionals are difficult to find, communication deficiencies are left behind to be managed ad-hoc.

It is a natural expectation that this will happen in fields that demand high technical expertise and significant human interactions. But there is a lack of measurement, and this research is an attempt to bring numbers to the table.

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Why Paradoxes Matter

- Stimulate Critical Thinking: Paradoxes encourage us to question assumptions and explore complex ideas from different angles.
- Advance Knowledge: By examining paradoxes, researchers can uncover new insights or develop more robust theories.
- Highlight Limitations: They expose the limitations of our logical frameworks or conceptual models, prompting further exploration and refinement.
- Engage and Entertain: Paradoxes often capture our imagination and curiosity, making them popular in literature, art, and puzzles.

In this study, we investigate this practical paradox, "The Communication Blind Spot Paradox," which suggests that individuals with strong technical skills assume that their expertise is sufficient for success, neglecting the need for effective communication. This oversight leads to misunderstandings, reduced team performance, and inefficiencies. The more they have success in their careers, the more they prioritize technical skills and neglect communication skills, perpetuating a cycle of poor communication performance.

Problem Statement: As professionals grow and ascend in their careers, this is expected to reflect greater technical and communication skills. The paradox is that technical skills are consistently prioritized over communication skills in a perpetual cycle, leading to a continuous stream of poor performance in communication. As technical competence improves, communication skills deteriorate. As technicians keep growing in their careers, communication keeps being neglected in a perpetual cycle, paradoxically.

This research intends to help identify specific communication challenges faced by SAP professionals and how these challenges impact project outcomes. By understanding the dynamics of communication in SAP implementations and support, our findings may lead to strategies that improve collaboration, reduce misunderstandings, and enhance project success rates. Our study contributes to both academic literature and practical applications in the field of enterprise resource planning and project management.

Objective: This article aims to explore and understand the dynamics of communication in SAP ERP implementation teams to identify if it is just the well-known problem of poor communication, or the possible existence of a paradox, which is identified here as the communication blind spot paradox.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reviewing the existing literature on ERP project implementation, whose success is affected by communication failures, we see that communication is always a key factor for success.

Not only in SAP ERP projects, but miscommunication is key in any project. Belephant (2017) explored communication differences between males and females, which often leads to miscommunication. As said in their study, miscommunication, especially in the workplace, can create negative behavior, resulting in low productivity. That is why identifying problems through research, as much as implementing solutions to improve relationships and communication, is essential.

Another investigation from Ludviga & Sluka (2018) explored cultural diversity in project management. Frank Cervone (2014) observed effective communication for project success. Also, Abdallah et al. (2024) studied the *Causes of miscommunication leading to project delays and low work quality in the construction industry of Saudi Arabia* to find the root causes of miscommunication, which pose a serious threat to a project.

In the work *Studying Project Managers' skills in ERP System Implementation Projects***,** Ravasan & Deilami (2014) showed communication as essential for implementation and critical to outcomes.

Huang et al. (2023) *An analysis of enterprise resource planning systems and key determinants using the Delphi method and an analytic hierarchy process* also confirmed miscommunication as critical for ERP project outcomes.

An investigative work named *Enterprise Resource Planning System: Analysis in a Treasury, Colombia,* Muñoz Galvis et al. (2020) presented findings of failures in communication and dissatisfaction of officials due to the lack of some functionalities.

In the paper *Critical Success Factors for Enterprise Resource Planning Implementation and Upgrade* from Nah & Delgado (2006) seven categories of critical success factors were identified from the ERP literature: (1) business plan and vision; (2) change management, (3) communication; (4) ERP team composition, skills, and compensation; (5) management support and championship; (6) project management; (7) system analysis, selection and technical implementation. The conclusion was that 'Project Management' and 'System Analysis, Selection and Technical Implementation' are most important during the Project phase. 'Change Management' and 'Communication' are very important during the Project and Shakedown phases.

Observing the gap in IT projects in *An Analysis of the Causes and Consequences of the Information Gap in IT Projects,* Wachnik et al. (2021) highlighted that the results of the study can help develop methodologies for IT project implementation, limiting the level of risk and uncertainty.

Another work of Zouaghi & Laghouag (2012) named *Assessing key success factors in an ERP implementation project: A case study in the automotive industry* also showed that in these last years, many companies have implemented ERP systems, but lots of them have failed to deliver what was expected so far, and miscommunication is indeed on the table.

