Journal of Applied Psychology

Asking for Less (but Receiving More): Women Avoid Impasses and Outperform Men When Negotiators Have Weak Alternatives

Anyi Ma, Rebecca Ponce de Leon, and Ashleigh Shelby Rosette

Online First Publication, October 12, 2023. https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/apl0001138

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Journal of Applied Psychology

ISSN: 0021-9010

https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001138

RESEARCH REPORT

Asking for Less (but Receiving More): Women Avoid Impasses and Outperform Men When Negotiators Have Weak Alternatives

Anyi Ma[1], Rebecca Ponce de Leon[2], and Ashleigh Shelby Rosette[3]

[1] Department of Management and Human Resources, Wisconsin School of Business, University of Wisconsin–Madison

[2] Management Division, Columbia Business School

[3] Department of Management and Organizations, Fuqua School of Business, Duke University

Both research and conventional wisdom suggest that, due to their relational orientation, women are less likely than men to engage in agentic and assertive behaviors, leading them to underperform in zero-sum, distributive negotiations where one party's gain is equivalent to the other party's loss. However, past research tends to neglect the costs of reaching impasse by excluding impasses from measures of negotiation performance. Departing from this convention, we incorporate the economic costs of impasses into measures of negotiation performance to provide a more holistic examination of negotiation outcomes. In so doing, we reveal a reversal of the oft-cited male performance advantage when obtaining an impasse is especially economically costly (as is the case when negotiators have weak negotiation alternatives). Specifically, we predicted that female negotiators would make less assertive first offers than men due to their more relational orientation and that these gender differences in offer assertiveness should result in women avoiding impasse more often than men. Since avoiding impasses should improve negotiation performance when negotiators are able to obtain a deal that is more valuable than their negotiation alternative, women's tendency to avoid impasses should improve their performance when negotiators have weak (vs. strong) alternatives. These predictions were supported in eight studies (three preregistered) across various negotiation contexts, comprising data from the television show Shark Tank (Study 1), four incentive-compatible negotiation simulations (Studies 2 and 3, Supplemental Studies), and a multistudy causal experimental chain (Supplemental Studies 4a–c).

Keywords: gender, negotiation, impasse, relational orientation, performance

Supplemental materials: https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001138.supp

> Trades would not take place unless it were advantageous to the parties concerned. Of course, it is better to strike as good a bargain as one's bargaining position permits. The worst outcome is when, by overreaching greed, no bargain is struck, and a trade that could have been advantageous to both parties does not come off at all.
>
> —Benjamin Franklin

Negotiations, ubiquitous in organizational and everyday life, are economically and socially impactful interactions, influencing employees' salaries, career advancement, and relationships (L. L. Thompson et al., 2010). As such, understanding gender dynamics in negotiations is considered vital for establishing gender equity in the workplace (Bowles & McGinn, 2008). Substantial research has suggested that gender disparities remain prevalent in distributive negotiations (i.e., when one party's gain is equivalent to the other party's loss), with female negotiators underperforming relative to men due to their tendency to avoid assertive negotiation behaviors (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013; Bowles et al., 2007; Kray & Thompson, 2004). This gender gap in negotiation assertiveness is purported to stem from two related yet distinct forces: a desire to be relational and avoid contentious negotiation interactions (Kray & Thompson, 2004), as well as a fear of the negative repercussions that women (but not men) experience when negotiating assertively (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Bowles et al., 2007).

However, the implication that women's insufficient assertiveness categorically lowers negotiation performance may be somewhat limited. Past research tends to assess negotiation performance by analyzing deal value after excluding impasses from the data set (Schweinsberg et al., 2012, 2022; L. Thompson, 1990; Tripp & Sondak, 1992). This practice of omitting impasses is partially driven by the infrequent number of impasses observed in typical research contexts (e.g., behavioral laboratories, classroom simulations). Such low impasse rates, however, are likely an inaccurate reflection of real-world outcomes. Indeed, anywhere from 29% to 55% of negotiations in field settings result in impasse (Ashenfelter & Currie, 1990; Backus et al., 2020). What is more, the small body of work that has examined impasses has suggested that impasse rates are an

Earlier versions of the article were presented at Duke University, University of California, San Diego, as well as the 82nd Academy of Management Annual Meeting. The present research was supported by funding from the Newcomb Institute at Tulane University, the Freeman School of Business at Tulane University, and the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Anyi Ma, Department of Management and Human Resources, Wisconsin School of Business, University of Wisconsin–Madison, Grainger Hall, Office 4250C, 975 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53706, United States. Email: anyi.ma@wisc.edu

important negotiation outcome to consider due to their various associated costs (Dannals et al., 2021). In addition to social, reputational, and opportunity time costs (Tinsley et al., 2002), negotiators who reach an impasse also incur economic costs when they could have potentially obtained an agreement more valuable than their alternative (Schweinsberg et al., 2022).

Due to the tendency to exclude impasses from analyses of negotiation performance, it is unsurprising that excepting a few studies (e.g., Dannals et al., 2021), limited research has examined differences in men's and women's ability to avoid impasses and the consequent effects on negotiation performance. Enriching this scholarly space, we explore whether gender differences in relational orientation—or the propensity to be interpersonally attuned and affiliative (Abele & Bruckmüller, 2011; Cross & Madson, 1997; Gelfand et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2016)—might explain the tendency for women to engage in less assertive negotiation behaviors than men, operationalized as the value of a negotiator's initial offer in distributive negotiations. As the assertive negotiation behaviors (e.g., an extreme, self-favorable first offer) that women tend to avoid are also likely to reduce the probability of impasses (Schweinsberg et al., 2012), we propose that a reversal of the typical male advantage in negotiation performance may occur when we incorporate impasses into computations of performance and that this reversal should only emerge when negotiators have weak (vs. strong) negotiation alternatives, wherein it is particularly costly for negotiators to obtain an impasse. For instance, we would expect this female advantage to emerge when a job negotiator has no existing offers, weakening their bargaining position, but not when they have a backup job offer with a salary higher than that being offered in the current negotiation.

In considering the impact of likelihood of impasse on individual negotiation performance, this work provides nuance to prevailing wisdom about women's underperformance in distributive negotiations as well as the unilateral benefits of assertive behaviors for negotiation performance. The notion that making an assertive first offer is beneficial for negotiation performance is well established in the literature (Galinsky & Mussweiler, 2001). However, this finding was observed in analyses that excluded impasses. We theorize that including impasse cost in calculations of performance can reveal the importance of considering the strength of one's negotiation alternative as a boundary condition to this broad presumption. Whereas negotiating assertively (due to a lower relational orientation) may increase the value claimed in a negotiation, it can also increase impasse likelihood (which undermines negotiation performance when negotiators have weak alternatives). In sum, we suggest that the presumedly sweeping benefits of a more assertive negotiation style may be overstated, whereas the utility of adopting a relational orientation in distributive negotiations may be undervalued.

Theory and Hypothesis Development

Gender, Relational Orientation, and Assertive Negotiation Behaviors

To identify an important psychological antecedent of behaviors that might decrease the likelihood of impasse, we draw from relational perspectives on gender. Multiple converging streams of research indicate that women are more relationally oriented than men, which in turn has significant consequences for wide-ranging workplace phenomena, including organizational citizenship behaviors (Allen, 2006) and leadership style (Eagly & Johnson, 1990), to name just a couple. Women are socialized to be relationally oriented from a young age (Cross & Madson, 1997; Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Gabriel & Gardner, 1999; Maccoby, 1998) and are often encouraged to act in ways that "promote and strengthen existing relationships," compared to men (Cross et al., 2002, p. 400; Lee et al., 2016). For example, relative to men, women speak in more interpersonally sensitive ways (Leaper & Robnett, 2011), are more motivated to foster connections by disclosing intimate or personal details about themselves, and more apt to express emotions (Cross & Madson, 1997; Gelfand et al., 2006). Gender differences in relational orientation also lead women to behave less competitively and more cooperatively than men in economic games (Balliet et al., 2011; Kugler et al., 2018).

