

Gender in Negotiation

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate how negotiator perceive the other side when the negotiator identified the same or opposite sex. For this reason 162 employees have been interviewed about negotiation. The research sample was composed of 91 males and 71 females. The participants interviewed with open ended questions. The questionnaire asks the participants their real life experiences about conflict situations at work in last 15 days. Then content analysis have been proceeded. At the end of the study researcher found that both female and male negotiators stated that they were more comfortable when they negotiate the same sex one than the opposite sex. Male participants stated that they avoid to negotiate with females. When men were forced to negotiate with a woman, they said they were gentle with them. Men believed that they have no chance to win the negotiation when they confronted with women. Both men and women stated that; if the encounters are different sexes, more refined negotiations take place. Both men and women thought that women are more emotional, men did not personalize the subject. As compare to men, women have criticized the female negotiators more brutally. For example they stated that women may make gossip, use their sexuality, race with the same sex, jealous with the other women, capricious, personalized, do something behind someone's back, not professional, stern, ugly customer when they are manager.

Keywords: conflict, negotiation, gender

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Introduction

This study aims to descriptively search how the negotiator perceive their opposites in negotiation in Turkish work culture based on their own and opponent's sex.

The results of this study have been interpreted in the light of traditional gender stereotypes. First of all it is known that people believe that men and women behave in stereotypically different ways when they interact (Burrell, Donohue, and Allen,1988). As a result so many traits are attributed to males, while others are attributed to females. As it can be consumed some of gender based beliefs about behavioral differences are supported by empirical studies but the others are not. Whether these distinctions are empirically supported or not, the participants expect these factors to affect their dealings. Thus these stereotypes continue to influence the way of men and women interaction in negotiation process.

Gender based competitive differences may be attributable to the different acculturation process for boys and girls in their early ages. (Menkel-Meadow, 2000). For example parents tend to be more protective of their daughters than their sons (Marone, 1992). As especially parents more likely expose their sons to competitive situations at an early age. Fathers are more overprotective attitudes for their daughters than their sons. (Evans, 2000; Tannen, 1990). Sons have been encouraged to participate in little league baseball, basketball, football etc. competitive team games. As Harragan (1977) stated boys experience victory and defeat as a result of these kinds of activities in early ages.

At the girls side the traditional games do not necessarily signify another's failure like jump rope but this kinds of games are turn-taking. So this kinds of games do not support competition, success and failure (Gilligan, 1982).

In here, some gender stereotypical findings that derived from the previous studies on negotiation process, can be discussed. Some negotiation studies showed that men are considered more rational and logical than women. And women are thought to be more emotional and intuitive than men (Deaux, 1976). Another finding about gender difference on negotiation process was stated by Gilligan (1982) that men focus more emphasize on objective facts when they are negotiation process. On the other hand women give importance on relationships maintenance.

Previous studies also stated that in negotiation men are supposed to be more dominant and authoritative than women. It is also stated that women are expected to be more passive and submissive than men (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974). There are some supporting findings on directive and dominant tendency of men in negotiation process. For example Goleman (1998) stated that, although men minimally prepared they believe they can have success and they tend to show more confidence than women in performance oriented settings. Interestingly, women tend to feel unprepared in negotiation process even they prepared desperately (Evans, 2000).

This kind of manner difference between man and woman, make difference in communication between man and woman also. For example; in general men exert more influence over the topics being discussed. Men exert more directive language while women tend to exhibit tentative and respectful speech patterns (Smith-Lovin

and Robinson, 1992). In addition when a man interact with a women, he tends to speak for longer periods of time. He attempts to interrupt her speech more often than a woman does (Tannen, 1994). This kind of male tendency to dominate interactions with female could provide man with an advantage during bargaining encounters. As a result of dominating strategy man controls the agenda and directs the substantive discussions. On the other side women are more likely to use less intense language during persuasive encounters, and they are inclined to be more effective behaving this way. This kinds of indirect and less intensive language may cause women to be perceived as less forceful (Smeltzer and Watson, 1986).

It is known that formal education diminishes the presence of gender based communication differences (Burrell, et al., 1988). At school year gender based factor in communication is counter balanced. But girls continue to be more sensitive to body language and nonverbal signs than their male cohorts (Hall, 1984).

During negotiation process, men have wrong beliefs and expectation from women. For example men often expect women to behave like “ladies” during their negotiation interactions (Craver; 2002). It means they expect woman to not negotiate intensively and competitively. This stereotypical expectation sometimes interrupts the negotiation. When gender based stereotypes are negatively affect bargaining interactions between man and woman, woman tries to prevent from the impact of negative stereotyping (Schneider, 1994). For this reason women may ask their opponents whether they find it difficult to negotiate against female adversaries or not. In this kind of situation most of the men opponents deny any such beliefs and they often reevaluate their treatment of female adversaries internally.