The researchers Malik & Khan (2020) were beyond, and developed a strategy based on empirical evidence to overcome the issues of ERP implementation failure for developing countries like Pakistan.

They presented their findings on the work *Analysis of ERP implementation to develop a strategy for its success in developing countries*.

Menon et al. (2019) the work *Critical Challenges in Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Implementation* presented findings, the top twelve challenges that were drawn from the responses of participants from four project role groups. The study findings indicated that critical challenges, including miscommunication among them, were significant during ERP implementation.

In a recent study, Hess (2025) found that "the communication dynamics within cross-functional teams are predominantly positive, although there is room for improvement, as 23% consider it ineffective or challenging. The perception is that there are almost always technical issues that originate in fact on communication failures, with 82% of the respondents."

Reviewing the existing research on communication in technical fields, we see that although communication is a key factor for success, miscommunication is always present. Nevertheless, no study observed the possibility of a paradox involving technical and communication issues linked.

We based this research on SAP professionals to check for the existence of the communication blind spot paradox because SAP ERP projects typically involve cross-functional teams, including technical experts, business analysts, and end-users, making effective communication crucial for aligning objectives, expectations, and outcomes. Implementing SAP ERP systems involves complex technical processes that require precise communication among team members to ensure successful integration and functionality. Based on that, we made key assumptions, formulated research questions, and developed testable hypotheses. Moreover, we included qualitative data to help conclude.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

Our research is based on Dillman's Total Design Method (TDM) questionnaire sent via Google Forms, with 22 questions, 11 single-choice, 5 multiple-choice, 2 open-ended questions, and 4 Likert-scales of ten degrees. The questions are answered by 51 SAP professionals from different locations in Brazil, to gather information from SAP project implementation experiences, so it is "quali-quanti" survey-based research, referred to as a mixed-methods approach.

Survey-Based Perception Study: Our approach involves collecting data on SAP professionals' perceptions based on their work experiences with colleagues here called "hard to understand at work," to assess how poor communication may affect outcomes. These "hard to understand" colleagues are assessed by their peers by a Likert scale (from 1 to 10) to rate questions, so we measure descriptive statistics and Spearman correlation between the variables.

Observational Study: Our research is an observational study where we gather qualitative and quantitative data on professionals' experiences and perceptions without altering their environment. We analyzed perceptions and experiences, which could be influenced by various factors such as

organizational culture, project dynamics, or individual roles, rather than controlled experimental conditions. Using closed single-choice and multiple-choice questions to count frequency.

We used the Spearman Correlation coefficient:

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{6 \sum d_i^2}{\mathrm{n}(n^2 - 1)}$$

Where:

- d_i is the difference between the ranks of each pair.
- n is the number of observations

About the magnitude of the Spearman Correlation

- 0.00 to 0.19: very weak correlation
- 0.20 to 0.39: weak correlation
- 0.40 to 0.59: moderate correlation
- 0.60 to 0.79: strong correlation
- 0.80 to 1.00: very strong correlation

p-value < 0.05 to indicate statistical significance

We compared the Spearman Correlations using Fisher's r-to-z transformation

Convert correlations to Fisher's z-values:

$$z = \frac{1}{2} ln\left(\frac{1 + r}{1 - r}\right)$$

Computed the Standard Error of the difference between two z-values calculated as:

$$SE = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1 - 3} + \frac{1}{n_2 - 3}}$$

Where:

n_1 and n_2 are the sample sizes for each correlation.

Calculated the z-score for the Difference:

$$z = \frac{|z_1 - z_2|}{SE}$$

We considered the standard normal distribution to find the p-value (< 0.05) associated with the calculated z-score to indicate statistical significance.

To ensure that our analysis is robust and well-justified, we conducted sensitivity analyses to test the robustness of the results, ensuring the credibility and reliability of our scientific research. We explored how different assumptions, parameters, or methods affect our study's outcomes.

Calculating a range of descriptive statistics provided a comprehensive view of the professionals, both the respondents and the assessed ones, helping to understand both the tendencies, and the distributions of the responses, and providing a solid foundation for subsequent inferential statistics and discussions. Spearman correlation helped assess the relationship between communication and technical skills with the work experience of the professionals and how it may impact outcomes.