The tendency for female negotiators to exhibit a stronger relational orientation than their male counterparts should result in differences in the assertiveness of their negotiating behaviors, reflected clearly in the offers they make. Offer value is a key indicator of assertiveness in distributive negotiations (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Dannals et al., 2021; Toosi et al., 2019), as it indicates the extent to which negotiators employ value-claiming behaviors that focus on their own (vs. other parties') economic interests. Because people with a relational orientation tend to focus more on others' interests and needs (vs. their own; Cross et al., 2002; Gabriel & Gardner, 1999; Gelfand et al., 2006), negotiators who have a stronger relational orientation should be less likely to engage in value-claiming behaviors. Such a preference may emerge because engaging in value-claiming behaviors might not only maximize personal gains but also cause heightened interpersonal strain, offense, or friction (Amanatullah et al., 2008; Curhan et al., 2008; Gelfand et al., 2006). To manage this trade-off, those with a stronger (vs. weaker) relational orientation may make less assertive negotiation offers[1] because they are motivated to establish trusting relationships and avoid interpersonal strife. Behaviorally, a strong relational orientation is thus reflected as an offer that builds rapport and trust while minimizing conflict (i.e., less self-valuable negotiation offers). Consistent with this premise, job candidates who perceive a higher relational cost to negotiating set lower reservation prices (i.e., walkaway points; Amanatullah et al., 2008), which typically predict lower initial offer values (L. Thompson, 1990). In economic games, interpersonally concerned prosocial negotiators also tend to award others more points than themselves (Murphy et al., 2011; van Dijk et al., 2004). Integrating these ideas, we hypothesize that women will make less assertive negotiation offers than men, and that this gender gap will be mediated by differences in relational orientation.

Hypothesis 1a: Female negotiators will make less assertive first offers than male negotiators.

Hypothesis 1b: Relational orientation will mediate gender differences in offer assertiveness.

[1] Although agentic, assertive behaviors and relational orientation have been construed in certain literatures as independent and orthogonal theoretical constructs (Bem, 1974), within the context of distributive negotiations, the two are strongly inversely related in that having a relational orientation should decrease assertive negotiation behaviors. For example, the assertiveness of offers has been used as a behavioral metric for social value orientation in negotiations (Van Lange et al., 1997), with less assertive offers indicating a stronger relational orientation.

Although we theorize that women may refrain from negotiating assertively because of their higher relational orientation, as noted earlier, another prominent yet distinct explanation for the gender gap in negotiation assertiveness is women's fear of experiencing backlash when engaging in assertive behaviors. For example, negotiation partners express less liking for and willingness to hire women (but not men) who initiate negotiations (Bowles et al., 2007). Women's fear of backlash has also been shown to reduce the assertiveness of their negotiation offers (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010). Therefore, in our studies, we also consider the alternative possibility that our findings are explained by an anticipated backlash.

Assertive Negotiation Behaviors, Impasses, and Negotiation Performance

Negotiation theory and research have shown that two primary metrics capture economic performance in distributive negotiations: the rate of impasse and the value claimed from the negotiation (L. Thompson, 1990). Value claimed refers to the economic outcome negotiators extract from the negotiation, assuming that they have avoided an impasse in the first place (L. Thompson, 1990). Avoiding an impasse is beneficial when both parties obtain a deal that is more valuable than their negotiation alternatives (i.e., any backup offers that they may have in hand). Obtaining an impasse when negotiators could have attained a negotiation agreement that is more valuable than their best alternative—that is, when the negotiation has a positive zone of possible agreement—is economically inefficient (Rubinstein, 1982; Sobel & Takahashi, 1983). Indeed, game theorists have formulated numerous economic models to understand how much negotiators can demand in such a negotiation to avoid an impasse and receive nothing (Nash, 1950; Raiffa, 1982; White et al., 1994).

Despite its central importance in early negotiation theories, limited empirical research has examined impasses. Instead, most studies opt to exclude impasses from analyses of negotiation performance for a couple of key reasons. As mentioned, the bulk of negotiation research is conducted with samples drawn from laboratory or class simulations in which participants only negotiate with one partner and may feel pressure to come to a negotiated agreement (Galinsky et al., 2009; Schweinsberg et al., 2012). Negotiation scenarios used in past research also feature large positive bargaining zones, reducing the rate of impasse (Schweinsberg et al., 2022). As a result, researchers have a limited understanding of the factors that may affect impasse rates.

We assert that one critical determinant of impasse rates is the assertiveness of negotiation offers, a possibility that has received some empirical support (Nash, 1950; White et al., 1994). For instance, in both negotiations and economic games, extreme negotiation offers can be perceived as offensive and increase the likelihood of impasse (Pillutla & Murnighan, 1996; Schweinsberg et al., 2012; Thaler, 1988). One experiment that varied offer extremity found that negotiations in which one partner gave a moderate first offer resulted in impasses only 14% of the time, whereas those in which a partner gave an extreme first offer resulted in impasses 29% of the time—more than twice as often (Schweinsberg et al., 2012). Given the link between offer assertiveness and impasse rate, we further posit that negotiator gender should affect the rate of impasse. Integrating gendered perspectives on relational orientation—which predict that women should make less assertive first offers than men—and negotiation theory—which predicts that less assertive offers will reduce a negotiator's probability of reaching an impasse—we hypothesize that women should be less likely to reach impasses than men, and a pattern that should be mediated by gender differences in relational orientation and the assertiveness of initial offers. While limited research has examined how gender influences impasse rates, one notable exception is work by Dannals et al. (2021), which found that women, but not men, who were empowered by a strong alternative to act more assertively had higher impasse rates with partners who also had strong alternatives. Although Dannals et al. (2021) did not find that women made less assertive offers or were more likely to obtain deals across their studies, it is unclear what would occur when partner effects were controlled for, as in the case when all negotiators negotiate with the same partner.

Hypothesis 2a: Female (vs. male) negotiators will be less likely to reach impasses.

Hypothesis 2b: The effect of gender on reaching impasses will be serially mediated by differences in relational orientation and assertiveness of first offers.

Gender Effects on Negotiation Performance and the Moderating Role of Negotiation Alternatives

Distributive negotiation performance is often computed as the value negotiators extract from the focal negotiation. However, this convention often neglects to consider that performance is shaped by whether negotiators are able to strike a deal in the first place. To incorporate the cost of impasses and more accurately capture negotiation performance, recent research recommends capturing negotiation performance for those who reach an impasse as the value of a negotiator's alternative, or the value of the deal or action the negotiator would take if they failed to close the current deal (Schweinsberg et al., 2022). For example, if a job negotiator failed to reach a salary agreement with a prospective employer, their negotiation performance would be recorded as the value of their backup deal—the salary amount of their highest job offer in hand, or $0 if they had no current offers.

We predict that incorporating impasses into measures of negotiation performance has a critical impact on whether assertive behaviors, such as making an extreme first offer, are beneficial or detrimental to negotiation performance. Because negotiation performance is equivalent to the value of a negotiator's alternative if they reach an impasse, all else equal, an impasse is therefore more costly when negotiators have a weak (vs. strong) alternative. Although assertive negotiation behaviors can improve negotiation performance by increasing the value that negotiators claim from a focal negotiation (Galinsky & Mussweiler, 2001), the same behaviors also increase the likelihood of impasse, which is especially detrimental to performance when negotiators have weak alternatives. Therefore, it is possible that when impasses are considered when computing negotiation performance, the positive effect of assertive first offers on distributive negotiation performance might be attenuated or even reversed when negotiators have weak (vs. strong) alternatives. Women's tendency to make less assertive offers and avoid impasses should in turn result in a female performance advantage when negotiators have a weak (vs. strong) negotiation alternative. To return to the salary negotiation example above, entering a negotiation with no existing job offers would

increase the cost of impasse, as failing to close the current deal at hand would leave the negotiator with nothing. Conversely, entering a salary negotiation with a strong, valuable outside offer would significantly reduce the cost of impasse, as a failed negotiation would still leave the negotiator with a favorable alternative outcome.