In addition to that men makes the mistake of assuming that their female opponents will not engage in as many negotiating “games” as their male counterparts. Like men many women also have false belief on assuming other females are unlikely to employ the Machiavellian tactics. These women think that this kind of games stereotypically associated with competitive male culture (Craver; 2002).

In literature, it is insisted that men and women behave differently in competitive situations. For example females tend to be initially more trusting and trustworthy than their male opponents (Rubin & Brown, 1975). In here it can be said that negotiator’s exhibition of verbal and nonverbal signals that consistent with female’s expectations may lead trusting and cooperative relationships with each other and strengthen the trustful relation (Craver; 2002). In addition females do not to forgive violations of their trust than are men (Rubin & Brown, 1975). In Striver’s (1983) study, one observer has suggested that women are more likely to avoid competitive wishes than men, and they do not tend to do well in competition. Women believe that they confront some negative consequences associated with competitive achievement. For example competitive success will isolate them from the others (Gilligan, 1982).

The previous studies showed that there is gender difference in self and other orientation. On the one hand males tend to lie on a self-oriented behaviors. On the other, females tend to lie on other-oriented behaviors. Men want to enhance their own images, but women intended to make others feel better (DePaulo, et al., 1996). As a result males feel more comfortable in bargaining encounters to advance their own interests because such conduct would be of a self-oriented nature of males.

There is also gender difference in attribution of success. As it can be expected men attribute their performance to intrinsic factors such as hard work and intelligence. On the other hand women attribute their performance to extrinsic factors such as luck or the assistance of others (Deaux, 1976). Similarly, men feel more successful in masculine tasks than women even they perform equally with female opponents (Foschi, 1991). From here it may be said that negotiation is seen as a masculine task by men. There are also another gender differences between men and women often with respect to their view of appropriate bargaining outcomes. For example women want to have “equal” exchanges from the outcomes. On the other hand men want to have “equitable” distributions from the outcomes (Lewicki, Litterer, Minton, and Saunders, 1994). These expectations may induce male negotiators seek equitable exchanges that reflect relevant power imbalances. On the other hand female negotiators accept equal results despite their possession of greater bargaining strength.

This study aims to descriptively search perceptual gender difference in negotiation at work settings in Turkey. The main research questions are like below;

- Is there any gender differences on perceiving their counterpart in negotiation process based on opponent's gender?
- How females perceive their own sex opposites in negotiation?
- How males perceive their own sex opponent's in negotiation?
- How females perceive males in negotiation?
- How males perceive females in negotiation?

Method

In this study 134 employees have been interviewed. The research sample was composed of 70 males and 64 females. 14 females and 16 males totally 30 academic staffs, 14 females and 16 males totally 30 office employees, 9 females and 19 males totally 28 research assistants, 17 females and 11 males totally 28 hotel staffs and 10 female and 8 males totally 18 sales and marketing employees were participated in the study. The age of participants is ranged from 26 to 53 years old.

This study realized with qualitative data collection and analyses methods. The participants interviewed with approximately 45 open ended questions. The questionnaire asks the participants their real life experiences about conflict situations at work in last 15 days. Questions are like these “*I would like to talk with you about a conflict that you were experienced at work in last 15 days. You experienced it with who? How you define the problem that create the conflict? etc.*” Participants were also questioned whether their negotiation behavior changed if the counterpart were the same sex or opposite ones. After the data collection finished the researcher and the two other research assistants independently proceed the content analyses. Themes and subthemes which are the result from the content analyses, were taken together, confronted with each other and controlled by the researcher.

Results and Discussion

The research findings showed that 1/3 of the participants both males and females insisted that their behavior in negotiation could not change based on their opponents gender. Only the employees that work in office for government stated that their behaviors may change based on their cohort's sex. This finding can be explained by the formal education level of the employees. Official staffs that work for government generally are graduated from high school. University education may prevent students from gender discrimination. This finding can be also explained by the nature of task. Governmental tasks that interviewed in this study are mostly routine. The employees not to be given any achievement oriented goals. Generally social network proceeds more traditionally in office.

At the end of the study researcher found that both female and male negotiators stated that they were more comfortable when they negotiate the same sex opponents than the opposite ones. Both men and women stated that; if the encounters are different sexes, more refined negotiations take place.

The findings showed that both men and women thought that women are more emotional than men in bargaining. This finding is relevant with literature. For example Deaux (1976) stated that men are thought to be rational and logical, while women are considered emotional and intuitive in negotiation.