Assumptions:
To help assess the presence of the communication blind spot paradox in SAP ERP teams by this research, we made some assumptions.

Assumption of experience acquired from working time: The higher the professional's seniority, the higher their technical and communication skills, so the better their colleagues perceive it and recognize it.

Assumption of shared understanding: It is assumed that all parties involved have the same level of understanding regarding technical jargon, tools, and processes, and that all parties may perform technically and communicatively well.

Assumption of technological adequacy: All parties have access to and proficiency with the necessary technology to communicate effectively.

The **Key Assumption of this work** is the systemic vulnerability: The overall strength and effectiveness of a system or process are determined by its weakest component, and any deficiencies in the weakest part can compromise the entire system's performance. This is why all the assessments were done considering the “hardest colleague to understand at work.”

Research questions:

1. Are communication and technical skills positively correlated in SAP teams?
2. Are the communication and technical skills of the ‘hardest colleague to understand’ positively correlated?

3. Are the technical skills of the 'hardest colleague to understand' positively correlated with years of experience?
4. Are the communication skills of the 'hardest colleague to understand' positively correlated with years of experience?
5. Is there a statistically significant difference between the technical and communication skills of the 'hardest colleague to understand'?
6. Does the time of work experience bring an equal level of experience, both technical and communication skills?
7. Is there evidence of "bad incentives" to neglect communication skills?
8. Is there evidence of poor communication skills affecting project performance?
9. Is there evidence of companies neglecting the poor communication effects on project performance?
10. Is there evidence of feedback for the perpetuation of the paradoxical cycle?

Hypotheses:

Test 1: Hypothesis on the communication and technical skills in SAP teams

Test 2: Hypothesis on the correlation between communication and technical skills of the 'hardest colleague to understand'

Test 3: Hypothesis on the correlation between the technical skills of the 'hardest colleague to understand' with years of experience

Test 4: Hypothesis on the correlation between the communication skills of the 'hardest colleague to understand' with years of experience

Test 5: Hypothesis on the difference between the technical and communication skills of the 'hardest colleague to understand'

Test 6: Hypothesis on companies neglecting communication skills

Test 7: Hypothesis on poor communication skills affecting project performance

Test 8: Hypothesis on the presence of "bad incentives" to neglect communication skills

Exploring the Data

The histogram of the respondents (graph 1) shows that SAP tends to be an environment for more experienced workers, mostly between 40 and 60 years.

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Graph 1: Profile of the respondents

The profile of the respondents (table 1) brings more detailed information that in the SAP working environment prevails the more experienced workers prevail, with a mean and median of around 45 years and a mode of 50.

Table 1: Profile of the respondents

Respondents age profile		Working Experience with SAP ERP	
Mean	45,3	Mean	17,59
Median	45,0	Median	18,00
Mode	50,0	Mode	25,00
Standard Deviation	8,92	Standard Deviation	9,77
Sample Variance	79,51	Sample Variance	95,53
Kurtosis	0,52	Kurtosis	-0,87
Skewness	-0,50	Skewness	-0,14
Range	41	Range	34
Minimum	20	Minimum	1
Maximum	61	Maximum	35
Count	51	Count	51

The histogram of the assessed “hard colleague to understand” (graph 2) shows that these professionals tend to be experienced workers, mostly between 5 and 20 years of working with SAP.

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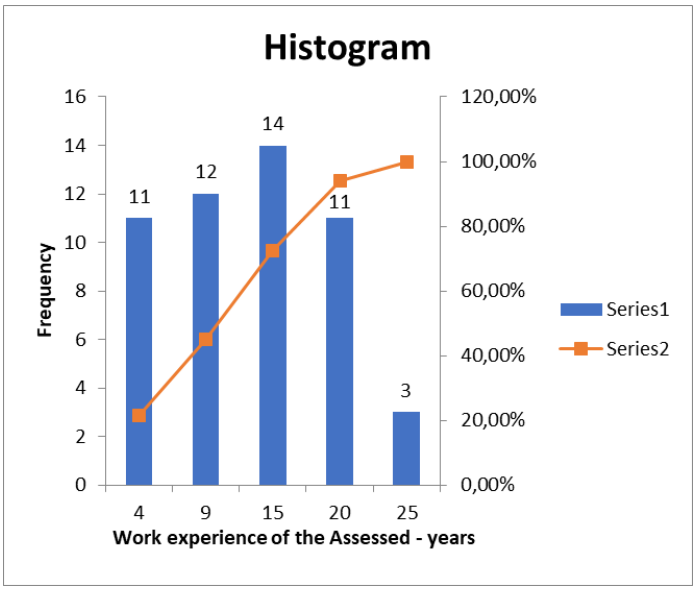
Graph 2: Profile of the assessed "hard colleague to understand" at work



