Women in Negotiation: Effects of Gender and Power on Negotiation Behavior

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**Woman in Negotiation**

Effects of Gender & Power on Negotiation Behavior

Meet Adam and Jane. Both are negotiating separately about an asking price of a car.

Compared to Adam, Jane starts with a worse opening offer for herself and makes bigger concessions. As a result, she ends up paying more for the car than Adam.

The difference being partly due to the fact that Jane was less at ease in the competitive bargaining situation than Adam.

"However, what would be the outcome if prior to the negotiation something happened to Jane that made her feel more powerful and more at ease in the bargaining situation?"

"In this study, we addressed the question of whether and, if so, how power influences men's and women's cognition differently and to what extent this influence affects their negotiation behavior."
“Results of previous studies show that power affects individuals’ cognition and behavior in many meaningful ways. Increased power causes individuals to experience increased positive emotions and enhanced automatic cognition, and people are more likely to take action in risky situations.”

Generally, a distinction in power can be made between informational power, like expertise...

Personal power, such as skills...

Position based (authority)... The mere recollection of having power over others already increases one’s power at the negotiating table.

And, relationship-based: interdependency

Power triggers personality traits such as dominance and assertiveness.

‘This would positively affect women’s negotiation behavior more than men’s negotiation behavior.”
"Eagly’s (1987) social role theory provides a plausible framework to explain the stronger reaction of women to power activation in a negotiation."

"According to this theory, individuals have beliefs about their own and others’ behavior, based on what is seen as appropriate behavior for a role that an individual fulfills. For men and women, socialization has resulted in traditional gender roles, whereby men are expected to be the breadwinner of the family, to be assertive, dominant, self-confident, ambitious, and self-oriented."

"While women are expected to take care of the children and do the housekeeping, to be warm, expressive, caring, and friendly."

"Negotiations are believed to be part of the masculine traits such as dominance, assertiveness, and rationality. They are more important for negotiation success than feminine traits, such as being emotional and intuitive."

The question arises, however, to what extent men would still have a negotiation advantage over women if the latter feel empowered? Would Jane benefit more from a feeling of power than Adam?
First offer

With regard to making a first offer, we expect...

Hypothesis 1a: In general, men will make better first offers than women.

Hypothesis 1b: Power interacts with gender. It causes women to make better offers for themselves, whereas men's first offers will not be affected by power.

Hypothesis 1c: As a result of the effect power has on women's negotiation behavior, men's and women's first offers will differ less from each other than they normally do.

Outcome

With regard to the negotiating outcome, we expect...

Hypothesis 2a: In general, men will reach better negotiation outcomes than women.

Hypothesis 2b: Power interacts with gender in such a way that it causes women to reach better negotiation outcomes for themselves; men's negotiation outcomes will not be affected by power.

Hypothesis 2c: As a result of the effect power has on women's negotiation behavior, men's and women's negotiation outcomes will differ less from each other than they normally do.

101 students (50 women, 51 men) from a Dutch university participated in the experiment. The average age of the participants was 21.8. During the experiment, the participants had to negotiate with the second experimenter, male aged 24, he wore casual clothing. The independent variables were gender and priming. The dependent variables were the amount of the participants' first offer and the amount of the participants' final offer.
The first part, consisted of, a premeasurement of the participants self-ratings on power-relevant traits. And a postmeasurement of the participants’ self-ratings on power-relevant traits.

### Priming Power Manipulation

“Please recall and write down a particular incident in which you had power over another individual or individuals. By power, I mean a situation in which you had control and influence over others. Please describe this situation in which you had power—what happened, how you felt, and so on.”

### The control prime

“Please describe the way you typically spend your evenings. Begin by writing down a description of your activities, and then figure out how much time you devoted to each activity. Examples of things you might describe include eating dinner, studying for a particular exam, hanging out with certain friends, watching TV, and so on.”

The participants received a case briefing in which they would negotiate the price of a house that had an asking price of €250000. Information needed to justify their offer was provided (e.g., the average selling prices of houses in the neighborhood). The participants’ wrote their first offer on the case briefing prior to the negotiation. The participants’ final offer was written down by the experimenter on a blank sheet immediately after the negotiation.”

### Results

The results of this study show that women who were primed with the experience of having power made better first offers and negotiated better outcomes than women who were not. Thus, the power-prime manipulation turned out to be effective and worked out considerably more strongly for women.
First offers
Hypothesis 1 was rejected, first offers were similar to those of men. The results support Hypotheses 1b and 1c.

Outcome
The negotiation outcome of power-primed women did not differ from the negotiation outcomes of the power-primed men. In all, these results support Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c.

The results of this study show that while men and women both perceived an increased sense of power after the power-primed manipulation, only women’s negotiation behavior was affected by the power prime. Women who experienced power made better first offers and reached better negotiation outcomes than did women who were not primed to experience power. Interestingly, power-primed women even negotiated outcomes that did not differ at all from those of men. This highlights the strong effect of power on women’s behavior in negotiation.

“It should be taken into account, however, that it may not always be beneficial for women to behave (more) powerfully in negotiations. Displaying powerful behavior is more congruent with the male gender role than the female gender role. As such, negotiating parties may expect gender role congruent behavior of female negotiators. When this behavior is incongruent, this may result in a backlash toward the female negotiator.”

The end