In addition, it was found that both men and women thought that men did not personalize the subject. This finding can be explained men are expected to emphasize objective facts in negotiation process, while women focus more on the maintenance of relationships (Gilligan, 1982).

In his study male participants stated that they avoid to negotiate with females. When they are forced to negotiate with a woman, they said they are gentle with them. They are smoother, more polite, and more careful when they communicate the women. They might make positive discrimination to women. This findings may explained with the Craver's statement, Craver said that men often expect women to behave like "ladies" during negotiation interactions (Craver; 2002). Thus they behave more gentle with woman.

In this study it was also found that, men afraid that women use or change the situation for their advantage. They have no chance to win the negotiation when they confronted with a woman. If there is a conflict with women they might consider the situation as a matter of pride and they stated that they might unable to bring oneself to. This finding explained the idea that some men find it difficult to act as competitively against female opponents as they would against male opponents (Craver; 2002). Male negotiators sometimes afraid to behave as competitively toward female opponents. They believe that competition takes place between men. Craver stated that men who do not want open competition with women, afraid to lose the negotiation. Men prefer accept the negative consequences associated with non-settlements. And they want to avoid embarrassment of being beaten by women.

The research showed that male participants from sales and marketing, stated that women might be more rational and more rigid because of difficulties that they must deal in work life. Work life sometimes more difficult for women than males. This findings can be explained by the contemporary work atmosphere at marketing setting. Women and men work on the similar tasks and they have chance to observe them on the job. Men realize the difficulties for women at achievement oriented work settings. Male participants stated that when they confronts with males, they might be more comfortable. They might solve the problem faster because they have more opportunities to meet and talk with men than women in different settings like lunch or social meetings. Negotiation takes longer when a man try to play swashbuckler. This finding relevant with the previous findings. Previous findings point that men are expected to be dominant and authoritative in negotiation (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974). Thus man to man negotiation takes longer because of power struggle.

The research findings revealed that female participants stated that personality is more important than the opponent's gender in negotiation. If the opponent is male female participant stated that they might not go into negotiation. They do not want to negotiate with men but they prefer to talk with opponents' supervisor to solve the problem. In here it can be said that women accept the authority of men and try to avoid dominant approach of men. They try to have support of another man that have power over their opponent.

Women also believe that the negotiation takes place more gifted when they confronted with men. They also believe that men are more hospitable and make easier to end the conflicts. This finding complete the idea that men often expect women to behave like "ladies" during their negotiation interactions (Craver; 2002). In here it can be said that women also expect men to behave to a lady.

Women said that communication style may change when they negotiate with men. They become more careful about words. Women believe that negotiation process may take longer. In here the opponents may have difficulties to understand each other and they may try to be more careful on their communication when the opponents are from different sex.

Female participants also believe that men are not emotional so the conflicts might be solved easily. They also believe that men do not personalize the things and men are not so impulsive. Women stated that the negotiation do not take place so severe, men do not shout to a woman. Women said that they become more reckless and expect gentle behavior from men. The research findings of females' belief about negotiation with males are not consistent with previous findings. Previous findings stated that when a man interact with a women, he tends to speak for longer periods of time. He attempts to interrupt her speech more often than a woman does (Tannen, 1994). This difference may explained by cultural difference on gender stereotypical expectation of working Turkish women. In Turkish culture it is expected that man don't talk too much. It is also expected that man do not interested in discussion with woman.

On the other hand, women said that they feel more comfortable with women than men in negotiation. Women said that they express themselves explicitly to women, negotiation takes longer and might be heated. And women said that they may get easily nervous with female opponents.

The research showed that as compare to men, women have criticized the female negotiators more brutally. Women believe that; women may make gossip, use their sexuality, try to dominate the same sex opponent, race with the same sex opponent, jealous with the other women, capricious, personalized, do something behind someone's back, not professional, stern, ugly customer when they are manager. This finding can be explained gender stereotypical expectation for woman and man. For example in Turkish culture it is expected man to not to occupied with talking with woman. It is also expected that women are jealous each other.

In here research findings and discussions can be summarized like followings. First of all, the listed characteristics that attribute to the women and to the men above are gender stereotypical critics. These stereotypes are independent from what the participants experienced with their opponents from the same and the different sexes. Participants' beliefs are stereotypically different about negotiation process with man and with woman. The difference between work settings like marketing or governmental office, creates different perceptions about negotiation processes based on gender. It is also interesting to find that women have worse belief on women opponents than men. As compare to men, women have criticized the female negotiators more brutally.

In general even some cultural differences in negotiation have been found in this study, different acculturation process for man and for woman is universal. The given gender roles to man and to woman in negotiation are always different. Gender role difference may change low to huge from culture to culture but stand still as a difference.

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