The more detailed profile of the assessed "hard colleague to understand" (table 2) brings information that these professionals are experienced workers, with a mean and median of around 10.

Table 2: Profile of the hardest colleague to understand at work (hctu)

Work Experience of the hctu	
Mean	10,76
Median	10,00
Mode	8,00
Standard Deviation	6,04
Sample Variance	36,42
Kurtosis	-0,86
Skewness	0,27
Range	24
Minimum	1
Maximum	25
Count	51

The frequency distribution of the communication skills of the assessed "hard colleague to understand" (graph 3) shows that these professionals, when assessed by their peers, tend to score below 6 points in communication skills (67%) and only score 7 and 8 (33%). In technical skills, the trend is the opposite, with scores below 6 points (33%) and scores from 7 to 10 (67%). SAP teams tend to have professionals with technical skills stronger than communication.

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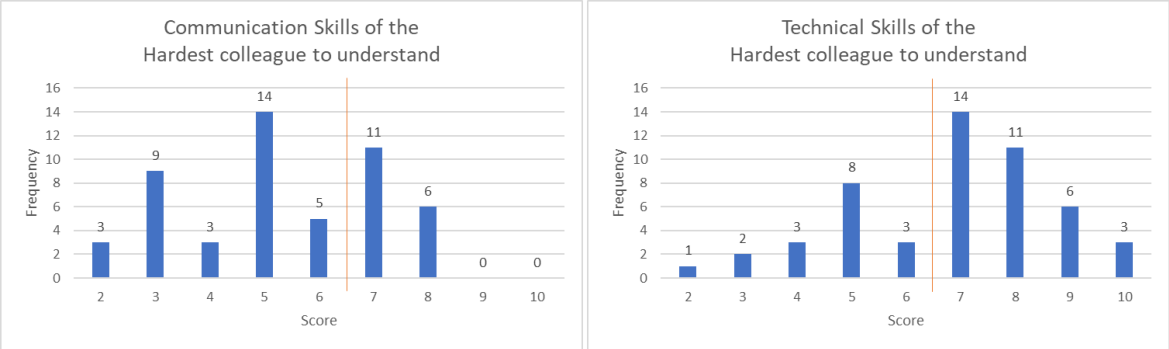
Graph 3: Frequency distribution of the assessed "hctu" at work



67%	scores 6 or below		33%	scores 6 or below
33%	Scores are 7 and 8		67%	scores 7 to 10

The descriptive statistics of the profile of the assessed "hard colleague to understand" (Table 3) show that these professionals, although experienced workers, have stronger technical than communication skills.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the hardest colleague to understand at work

communication skills		*technical skills*	
Mean	5,27	Mean	6,82
Median	5,00	Median	7,00
Mode	5,00	Mode	7,00
Standard Deviation	1,86	Standard Deviation	1,89
Sample Variance	3,44	Sample Variance	3,59
Kurtosis	-0,83	Kurtosis	-0,19
Skewness	-0,26	Skewness	-0,51
Range	7	Range	8
Minimum	1	Minimum	2
Maximum	8	Maximum	10
Count	51	Count	51

The frequency distribution of the SAP teams' (graph 4) communication and technical skills tends to be more balanced.