Therefore, when negotiators have weak alternatives, women's relational orientation and consequent tendency to make less assertive offers—relative to men—should shield them from the great losses associated with reaching an impasse when they could have obtained a deal more valuable than their alternative. Conversely, when negotiators have strong alternatives, women's tendency to avoid impasse may cause them to agree to a deal less valuable than their alternative, resulting in their underperformance relative to men.

Hypothesis 3a: Women will have better negotiation performance, measured as final deal value that incorporates impasses, than men when their negotiation alternative is weak, but worse relative performance when their alternative is strong.

Hypothesis 3b: This pattern of moderation will be explained by relational orientation and offer assertiveness.

Transparency and Openness

We describe our sampling plan, all data exclusions, all manipulations, and all measures for all studies, and we adhere to the *Journal of Applied Psychology*'s methodological checklist. The design, hypotheses, sample size, and analysis plan for Study 2 were preregistered (https://aspredicted.org/9RV_BZL). Data for Study 1 will not be made available due to its proprietary nature. Study material (additional online material), data, and analysis code for all other studies are available at: https://osf.io/9bcnz/. Data were analyzed in Stata 16. Study 1 was deemed exempt for review by the Tulane University institutional review board (2021-1313, "Examining gender effects on Kickstarter, Airbnb, and Shark Tank"). All other studies were approved by Tulane University institutional review board (2020-1432, "Attitudes and beliefs in the workplace").

Overview of Studies

We examined our hypotheses across two primary studies and four supplemental studies. In Study 1, we tested Hypotheses 1a–2b by collecting negotiation data from a popular television show based in the United States, Shark Tank, to examine the relationships among negotiator gender, relational orientation, and the likelihood of obtaining an impasse. Study 2 tested all predictions using an incentive-compatible salary negotiation. The supplemental studies provide additional evidence using negotiation simulations and a causal chain strategy (Spencer et al., 2005).

Study 1: Deal Outcomes From Shark Tank

We collected archival data from the television show Shark Tank (Jachimowicz et al., 2019; Poczter & Shapsis, 2018; Smith & Viceisza, 2018). In addition to collecting relevant deal-level information (e.g., gender), coders unaware of our hypotheses were trained to evaluate entrepreneurs' relational orientation by coding for two readily observable and concrete behavioral indicators of relational orientation—relational self-disclosure and emotional appeal—that have been linked to performance in competitive contexts (Cross & Madson, 1997; Gelfand et al., 2006).

Method

Data were collected from 802 pitches from Seasons 1 to 9 of Shark Tank. After excluding 116 mixed-gender teams from our analyses, the final sample consisted of 486 pitches from solo men and all-male teams and 200 pitches from solo women and all-female teams.

Gender

Gender of the negotiator(s) was recorded (0 = men, 1 = women).

First Offer Assertiveness

This was operationalized as the dollar amount that each negotiator requested at the start of each pitch (log-transformed due to high skewness).

Likelihood of Impasse

This was coded as 1 for impasse and 0 for no impasse.

Relational Orientation

We trained five coders unaware of our hypotheses to evaluate pitches for the nine seasons. Due to personnel changes, the coding process occurred in two phases. Three coders rated pitches from Seasons 1 to 6, and two different coders rated pitches from Seasons 7 to 9, so we report item reliabilities for these two phases separately. A definition was provided for each rated variable, and raters evaluated 124 (first phase) or 80 (second phase) randomly selected pitches. Disagreements were resolved through discussion. Upon ensuring the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) exceeded .70 for each coded variable, we divided the remaining pitches among raters.

To assess negotiators' relational orientation, coders evaluated two indicators as a proxy measure for the construct: relational self-disclosure and overall emotional appeal. Relational self-disclosure refers to the sharing of personal and intimate information with others, motivated by a desire to build rapport and interpersonal closeness (Cross & Madson, 1997; Gelfand et al., 2006). We defined emotional appeal as the use of any emotions—positive or negative—to persuade the investors to fund the product (Armstrong et al., 2014). Both relational self-disclosure and emotional appeal were rated on a 7-point scale (1 = *none at all*, 7 = *a great deal*). A two-way random ICC score indicated that reliability across the six items in Phase 1 of the rating process (two items across three raters; ICC = .81) and four items assessed in Phase 2 (i.e., two items across two raters; ICC = .80) were satisfactory. All ratings were averaged to form a composite score.

Covariates

Female-led (vs. male-led) ventures in male-dominated industries underperform (Kanze et al., 2020). Therefore, raters were also asked to consider all aspects of the business (e.g., targeted consumers) and rate the extent to which they perceived the business to be masculine (1 = not masculine at all, 7 = very masculine, $ICC_{\text{first/second phase}}$ = .82/.78). Due to the popular belief that teams outperform solo

entrepreneurs in venture capital contexts (Greenberg & Mollick, 2018), we controlled for team status (0 = solo, 1 = team). We also controlled for the percentage of equity requested by the negotiator because funding requests are likely positively associated with the amount of equity provided in return. Finally, companies that are more valuable can request more funding (Zider, 1998). An important indicator of a company's value is its target industry, as companies in high-growth sectors have more room for expansion (Zider, 1998). We coded and controlled for the company's target market using the 11 sectors described in the Global Industry Classification Standard (Bhojraj et al., 2003).

Results and Discussion

Variable means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations can be found in Table 1. Results reported below include covariates (Table 2); the substantive pattern of results does not change if covariates are excluded. Supporting Hypothesis 1a, women made less assertive negotiation offers than men ($b = -.36$, $\beta = -.17$, 95% CI [−.53, −.19], $SE = .09$, $t[671] = -4.14$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .02$, Model 1). Consistent with Hypothesis 2a, women (who reached impasse 40% of the time) obtained significantly fewer impasses than men (who reached impasse 48% of the time; $b = -.41$, 95% CI [−.80, −.02], $SE = .20$, $z = -2.07$, $p = .039$, $OR = .66$, Model 2).[2] Supporting Hypotheses 1b and 2b, mediation analyses (with 5,000 bootstrapped samples) found a significant gender → relational orientation → offer assertiveness → impasse indirect effect ($b = -.01$, $SE = .01$, 95% CI [−.03, −.01], Table 3).

We found that women (vs. men) made less assertive negotiation offers due to their more relational orientation and, consequently, were more likely to avoid impasses. However, the nature of these data results in several limitations. First, women may have avoided assertive behaviors not because of their own motivations but because they anticipated negative reactions from their negotiation partners. Second, we are not able to fully consider all facets of each business that may influence just how assertive the monetary offer is or why the pitch resulted in an impasse, such as the company's maturity, sales, or market share.[3] Although we controlled for the companies' target industry, this may not fully capture the variety of dimensions that may affect the company's overall value. Third, although we construe relational orientation as an intrapsychic variable, we used behavioral indicators as assessments of relational orientation. Study 2 addresses these limitations by examining if relational orientation—assessed with established, intrapsychic measures—predicts gender differences in offer assertiveness beyond established mechanisms and when holding constant all other features of the negotiation.

Study 2: Evidence From an Incentive-Compatible Negotiation

Study 2 used an incentive-compatible, computer-mediated, single-issue distributive negotiation scenario in which we manipulated the strength of the negotiator's alternative to test our predictions. Finally, we sought to show that relational orientation predicts gender differences in behaviors and outcomes beyond anticipated backlash.[4]

Method

Given an effect size of $r = .16$ (based on correlation between gender and offer assertiveness in Study S1), $\alpha = .05$ (two-tailed), and power = .90, an a priori power analysis indicated that we need to recruit 404 participants. As preregistered, we sought to recruit 400 participants and received complete responses from 396 U.S. participants from Prolific. Per our preregistration, we excluded data from one participant who indicated that they experienced technical issues. The final sample consisted of 395 participants (194 women, 197 men, four nonbinary people, $M_{age} = 37.09$, $SD_{age} = 12.04$[5]).

