

Gender and Professional Identities in Businesswomen's Negotiation

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Abstract

Gender roles and expectations for women have been shown to account for why women tend to negotiate ineffectively in business settings. Drawing from the psychological literature on multiple identities, this paper examines how individual differences in perceived compatibility between gender and professional identities-captured by the construct Gender-Professional Identity Integration (G-PID)-shape businesswomen's negotiation behaviors. Two studies examined how G-PID interacts with identity cues and cue valence to influence negotiation outcomes. We found that those who perceived their gender and professional identities as compatible (high G-PID) exhibited an "assimilation" effect-they negotiate more effectively when their professional identity was primed by professional identity cues and when prototypical female traits were positively linked to negotiation success, and negotiated less effectively when their gender identity was primed by gender identity cues and when prototypical female traits were negatively linked to negotiation success. However, businesswomen who perceived their gender and professional identities as incompatible (low G-PID) exhibited the opposite "contrast" effect. These findings suggest that the way women negotiate is influenced in part by individual differences in perceptions of compatibility between multiple identities.

Keywords

Businesswomen, negotiation, identity, gender and professional identity integration (G-PII), identity cue

Introduction

Existing research shows that women often do not perform as well as men in negotiations (see [Kray & Kennedy, 2017](#), for a review). For example, compared to men, women are less likely to initiate negotiations ([Kugler et al., 2018](#)), and tend to be less assertive and less likely to promote their own interests when negotiating ([Amanatullah & Morris, 2010](#)). Overall, women are less effective and successful in negotiations compared to their male counterparts ([Mazei et al., 2015](#)).

According to social role theory ([Eagly, 1987](#); [Eagly & Wood, 2012](#)), this effect stems from shared societal beliefs about gender roles—that is, what it means to be a man or a woman. In particular, there is substantial evidence that male gender role is associated with agentic traits (assertive, competitive, and ambitious) and female gender role is associated with communal traits (warm, caring, and interpersonal-oriented) ([Costa Jr., Terracciano, & McCrae, 2001](#); [Eagly & Karau, 2002](#); [Eagly & Wood, 2012](#); [Mazei et al., 2015](#); [Wood & Eagly, 2002](#)). These shared beliefs about gender roles create gender role expectations or gender stereotypes about how men and women should behave ([Wood & Eagly, 2015](#)). Scholars have argued that women's performance in negotiations is a result of these gender role expectations. To the extent that effective negotiation is associated with traits such as agency, assertiveness, and dominance—traits that are also characteristic of male rather than female gender role ([Kray & Thompson, 2005](#))—gender role expectations are incongruent with effective negotiation for women. Such incongruence is typically observed in women engaged in other male-typical tasks, such as leadership and management (e.g., [Glick et al., 1988](#)). And indeed, women who conform to their female gender role are more likely to exhibit communal rather than agentic behaviors during negotiations, which may lead to less successful negotiation outcomes (e.g., [Kray & Thompson, 2005](#); [Kray et al., 2001](#)).

Further, congruency models—particularly role congruity theory—suggest that prejudicial judgements occur when people behave in ways that are incongruent with their gender social roles. In other words, people tend to react negatively to others who do not fulfil role expectations ([Rudman & Glick, 1999](#)). For instance, women experience backlash when they display agentic behavior—behaviors necessary for effective

negotiations (e.g., [Bowles et al., 2007](#); [Bowles & Flynn, 2010](#); [Williams & Tiedens, 2016](#))—because agentic behaviors are incongruent with gender social roles for women ([Babcock et al., 2003](#)). As such, women are often caught in a double bind: They can either conform to gender role expectations and receive positive perceptions from others, at the cost of less effective negotiation outcomes, or behave in ways that contradict these expectations, risking negative perceptions to achieve better negotiation outcomes ([Amanatullah & Morris, 2010](#)).

It is important to note that there are boundary conditions affecting women's negotiation effectiveness ([Shan et al., 2019](#)). For example, women's relative performance is worse when salaries are not explicitly stated as negotiable or when the negotiation task is labelled as a test of competence ([Leibbrandt & List, 2015](#)). Meanwhile, women's performance on negotiation tasks are better when they are prompted and encouraged to be "competitive" ([Bowles & McGinn, 2008](#); [De Janasz & Cabrera, 2018](#)) or when they negotiate on others' behalf ([Amanatullah & Morris, 2010](#)). Women can be effective negotiators without incurring the costs of behaving in role-incongruent ways when gender social roles are less salient, when there are clear scripts on how to act ([Kugler et al., 2018](#)), and when negotiating is framed as congruent with their gender social roles (i.e., negotiating on a female-related topic; [Bear & Babcock, 2012](#)). These studies demonstrate that women can be effective negotiators, but only if the negotiation does not conflict with their gender role.