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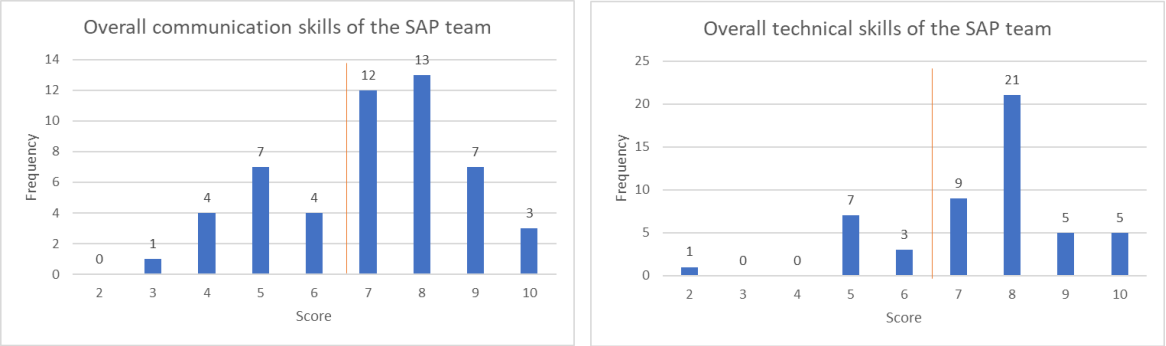
Graph 4: Frequency distribution of the SAP teams



31%	scores 6 or below		22%	scores 6 or below
69%	scores 7 to 10		78%	scores 7 to 10

The descriptive statistics of the SAP teams (Table 4) bring more detailed information confirming that communication and technical skills tend to be more balanced.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of the profile of the SAP teams

communication skills of the SAP team	
Mean	7,04
Median	7,00
Mode	8,00
Standard Deviation	1,74
Sample Variance	3,04
Kurtosis	-0,55
Skewness	-0,39
Range	7
Minimum	3
Maximum	10
Count	51

technical skills of the SAP team	
Mean	7,47
Median	8,00
Mode	8,00
Standard Deviation	1,62
Sample Variance	2,61
Kurtosis	1,45
Skewness	-0,88
Range	8
Minimum	2
Maximum	10
Count	51

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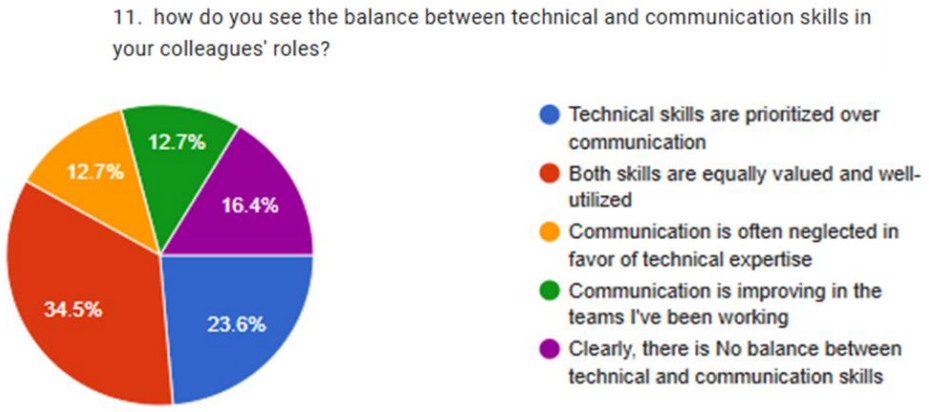
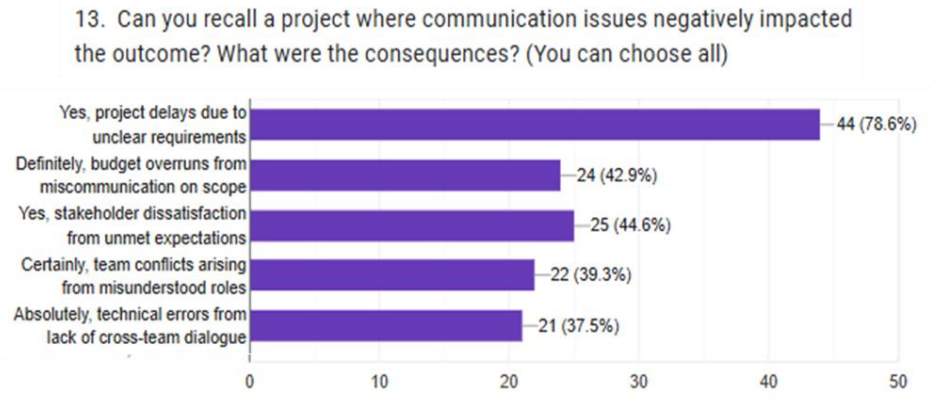
Graph 5: Balance between communication and technical skills in SAP teams