All participants were assigned the role of a job candidate who would be negotiating with a human resource manager. We provided participants with a table showing 11 salary options ranging from $85,000 to $135,000 in $5,000 increments and told them that their goal was to negotiate the highest salary possible. To emphasize the distributive nature of the negotiation, we told participants that the human resource manager likely wants to offer them the lowest possible compensation (i.e., $85,000), and that the manager likely has other candidates that they could hire.

Value of Negotiation Alternative

Participants were then randomly assigned to the strong (vs. weak) negotiation alternative condition.[6] In the strong negotiation alternative condition ($n = 200$), participants were told, "You have another job that is offering a $85,000 salary. Therefore, any deal that affords you compensation that is worth at least $85,000 will be beneficial." In the weak alternative condition ($n = 195$), participants were told that "You currently do not have an alternative job offer," resulting in an alternative valued at $0. We chose $0 in the weak negotiation alternative condition so that obtaining an impasse would be sufficiently costly.[7] All participants were informed that there would be several rounds of negotiation, but that they did not know how

[2] Female (vs. male) investors were more likely to offer deals to female negotiators (36%), compared to male negotiators (22%), $\chi^2(1) = 8.09$, $p = .004$. Interestingly, female investors were not more likely to offer deals to negotiators who exhibited a higher relational orientation, $b = .22$, 95% CI [−.13, .56], $SE = .18$, $z = 1.23$, $p = .220$, indicating that although female investors were more likely to reach a negotiated agreement with female negotiators, this was not because female investors were more susceptible to relational appeals.

[3] We thank an anonymous reviewer for this valuable point.

[4] Although we control for the role of anticipated backlash in our models, we thank an anonymous reviewer who suggested that there could be temporal relationships between the two variables, with anticipated backlash predicting relational orientation and/or vice versa. Indeed, we found a significant gender → anticipated backlash → relational orientation → offer assertiveness → impasse indirect effect, *coeff* = .01, $SE = .01$, 95% CI [.0003, .01], as well as a gender → relational orientation → anticipated backlash → offer assertiveness → impasse indirect effect, *coeff* = .03, $SE = .02$, 95% CI [.005, .10]. While disentangling the causal relationships between anticipated backlash and relational orientation is beyond our research scope, we urge future researchers to examine this important possibility in greater detail.

[5] Additional details about participant demographics (e.g., race/ethnicity, job tenure, industry) can be found in the Supplemental Materials.

[6] We ran a post hoc study to validate the manipulation and found that, as intended, participants in the weak (vs. strong) alternative condition set a lower reservation price (see Supplemental Material, for full details).

[7] Two supplementary studies with different values for negotiation alternatives ($60,000 vs. $110,000 in Supplemental Study 2 or $0 vs. $110,000 in Supplemental Study 3) replicated the pattern of results reported in the present study (see Supplemental Material, for details).

Table 1
Intercorrelations, Interrater Reliabilites, Means, and Standard Deviations Among Variables (Study 1)

Variable	M_{women}	SD_{women}	M_{men}	SD_{men}	M	Min	Max	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Relational orientation	3.34	1.65	2.76	1.48	3.00	1	7	1.58	(.81/.80)						
2. Impasse (1 = yes, 0 = no)	.40	.49	.48	.50	.45	0	1	.50	−.13***	—					
3. Gender (0 = man, 1 = woman)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.17***	−.07†	—				
4. First offer assertiveness (log)	11.77	.82	12.15	.98	12.04	9.21	15.42	.93	−.19***	.06†	−.18***	—			
5. Percentage equity offered	.17	.09	.15	.10	.16	.02	1	.09	.01	.13***	.10**	−.25***	—		
6. Team status (1 = team, 0 = solo)	.34	.47	.38	.49	.46	0	1	.50	−.01	−.11**	−.04	.05	−.08*	—	
7. Perceived masculinity of product	2.63	1.48	4.08	1.31	3.61	1	7	1.49	−.10**	.02	−.44***	−.01	−.02	.01	(.82/.78)

Note. $N = 686$. First number in parathenses represent reliabities for Seasons 1–6, second number represents reliabilities for Seasons 7–9. Min = minimum; max = maximum.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. † $p < .08$.

many rounds because the human resource manager could choose to end the negotiation at any time. To incentivize participants to perform their best, we also told them that they would be eligible for a bonus, with the top 20% of negotiators receiving a $0.50 bonus on top of their $0.54 base pay. Before negotiating, participants were asked to complete the measures below (full scales are contained in the online repository).

Relational Orientation

Participants completed a five-item measure of relational orientation (e.g., "I intend to be cooperative") adapted from a measure of cooperative social value orientation in negotiations ($\alpha = .73$, 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; Giebels et al., 2000; Sullivan et al., 2006).[8]

Anticipated Backlash

To measure anticipated backlash, participants were asked to respond to two items (e.g., "How much do you think you can reasonably ask for without the Human Resource Manager perceiving you to be a pushy person?"). Consistent with Amanatullah and Morris (2010), we used a dollar value response format with $5,000 increments (1 = $85,000, 11 = $135,000, $\alpha = .82$).

Filler Items

Finally, to reduce the chance that the prior items would prime participants to feel unsure of the appropriateness of competitive behaviors, we included three items about their intentions to use competitive tactics (Kray & Haselhuhn, 2007).

Negotiation Scenario

All participants were requested to make the first offer. Consistent with previous computer-mediated negotiations (Brooks & Schweitzer, 2011; Ma et al., 2019), the computer was preprogrammed to offer five counteroffers starting from $85,000 and ending at $105,000 in $5,000 increments each round. The computer accepted the participant's offer if it was equal to or lower than the computer's offer in the current or next round. For example, if the participant's first counteroffer to the computer was less than or equal to $90,000, this offer would be accepted and recorded as the final value of the deal, as the computer's next programmed counteroffer was $90,000.

First Offer Assertiveness

This was the value of the participant's first offer.

Likelihood of Impasse

We recorded whether participants reached an impasse at the end of the simulation (0 = no impasse, 1 = impasse).

[8] Unlike the original scale, our modified scale included a reference to the "human resource manager" in lieu of "negotiation partner." Our modified items also omitted language about an "upcoming negotiation."

Table 2
Gender Differences in Negotiation Behaviors and Outcomes (Study 1)

	Offer assertiveness(log)					Impasse (1 = yes, 0 = no)				
	Model 1					Model 2				
Variable	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*p*	*b*	*SE*	*z*	95% CI	*p*
1. Gender (0 = man, 1 = woman)	−.36***	.09	−4.14	[−.53, −.19]	.001	−.41*	.20	−2.07	[−.80, −.02]	.039
2. Equity requested	−2.05***	.37	−5.57	[−2.78, −1.33]	.001	3.34***	.91	3.69	[1.57, 5.12]	.001
3. Team status (1 = team, 0 = solo)	.11	.07	1.46	[−.04, .25]	.146	−.43**	.17	−2.61	[−.76, −.11]	.009
4. Perceived masculinity	−.04	.03	−1.62	[−.09, .01]	.106	−.02	.06	−.36	[−.13, .09]	.720
6. Industry	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
7. Intercept	13.06***	.29	45.01	[12.49, 13.63]	.001	.49	.68	.72	[−.85, 1.83]	.474
Pseudo R^2							.04			
R^2		.12								
N		686					681			

Note. *SE* = standard error; CI = confidence interval. Unstandardized betas.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Negotiation Performance

For participants who did not reach an impasse, we recorded the value of the deal to measure negotiation performance. When negotiators reached an impasse, this value was recorded as $0 in the weak alternative condition and as $85,000 in the strong alternative condition.

Results and Discussion

Variable means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations can be found in Table 4.[9,10] Supporting Hypothesis 1a, women (M = 104329.90, 95% CI [102805.60, 105854.20], SD = 10764.29) made less assertive first offers than men (M = 107258.90, 95% CI [105652.40, 108865.30], SD = 11432.99), $t(389) = 2.61$, $p = .010$, $d = .26$. In line with Hypothesis 2a, a logistic regression also found that women (who reached impasse 9% of the time) reached fewer impasses than men (who reached impasse 19% of the time), b = −.88, 95% CI [−1.49, −.27], $SE = .31$, $z = -2.81$, $p = .005$, OR = .42. Consistent with Hypotheses 1b and 2b, we observed a significant gender → relational orientation → offer assertiveness → impasse indirect effect, *coeff* = −.08, $SE = .04$, 95% CI [−.19, −.02] (Table 5), which held controlling for anticipated backlash, *coeff* = −.02, $SE = .01$, 95% CI [−.06. −.01].[11]

Supporting Hypothesis 3a, a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) found that strength of alternative significantly moderated gender differences in negotiation performance, $F(1, 387) = 4.61$, p = .032, $\eta_p^2 = .01$ (Figure 1). Planned contrasts found that for negotiators with weak alternatives, women (M = 82443.18, 95% CI [75364.72, 89521.64], SD = 33407.91) performed better than men (M = 69708.74, 95% CI [61307.21, 78110.26], SD = 42987.83), $F(1, 387) = 10.22$, $p = .002$, Cohen $d = .33$. In the strong alternative condition, however, men's (M = 92712.77, 95% CI [91552.72, 93872.81], SD = 5663.735) and women's performance did not differ (M = 93490.57, 95% CI [92485.71, 94495.42], SD = 5217.64), $F(1, 387) = 0.04$, $p = .842$, Cohen $d = .14$,[12] a finding we revisit in the General Discussion section. Next, we ran a serial moderated mediation analysis (Table 6), with strength of alternative moderating the link between (a) gender → relational orientation, (b) relational orientation → offer assertiveness, and (c) offer assertiveness → performance. Evincing Hypothesis 3b, the female performance advantage in the weak alternative condition was mediated by relational orientation and offer assertiveness (b = 879.27, SE = 610.87, 95% CI [40.70, 2564.69]), and this indirect effect reversed significantly in directionality in the strong alternative condition, b = −131.25, SE = 85.96, 95% CI [−399.95, −16.36]. The difference in conditional indirect effects across the weak (vs. strong) alternative condition was significant, b = 1010.53, SE = 617.07, 95% CI [160.37, 2722.87]. As shown in Table 6, the difference in conditional indirect effects was largely driven by a significant Alternative Strength × Offer Assertiveness interaction, which found that more assertive first offers were positively associated with performance when negotiators had strong alternatives, and negatively associated with performance when negotiators had weak alternatives. In other words, women outperformed men when negotiators had weak alternatives because making an assertive negotiation offer hurt (vs. helped) negotiation performance when negotiators had weak (vs. strong) alternatives. Finally, the difference in conditional indirect effects held controlling for anticipated backlash, b = −316.61, SE = 230.84, 95% CI [−987.99, −14.31].

Supplemental Studies 1–4

Four additional studies provide converging evidence for the existence of a negotiation performance advantage for women, relative

[9] Strength of negotiation alternative did not significantly moderate gender differences in relational orientation, first offer assertiveness, or impasse, suggesting that neither men nor women adjusted their motives or behaviors depending on the strength of their alternatives.

[10] Consistent with recommendations to report descriptive statistics when impasses are both included and excluded from measures of negotiation performance (Schweinsberg et al., 2022), we also report descriptive statistics when impasses are excluded from negotiation performance (see Supplemental Materials).

[11] Gender differences in relational orientation, first offer assertiveness, impasse, and negotiation performance held after controlling for anticipated backlash (see Table S1 in supplement). Both anticipated backlash and relational orientation significantly predicted gender differences in relational orientation, first offer assertiveness, impasse rates, and performance, confirming that relational orientation and anticipated backlash are related yet distinct explanations for gender differences in negotiation behaviors and outcomes.

[12] Two additional planned contrasts indicated that having a strong (vs. weak) alternative led both men, $F(1, 387) = 34.54$, $p < .001$, Cohen $d = .73$, and women, $F(1, 387) = 7.79$, $p = .006$, Cohen $d = .48$, to attain better performance.

Table 3

Mediating Effects of Relational Orientation and First Offer Assertiveness (Study 1)

Variable	Relational orientation					Offer assertiveness					Impasse				
	B	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*p*	*B*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*p*	*B*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*p*
Intercept	2.19***	.49	4.52	[1.24, 3.14]	0.001	13.28***	.29	46.30	[12.72, 13.85]	0.001	−1.30	1.40	−0.93	[−4.04, 1.44]	0.351
Gender	.57***	.14	3.93	[.28, .85]	0.001	−.30***	.09	−3.53	[−.47, −.13]	0.001	−.28	.20	−1.39	[−.68, .12]	0.165
Industry	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Perceived masculinity	.01	.04	0.26	[−.07, .09]	0.794	−.04	.02	−1.61	[−.09, .01]	0.107	−.01	.06	−0.22	[−.13, .10]	0.828
Team status	−.22	.12	−1.86	[.46, .01]	0.062	.08	.07	1.17	[−.06, .22]	0.243	−.49**	.17	−2.88	[−.82, −.16]	0.004
Equity offered	−.20	.62	−0.33	[−1.41, 1.00]	0.740	−2.08***	.36	−5.77	[−2.78, −1.37]	0.001	3.76***	.96	3.92	[1.88, 5.64]	0.001
Relational orientation						−.10***	.02	−4.56	[−.14, −.06]	0.001	−.14**	.05	−2.61	[−.25, −.04]	0.009
First offer assertiveness											.16	.09	1.77	[−.02, .34]	0.076
R^2			.04					.14				.04			
Indirect effect of gender on impasse through relational orientation and first offer assertiveness						$b = -.01$, $SE = .01$, 95% CI [−.03, −.01]									
Direct effect of gender on impasse						$b = -.28$, $SE = .21$, 95% CI [−.67, .15]									
Total effect of gender on impasse						$b = -.29$, $SE = .21$, 95% CI [−.68, .13]									

Note. *SE* = standard error; CI = confidence interval.
** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 4

Intercorrelations, Interrater Reliabilites, Means, and Standard Deviations Among Variables (Study 2)

Variable	M_{women}	SD_{women}	M_{men}	SD_{men}	*M*	Min	Max	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Relational orientation	5.24	.76	5.00	.96	5.13	1.6	7	.87	(.73)						
2. Anticipated backlash	5.01	2.18	5.57	2.24	5.30	1	11	2.22	−.15**	(.82)					
3. Impasse (1 = yes, 0 = no)	.09	.28	.19	.39	.14	0	1	.34	−.20***	.46***	—				
4. Gender (1 = woman, 0 = man)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.14**	−.13*	−.15**	—			
5. First offer assertiveness	104329.90	10764.29	107258.90	11432.99	105746.80	85000	135000	11163.83	−.19***	.79***	.48***	−.13**	—		
6. Negotiation performance	88479.38	23416.31	803685.28	33310.73	84658.23	0	105000	28930.99	.16**	−.35***	−.86***	.13**	−.33***	—	
7. Strength of alternative (1 = strong, 0 = weak)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	−.03	−.34***	−.20***	.07	−.28***	.30***	—

Note. $N = 395$. Min = minimum; max = maximum.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 5
Mediation Effects of Relational Orientation and First Offer Assertiveness (Study 2)

Variable	Relational orientation					Offer assertiveness				Impasse			
	B	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*p*	*B*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*p*	*B*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*p*
Intercept	5.01***	0.06	81.43	[4.89, 5.13]	0.001	118746.1***	3290.69	36.09	[112296.4, 125195.7]	0.001	−15.36***	2.42	−6.34	[−20.11, −10.61]	.001
Gender	.24**	0.08	2.72	[.07, .41]	0.007	−2384.68*	1112.81	−2.14	[−4565.75, −203.61]	0.032	−.63	.37	−1.69	[−1.35, .10]	.090
Relational orientation						−2294.64***	638.77	−3.59	[−3546.61, −1042.67]	0.001	−.51*	.20	−2.51	[−.92, −.11]	.012
First offer assertiveness											.01***	.01	7.34	[.01, .01]	.001
R^2	.02					.05					.33				
Indirect effect of gender on impasse through relational orientation and first offer assertiveness						$b = -.08$, $SE = .04$, 95% CI [−.19, −.02]									
Direct effect of gender on impasse						$b = -.63$, $SE = .40$, 95% CI [−1.44, .14]									
Total effect of gender on impasse						$b = -.71$, $SE = .40$, 95% CI [−1.51, .08]									

Note. *SE* = standard error; CI = confidence interval.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Figure 1
Performance as a Function of Gender and Alternative Strength (Study 2)

to men, when their alternatives are weak. Study S1 replicated these findings with an incentive-compatible computer-mediated cellphone negotiation in which all negotiators had weak negotiation alternatives. Studies S2 and S3 lend further support to our predictions by using different negotiation alternative values (i.e., $0 vs. $110,000 in Study S2; $60,000 vs. $110,000 in Study S3). Studies S4a–S4c offer causal support for our hypotheses by employing a causal experimental chain strategy. We assessed gender differences in relational orientation (Study S4a), manipulated relational orientation to test its effects on first offer assertiveness (Study S4b), and manipulated first offer assertiveness and negotiation alternatives to observe their effects on rate of impasse and negotiation performance (Study S4c).