Graph 6: Incentives from companies to improve communication skills

Graph 7: Effects of poor communication on projects outcomes



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Hypothesis tests:

Test 1: Hypothesis on the communication and technical skills in SAP teams

Ho: There is no correlation between communication and technical skills in SAP teams

H1: There is a correlation between communication and technical skills in SAP teams

Communication skills and technical skills => $r_s = 0.78,\ \mathrm{p-value} = 0.0000$

There is a statistically significant correlation. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Test 2: Hypothesis on the correlation between communication and technical skills of the 'hardest colleague to understand' (hctu)

Ho: There is no correlation between communication and technical skills of the 'hctu'

H1: There is a correlation between communication and technical skills of the 'hctu'

Communication skills and technical skills => $r_s = 0.61,\ \mathrm{p-value} = 0.0000$

There is a statistically significant correlation. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Test 3: Hypothesis on the correlation between technical skills of the 'hardest colleague to understand' with years of experience

Ho: There is no correlation between the communication skills of the 'hctu' and years of experience

H1: There is a correlation between the communication skills of the 'hctu' and years of experience

Communication skills and years of experience => $r_s = 0.58,\ \mathrm{p-value} = 0.0000$

There is a statistically significant correlation. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Test 4: Hypothesis on the correlation between technical skills of the 'hardest colleague to understand' with years of experience

Ho: There is no correlation between the technical skills of the 'hctu' and years of experience

H1: There is a correlation between the technical skills of the 'hctu' and years of experience

Communication skills and years of experience => $r_s = 0.79,\ \mathrm{p-value} = 0.0000$

There is a statistically significant correlation. The null hypothesis is rejected.

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Test 5: Hypothesis on the difference between the technical and communication skills of the 'hardest colleague to understand'

Ho: There is no difference between the technical and communication skills of the 'hctu'

H1: There is a difference between the technical and communication skills of the 'hctu'

Communication skills and years of experience => $r_s = 0.58,\ \mathrm{p-value} = 0.0000$

Communication skills and years of experience => $r_s = 0.79,\ \mathrm{p-value} = 0.0000$

Spearman correlation comparison => $z = 2.0274,\ \mathrm{p-value} = 0.0000, \mathrm{two-tailed\ test}$

There is a statistically significant difference. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Test 6: Hypothesis on companies neglecting communication skills

Ho: There is no evidence of companies neglecting communication skills

H1: There is evidence of companies neglecting communication skills

19.6% reported limited resources to improve communication.

33.9% reported no resources at all to improve communication.

29.1% reported poor or no balance at all between technical and communication skills

There is evidence of companies neglecting communication skills.

The null hypothesis is rejected.

Test 7: Hypothesis on poor communication skills affecting project performance

Ho: There is no evidence of poor communication skills affecting project performance

H1: There is evidence of poor communication skills affecting project performance

78.6% reported project delays due to unclear requirements.

42.9% reported budget overruns from miscommunication on scope.

44.6% reported stakeholder dissatisfaction from unmet expectations.

39.3% reported team conflicts arising from misunderstood roles.

37.5% reported technical errors from a lack of cross-team dialogue.

There is evidence of poor communication skills affecting project performance.

The null hypothesis is rejected.

Test 8: Hypothesis on the presence of "bad incentives" to neglect communication skills

Ho: There is no evidence of "bad incentives" to neglect communication skills

H1: There is evidence of "bad incentives" to neglect communication skills

Combining test 6 (on companies neglecting communication skills) with test 7 (on poor communication skills affecting project performance), and the data on the seniority of the assessed, we conclude that companies keep technically experienced workers growing even showing no improvement – or even loss – of communication skills.

There is evidence of "bad incentives" to neglect communication skills.

The null hypothesis is rejected.

FINDINGS

Answering the research questions:

1. Yes, there is a statistically significant correlation between communication and technical skills in SAP teams.
2. Yes, there is a statistically significant correlation between communication and the technical skills of the 'hardest colleague to understand."
3. Yes, there is a statistically significant correlation between the technical skills and years of experience of the 'hardest colleague to understand.'
4. Yes, there is a statistically significant correlation between the communication skills and years of experience of the 'hardest colleague to understand.'
5. Yes, there is a statistically significant difference between the technical and communication skills of the 'hardest colleague to understand'?
6. No, the levels of expertise contrast. Time of work brings significantly different experience levels, technical skills tend to grow, and communicational skills do not.
7. Yes, companies are neglecting the communication skills of workers.
8. Yes, poor communication skills are consistently affecting project performance.
9. Yes, companies neglect the effects of poor communication on project performance.
10. Yes, once companies keep the professionals who overlook communication skills because they have good technical skills working and progressing, there is evidence of feedback for the perpetuation of the paradoxical cycle.