General Discussion

Integrating perspectives on gender and relational orientation with negotiation theory, we show that women (vs. men) make less assertive negotiation offers due to their more relational orientation and, consequently, are more likely to avoid impasses. Women's focus on avoiding impasses (vs. claiming value) leads them to perform better than men, but this advantage is present only when negotiators have weak (vs. strong) negotiation alternatives.

Theoretical Contributions

Our findings provides nuance to prevailing views about women's underperformance in distributive negotiations. We find that, due to differences in relational orientation, men may focus primarily on claiming value, whereas women may focus more on avoiding impasses. These different aims lead women to outperform men when their negotiation alternatives are weak. Our finding that women outperformed men is novel; although research has uncovered situations in which the gender gap in negotiation performance can be *attenuated* (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Bowles & Flynn, 2010; Bowles et al., 2005), we are not aware of research that has examined the conditions under which the gender gap in negotiation performance *reverses*. Incorporating an underexamined negotiation outcome—likelihood of impasse—into measures of negotiation performance, we reveal that possessing a relational orientation and engaging in less assertive negotiation behaviors may improve negotiators' ability to avoid impasses, boosting their performance when they have weak alternatives. Thus, individuals who are traditionally viewed as

Table 6

Moderated Mediation Effects of Relational Orientation and First Offer Assertiveness (Study 2)

Variable	Relational orientation					First offer assertiveness					Negotiation performance				
	B	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*p*	*B*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*p*	*B*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*p*
Intercept	5.05***	.08	59.45	[4.88, 5.22]	.001	126970.2***	4584.09	27.70	[117985.5, 135954.9]	.001	178172.4***	23732.31	7.51	[131657.9, 224686.9]	.001
Strength of alternative	−.09	.12	−.76	[−.33, .15]	.449	−14794.02*	6265.04	−2.36	[−27073.28, −2514.77]	.018	−112616.2***	32199.05	−3.50	[−175725.2, −49507.2]	.001
Gender	.21	.13	1.70	[−.03, .46]	.089	−3736.64*	1513.93	−2.47	[−6703.90, −769.39]	.014	5322.90	3631.33	1.47	[−1794.37, 12440.17]	.143
First offer assertiveness											−1.32***	.17	−7.93	[−1.64, −.99]	.001
Relational orientation						−3129.43***	884.91	−3.54	[−4863.84, −1395.02]	.001	7538.03***	2155.04	3.50	[3314.23, 11761.84]	.001
Gender × Strength of Alternative	.06	.17	.32	[−.29, .40]	.750	3568.25	2119.35	1.68	[−585.59, 7722.10]	.092	−4373.38	5046.98	−0.87	[−14265.28, 5518.53]	.386
Relational Orientation × Strength of Alternative						1274.15	1216.05	1.05	[−1109.26, 3657.57]	.295	−7523.83*	2937.90	−2.56	[−13282, −1765.65]	.010
First Offer Assertiveness × Strength of Alternative											1.58***	.24	6.61	[1.11, 2.05]	.001
R^2		.02					.14							.29	
Conditional indirect effect of gender on negotiation performance through relational orientation and first offer assertiveness in the strong alternative condition									*b* = −131.25, *SE* = 85.96, 95% CI [−399.95, −16.36]						
Conditional indirect effect of gender on negotiation performance through relational orientation and first offer assertiveness in the weak alternative condition									*b* = 879.27, *SE* = 610.87, 95% CI [40.70, 2564.69]						
Difference in conditional indirect effects									*b* = 1010.53, *SE* = 617.07, 95% CI [160.37, 2722.87]						
Conditional direct effect of gender on negotiation performance in the strong alternative condition									*b* = 949.52, *SE* = 675.44, 95% CI [−327.58, 2284.81]						
Conditional direct effect of gender on negotiation performance in the weak alternative condition									*b* = 5322.90, *SE* = 5178.23, 95% CI [−5155.24, 15181.81]						
Difference in conditional direct effects									*b* = 4373.38, *SE* = 5226.86, 95% CI [−6226.52, 14310.7]						
Conditional total effect of gender on negotiation performance in the strong alternative condition									*b* = 818.27, *SE* = 683.57, 95% CI [−481.01, 2171.29]						
Conditional total effect of gender on negotiation performance in the weak alternative condition									*b* = 6202.17, *SE* = 5167.35, 95% CI [−4487.65, 15954.47]						
Difference in conditional total effects									*b* = 5383.90, *SE* = 5214.85, 95% CI [−5277.72, 15315.3]						

Note. *SE* = standard error; CI = confidence interval.
* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

disadvantaged in negotiations may have a heretofore unidentified advantage when there are economic benefits to avoiding impasses, such as when they enter a negotiation with no outside offers. These findings also contribute to the broader negotiation literature by showing that when impasse rates are incorporated into negotiation performance (Schweinsberg et al., 2022), assertive negotiation tactics may backfire for those engaged in distributive negotiations for which they have weak alternative offers.

Research on emotional expression in negotiation has found that specific types of emotions can influence impasse likelihood, with positive emotions reducing impasses (Kopelman et al., 2006) and anger increasing impasses (Allred et al., 1997; Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006; Yip & Schweinsberg, 2017). Study 1 contributes to this literature, as we found that the *magnitude* of emotional expression—which we use as a proxy for relational orientation—is also associated with fewer impasses. Emotions provide others with crucial information about our inner thoughts and motivations (Morris & Keltner, 2000). Negotiation partners may therefore be more willing to close a deal with negotiators who are more (vs. less) emotionally expressive because these negotiators appear more predictable and trustworthy (Cross & Madson, 1997).

Practical Implications

The knowledge that female negotiators frequently underperform in negotiations may arouse feelings of threat and anxiety in women, resulting in poor performance (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Kray et al., 2001). However, our findings indicate that the distinct way women navigate negotiations—with heightened interpersonal sensitivity and by making less assertive first offers—is not necessarily suboptimal and can even lead them to outperform men when they have weak alternatives. These findings can help women feel more confident when negotiating, particularly in the uncertain condition of having weak negotiation alternatives. Indeed, both men and women should strategically consider the optimal assertiveness of their negotiation offers to avoid impasses caused by "overreaching greed," as Benjamin Franklin warned. By calibrating an optimal offer based on considerations of the bottom line, impasse risk, and their walkaway point, men and women alike can make decisions that improve their negotiation performance. Indeed, reflecting the general tendency to overlook the costs of impasses in computations of negotiation performance, many have advised women to categorically make *more* assertive offers in distributive salary negotiations (Sandberg, 2013). Although this simple prescription is appealing, we caution women (and men) that more assertive offers may also increase the risk of impasse, which can adversely affect performance when they have weak alternatives.

Limitations and Future Directions

We note limitations in our research that could be fruitful avenues for future research. Despite convergent results, we observed notable differences between the present findings and those by Dannals et al. (2021). For example, we did not find that strength of negotiation alternatives moderated the relationship between gender and impasse rate, perhaps because we controlled for negotiation partner effects across studies. There are also other points of differences between our studies, including our use of incentive-compatible research designs and the focus on distributive (vs. integrative) negotiations. Future research could provide a reconciliation of these differences to provide a better understanding of when impasse likelihood differs between women and men. Second, when excluding impasses from negotiation performance, we found that men outperformed women in Supplemental Study 2 but not in Study 2 or Supplemental Studies 1 and 3, and these gender differences were not significantly moderated by the strength of alternatives across studies. While these mixed results may seem at odds with established findings indicating that men obtain more valuable deals than women, meta-analytic evidence has found that "gender differences in negotiations are contextually bound and can be subject to change" (Mazei et al., 2015, p. 85).

Third, we did not find that women's focus on avoiding impasses resulted in a pro-male advantage when negotiators had strong alternatives. One possibility is that the value of the alternative was not high enough to render making a deal sufficiently costly. Future research could manipulate a wider range of alternative values to better understand how gender differences in impasse avoidance and performance vary as a function of alternative strength. Relatedly, compared to men, women's focus on avoiding impasses did not increase their likelihood of closing deals that were less valuable than their alternatives (see Supplemental Materials). However, as fewer than 20% of negotiators accepted deals that were less valuable than their alternatives, future research could more systematically investigate whether women (vs. men) are more vulnerable to the agreement trap due to their aversion to impasses.

Additionally, we are unable to identify whether gender differences in impasse rates are driven by women's stronger relational orientation or men's weaker relational orientation. One way to disentangle this could be to investigate gender differences in negotiation behaviors across a range of situations (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010). Although we did not find that having a strong (vs. weak) alternative significantly moderated gender differences in relational orientation, offer assertiveness, or impasses, continued research should continue to examine the locus of the present effects. Finally, future work could examine the effects of intersecting social identities (e.g., gender and race) on negotiation behaviors and outcomes. Extant work has shown that women who have reached positions of higher professional status are more likely to engage in assertive negotiation behaviors than women without these credentials (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013; Hall & Krueger, 2012), and that Black women may fare better in distributive negotiations than White women (Leigh & Desai, 2023). Thus, gender differences in negotiation behaviors and the outcomes described in our model may be further moderated by professional status or race.

Conclusion

In conclusion, when performance is contingent on whether negotiators can navigate the delicate balance between maximizing one's payoff and avoiding costly impasses in distributive negotiations, women may perform *better* than men. By highlighting the importance of considering impasses—an important and oft-overlooked aspect of

negotiation performance—our research has important implications for policies and recommendations aimed at enabling both female (and male) negotiators to thrive.

References

Abele, A., & Bruckmüller, S. (2011). The bigger one of the "Big Two?" Preferential processing of communal information. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *47*(5), 935–948. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2011.03.028

Allen, T. D. (2006). Rewarding good citizens: The relationship between citizenship behavior, gender, and organizational rewards. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *36*(1), 120–143. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-9029.2006.00006.x

Allred, K. G., Mallozzi, J. S., Matsui, F., & Raia, C. P. (1997). The influence of anger and compassion on negotiation performance. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *70*(3), 175–187. https://doi.org/10.1006/obhd.1997.2705

Amanatullah, E. T., & Morris, M. W. (2010). Negotiating gender roles: Gender differences in assertive negotiating are mediated by women's fear of backlash and attenuated when negotiating on behalf of others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *98*(2), 256–267. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017094

Amanatullah, E. T., Morris, M. W., & Curhan, J. R. (2008). Negotiators who give too much: Unmitigated communion, relational anxieties, and economic costs in distributive and integrative bargaining. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *95*(3), 723–738. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012612

Amanatullah, E. T., & Tinsley, C. H. (2013). Punishing female negotiators for asserting too much … or not enough: Exploring why advocacy moderates backlash against assertive female negotiators. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *120*(1), 110–122. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2012.03.006

Armstrong, G., Adam, S., Denize, S., & Kotler, P. (2014). *Principles of marketing*. Pearson Australia.

Ashenfelter, O., & Currie, J. (1990). Negotiator behavior and the occurrence of dispute. *The American Economic Review*, *80*(2), 416–420. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2006611

Backus, M., Blake, T., Larsen, B., & Tadelis, S. (2020). Sequential bargaining in the field: Evidence from millions of online bargaining interactions. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *135*(3), 1319–1361. https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjaa003

Balliet, D., Li, N. P., Macfarlan, S. J., & Van Vugt, M. (2011). Sex differences in cooperation: A meta-analytic review of social dilemmas. *Psychological Bulletin*, *137*(6), 881–909. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025354

Bem, S. L. (1974). The measurement of psychological androgyny. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *42*(2), 155–162. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0036215

Bhojraj, S., Lee, C. M. C., & Oler, D. K. (2003). What's my line? A comparison of industry classification schemes for capital market research. *Journal of Accounting Research*, *41*(5), 745–774. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1475-679X.2003.00122.x

Bowles, H. R., Babcock, L., & Lai, L. (2007). Social incentives for gender differences in the propensity to initiate negotiations: Sometimes it does hurt to ask. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *103*(1), 84–103. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2006.09.001

Bowles, H. R., Babcock, L., & McGinn, K. L. (2005). Constraints and triggers: Situational mechanics of gender in negotiation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *89*(6), 951–965. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.89.6.951

Bowles, H. R., & Flynn, F. (2010). Gender and persistence in negotiation: A dyadic perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, *53*(4), 769–787. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2010.52814595

Bowles, H. R., & McGinn, K. L. (2008). Untapped potential in the study of negotiation and gender inequality in organizations. *The Academy of Management Annals*, *2*(1), 99–132. https://doi.org/10.1080/19416520802211453

Brooks, A. W., & Schweitzer, M. E. (2011). Can nervous nelly negotiate? How anxiety causes negotiators to make low first offers, exit early, and earn less profit. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *115*(1), 43–54. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2011.01.008

Cross, S. E., & Madson, L. (1997). Models of the self: Self-construals and gender. *Psychological Bulletin*, *122*(1), 5–37. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.122.1.5

Cross, S. E., Morris, M. L., & Gore, J. S. (2002). Thinking about oneself and others: The relational-interdependent self-construal and social cognition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *82*(3), 399–418. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.82.3.399

Curhan, J. R., Neale, M. A., Ross, L., & Rosencranz-Engelmann, J. (2008). Relational accommodation in negotiation: Effects of egalitarianism and gender on economic efficiency and relational capital. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *107*(2), 192–205. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2008.02.009

Dannals, J. E., Zlatev, J. J., Halevy, N., & Neale, M. A. (2021). The dynamics of gender and alternatives in negotiation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *106*(11), 1655–1672. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000867

Eagly, A. H., & Johnson, B. T. (1990). Gender and leadership style: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *108*(2), 233–256. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.108.2.233

Eagly, A. H., & Steffen, V. J. (1984). Gender stereotypes stem from the distribution of women and men into social roles. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *46*(4), 735–754. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.46.4.735

Gabriel, S., & Gardner, W. L. (1999). Are there "his" and "hers" types of interdependence? The implications of gender differences in collective versus relational interdependence for affect, behavior, and cognition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *77*(3), 642–655. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.77.3.642

Galinsky, A. D., Ku, G., & Mussweiler, T. (2009). To start low or to start high? The case of auctions versus negotiations. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *18*(6), 357–361. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2009.01667.x

Galinsky, A. D., & Mussweiler, T. (2001). First offers as anchors: The role of perspective-taking and negotiator focus. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *81*(4), 657–669. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.81.4.657

Gelfand, M. J., Major, V. S., Raver, J. L., Nishii, L. H., & O'Brien, K. (2006). Negotiating relationally: The dynamics of the relational self in negotiations. *Academy of Management Review*, *31*(2), 427–451. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2006.20208689

Giebels, E., De Dreu, C. K. W., & Van De Vliert, E. (2000). Interdependence in negotiation: Effects of exit options and social motive on distributive and integrative negotiation. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *30*(2), 255–272. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-0992(200003/04)30:2<255::AID-EJSP991>3.0.CO;2-7