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DISCUSSION

Cycle of Poor Performance: As companies have a very hard time finding good technical professionals and training them, companies always prioritize technical skills over communication skills. Scope and target time to deliver projects are always challenging. There is always a belief that the project manager can 'close the communication gap' in teamwork. The fact that the manager is not always there during work is ignored, and poor communication continues to harm the team's performance, perpetuating the cycle. Boakye et al. (2024) researched to "investigate the influence of training in multiple functions, communication of strategy, and feedback on performance on competitive advantage and concluded that training in multiple functions, communication of strategy, and feedback on performance did not significantly affect competitive advantage."

Less practice leads to lower proficiency. Like any skill, communication requires constant practice. Neglecting communication leads to less fluency and effectiveness in expressing ideas. Similarly, it can lead to a loss of sensitivity to feedback, difficulty in adapting to the message, decreased empathy, and difficulty in understanding other people's perspectives. Also leads to social isolation as people avoid interacting with those who have difficulty communicating, which increases misunderstandings, and can create tensions, resentments, and conflicts. Consider the broader impact on organizational culture and change management.

The study of Hajj & serhan (2019) named *A Project Approach to Enterprise Resource Planning Implementation,* aiming to discuss the critical success factors in ERP implementations from the perspectives of employees, management, consultants, and vendors, showing that motivation is key to success. Although it sounds obvious, in the context of the communication blind spot paradox, it is relevant, since a lack of motivation may be the reason for consultants not developing communication skills. More studies, such as Munier (2013) and Abu-Hussein et al. (2016) confirm this perception.

Al-Amin et al. (2023) presented the investigation named *History, Features, Challenges, and Critical Success Factors of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) in The Era of Industry 4.0,* where they reported that among the critical success factors of ERP implementation to thrive, communication emerges as one of the key factors. More works, even from two decades ago, such as Fui-Hoon Nah et al. (2001)or more recent, such as Tarhini et al. (2015) already reported communication relevance, but companies' persistent lack of attention perpetuates the problem.

This study has some limitations, such as sample size, although statistically relevant, and potential biases, since we have researched only in one country until now. Even methodological constraints, such as the 10-degree Likert scale used to assess the 'hardest colleague to understand' at work, and even the peer's assessment, that is a perceptual measure. We have a critical understanding of the limitations of our research, but still, we believe that viewing miscommunication as a paradoxical phenomenon opens a new perspective for further investigation.

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CONCLUSION

In this research, we discovered that communication skills and technical skills tend to improve over time, but communication skills are significantly lower than technical skills. There is evidence that a lack of communication ability can compromise the team's performance, and that communication is often neglected in favor of technical skills. Also, senior professionals improve their technical skills but seem to deteriorate their communication skills, and despite this, they keep growing their salaries and project participation, perpetuating the cycle. Our findings suggest the idea of a communication blind spot paradox affecting the performance and productivity of SAP ERP projects. Nevertheless, although it seems to be a paradox, it remains unclear and requires future research whether this phenomenon can be treated as a paradox or is just strongly counterintuitive.

Recommendations

We suggest ongoing text interpretation competitions as a strategy to improve communication skills among technical professionals. It is a simple, low-cost, easy-to-implement, effective approach that can help improve communication skills. Technical professionals should be required to read and write each other's texts and explain the meaning of the messages from different interpretation perspectives. This should be done under the supervision of a native language professional. They should be scored over time and given feedback on progress. It should be clear that improving communication is not a mere option, but a must-do.

While technical expertise is undoubtedly essential, we propose organizational changes to prioritize communication alongside it. A minimum communication score to be assigned to a major project could be one way to motivate improvement.

We also recommend other kinds of training and development programs to bridge the communication gap.

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List of abbreviations

SAP	Enterprise Resource Planning
TDM	Total Design Method
IT	Information Technology