Greenberg, J., & Mollick, E. R. (2018). *Sole survivors: Solo ventures versus founding teams* (SSRN Scholarly Paper No. 3107898). Social Science Research Network. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3107898

Hall, R. E., & Krueger, A. B. (2012). Evidence on the incidence of wage posting, wage bargaining, and on-the-job search. *American Economic Journal. Macroeconomics*, *4*(4), 56–67. https://doi.org/10.1257/mac.4.4.56

Hoyt, C. L., & Murphy, S. E. (2016). Managing to clear the air: Stereotype threat, women, and leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *27*(3), 387–399. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.11.002

Jachimowicz, J. M., To, C., Agasi, S., Côté, S., & Galinsky, A. D. (2019). The gravitational pull of expressing passion: When and how expressing passion elicits status conferral and support from others. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *153*, 41–62. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2019.06.002

Kanze, D., Conley, M. A., Okimoto, T. G., Phillips, D. J., & Merluzzi, J. (2020). Evidence that investors penalize female founders for lack of industry fit. *Science Advances*, *6*(48), Article eabd7664. https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.abd7664

Kopelman, S., Rosette, A. S., & Thompson, L. (2006). The three faces of Eve: Strategic displays of positive, negative, and neutral emotions in negotiations. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *99*(1), 81–101. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2005.08.003

Kray, L. J., & Haselhuhn, M. P. (2007). Implicit negotiation beliefs and performance: Experimental and longitudinal evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *93*(1), 49–64. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.93.1.49

Kray, L. J., & Thompson, L. (2004). Gender stereotypes and negotiation performance: An examination of theory and research. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *26*, 103–182. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-3085(04)26004-X

Kray, L. J., Thompson, L., & Galinsky, A. (2001). Battle of the sexes: Gender stereotype confirmation and reactance in negotiations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *80*(6), 942–958. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.80.6.942

Kugler, K. G., Reif, J. A. M., Kaschner, T., & Brodbeck, F. C. (2018). Gender differences in the initiation of negotiations: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *144*(2), 198–222. https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000135

Leaper, C., & Robnett, R. D. (2011). Women are more likely than men to use tentative language, aren't they? A meta-analysis testing for gender differences and moderators. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *35*(1), 129–142. https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684310392728

Lee, S. Y., Kesebir, S., & Pillutla, M. M. (2016). Gender differences in response to competition with same-gender coworkers: A relational perspective. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *110*(6), 869–886. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000051

Leigh, A., & Desai, S. D. (2023). What's race got to do with it? The interactive effect of race and gender on negotiation offers and outcomes. *Organization Science*, *34*(2), 935–958. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2022.1629

Ma, A., Yang, Y., & Savani, K. (2019). "Take it or leave it!" A choice mindset leads to greater persistence and better outcomes in negotiations. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *153*, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2019.05.003

Maccoby, E. E. (1998). *The two sexes: Growing up apart, coming together*. Harvard University Press.

Mazei, J., Hüffmeier, J., Freund, P. A., Stuhlmacher, A. F., Bilke, L., & Hertel, G. (2015). A meta-analysis on gender differences in negotiation outcomes and their moderators. *Psychological Bulletin*, *141*(1), 85–104. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038184

Morris, M. W., & Keltner, D. (2000). How emotions work: The social functions of emotional expression in negotiations. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *22*, 1–50. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-3085(00)22002-9

Murphy, R. O., Ackermann, K. A., & Handgraaf, M. J. J. (2011). Measuring social value orientation. *Judgment and Decision Making*, *6*(8), 771–781. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1930297500004204

Nash, J. F. (1950). The bargaining problem. *Econometrica*, *18*(2), 155–162. https://doi.org/10.2307/1907266

Pillutla, M. M., & Murnighan, J. K. (1996). Unfairness, anger, and spite: Emotional rejections of ultimatum offers. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *68*(3), 208–224. https://doi.org/10.1006/obhd.1996.0100

Poczter, S., & Shapsis, M. (2018). Gender disparity in angel financing. *Small Business Economics*, *51*(1), 31–55. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-017-9922-2

Raiffa, H. (1982). *The art and science of negotiation*. Harvard University Press.

Rubinstein, A. (1982). Perfect equilibrium in a bargaining model. *Econometrica*, *50*(1), 97–109. https://doi.org/10.2307/1912531

Sandberg, S. (2013). *Lean in: Women, work, and the will to lead*. Knopf.

Schweinsberg, M., Ku, G., Wang, C. S., & Pillutla, M. M. (2012). Starting high and ending with nothing: The role of anchors and power in negotiations. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *48*(1), 226–231. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2011.07.005

Schweinsberg, M., Thau, S., & Pillutla, M. M. (2022). Negotiation impasses: Types, causes, and resolutions. *Journal of Management*, *48*(1), 49–76. https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063211021657

Sinaceur, M., & Tiedens, L. Z. (2006). Get mad and get more than even: When and why anger expression is effective in negotiations. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *42*(3), 314–322. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2005.05.002

Smith, B., & Viceisza, A. (2018). Bite me! ABC's Shark Tank as a path to entrepreneurship. *Small Business Economics*, *50*(3), 463–479. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-017-9880-8

Sobel, J., & Takahashi, I. (1983). A multistage model of bargaining. *The Review of Economic Studies*, *50*(3), 411–426. https://doi.org/10.2307/2297673

Spencer, S. J., Zanna, M. P., & Fong, G. T. (2005). Establishing a causal chain: Why experiments are often more effective than mediational analyses in examining psychological processes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *89*(6), 845–851. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.89.6.845

Sullivan, B. A., O'Connor, K. M., & Burris, E. R. (2006). Negotiator confidence: The impact of self-efficacy on tactics and outcomes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *42*(5), 567–581. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2005.09.006

Thaler, R. H. (1988). Anomalies: The ultimatum game. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *2*(4), 195–206. https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.2.4.195

Thompson, L. (1990). Negotiation behavior and outcomes: Empirical evidence and theoretical issues. *Psychological Bulletin*, *108*(3), 515–532. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.108.3.515

Thompson, L. L., Wang, J., & Gunia, B. C. (2010). Negotiation. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *61*(1), 491–515. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.093008.100458

Tinsley, C. H., O'Connor, K. M., & Sullivan, B. A. (2002). Tough guys finish last: The perils of a distributive reputation. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *88*(2), 621–642. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-5978(02)00005-5

Toosi, N. R., Mor, S., Semnani-Azad, Z., Phillips, K. W., & Amanatullah, E. T. (2019). Who can lean in? The intersecting role of race and gender in negotiations. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *43*(1), 7–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684318800492

Tripp, T. M., & Sondak, H. (1992). An evaluation of dependent variables in experimental negotiation studies: Impasse rates and pareto efficiency. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *51*(2), 273–295. https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(92)90014-X

van Dijk, E., De Cremer, D., & Handgraaf, M. J. J. (2004). Social value orientations and the strategic use of fairness in ultimatum bargaining. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *40*(6), 697–707. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2004.03.002

Van Lange, P. A. M., Otten, W., De Bruin, E. M., & Joireman, J. A. (1997). Development of prosocial, individualistic, and competitive orientations: Theory and preliminary evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *73*(4), 733–746. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.73.4.733

White, S. B., Valley, K. L., Bazerman, M. H., Neale, M. A., & Peck, S. R. (1994). Alternative models of price behavior in dyadic negotiations: Market prices, reservation prices, and negotiator aspirations. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *57*(3), 430–447. https://doi.org/10.1006/obhd.1994.1023

Yip, J. A., & Schweinsberg, M. (2017). Infuriating impasses: Angry expressions increase exiting behavior in negotiations. *Social Psychological & Personality Science*, *8*(6), 706–714. https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550616683021

Zider, B. (1998, November 1). How venture capital works. *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/1998/11/how-venture-capital-works

Received May 18, 2022
Revision received July 6, 2023
Accepted July 7, 2023 ■