Existing approaches to studying gender gaps in negotiations largely assume that women experience incongruency between their gender role expectations and expectations associated with being a successful negotiator. As mentioned, women's performance is enhanced when these incongruencies are attenuated, and when gender role expectations are made less salient and/or less important for negotiation success. Missing in these approaches is the idea that in addition to gender roles, businesswomen also have social role expectations associated with being a business professional. In other words, businesswomen are not only subject to gender role expectations (i.e., being communal, affectionate, warm, sympathetic, pleasant, and sensitive), they also have an opposing set of professional role expectations (i.e., agentic, dominant, achievement-oriented, ambitious, and aggressive) ([Zheng et al., 2018](#)). [Eagly and Karau \(2002\)](#) demonstrated that a successful business leader is often perceived as possessing traits such as self-confidence, ambition, and assertiveness, characteristics traditionally associated with male gender roles. Female business leaders are expected to display agentic leadership qualities, even though this challenges societal expectations of femininity and can lead to negative reactions from perceivers and followers.

This raises the question of how businesswomen manage conflicting, incompatible role expectations, and how this impacts negotiation outcomes. The literature on identity integration is especially pertinent. As we describe in the section below, there is substantial evidence suggesting that individuals differ in how they perceive the compatibility, or lack thereof, between the conflicting expectations associated with their multiple identities. These perceptions in turn drive their responses to these role expectations in different social settings. This includes businesswomen who face

conflicting role expectations associated with their gender and professional identities (Sacharin et al., 2009). In the section below, we review the literature on identity integration and discuss how it influences businesswomen's negotiation performance.

Identity Integration and Assimilation/Contrast Effects

Every individual has multiple social identities, such as gender, ethnicity, profession, and religion. In some cases, individuals may possess two distinct identities that endorse differing values, beliefs, and behavioral norms and expectations, such as bicultural individuals (e.g., Asian Americans). Research has shown that, depending on the identity cues present in a given context, biculturals may engage in cultural frame switching, adopting the cultural frame that is cued to guide their thinking and behavior (Hong et al., 2000). For example, bilingual bicultural individuals may activate distinct sets of culture-specific concepts or mental frames corresponding to their cultural identities when primed with identity cues, such as being exposed to a particular language (Luna et al., 2008). This tendency can be described as an assimilation effect, where individuals display thinking and behavioral tendencies that align with the primed cultural identity. This occurs because exposure to identity cues signals the most relevant and suitable identity for the given situation (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001; Mok & Morris, 2013). Research also shows that individuals vary in their levels of "Identity Integration" (II), which refers to their perceptions of compatibility between multiple, potentially conflicting identities. High identity integrators perceive compatibility, overlap, and harmony between their multiple identities, while low identity integrators perceive disassociation, tension, and conflict between their multiple identities (see Benet-Martínez et al., 2021, for a review). Identity Integration (II) has been shown to influence identity frame switching tendencies in response to identity cues (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002). Specifically, individuals with high identity integration exhibit an assimilation effect, as observed in the identity frame switching literature. They "assimilate" to the cued identity and the corresponding identity-related expectations to better fit into their social environment. For example, Asian Americans with high levels of bicultural identity integration (or perceptions of compatibility between their two cultural identities) made more external attributions (a prototypically Asian style of inference) when Asian cues were salient in the context and made more internal attributions (a prototypically American style of inference) when American cues were salient in the context.

Interestingly, individuals with low identity integration exhibit a contrast effect; they may resist the identity cues present in the context and instead shift to their unprimed identity. Consequently, their thinking and behavioral tendencies do not align with the primed identity but rather oppose it. For example, Asian Americans with low bicultural identity integration demonstrate a contrast effect by making more prototypically Asian inferences when exposed to American cues, and vice versa (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002). The contrast effect exhibited by those with low II is explained by psychological reactance—people's tendency to protect their autonomy by reacting against external

demands on their behavior (Brehm & Brehm, 2013). Given that those with low II perceive their multiple cultural identities as incompatible and conflicting, they are more likely to view the emphasis on one identity as threatening to another (Cheng et al., 2006, 2021). For example, Asian Americans with low II are more likely to view their Asian identity as being threatened in situations where American identity cues are salient. As a result, they behave in ways that protect their Asian identity. Consistent with this argument, Mok and Morris (2013) found that perceptions of threat mediate the relationship between II and behaviors that are contrastive to identity cues.

Early studies of identity integration focused on biculturals (Cheng et al., 2014). More recently, this construct has been used to examine perceptions of compatibility between gender and professional identities, especially among women who work in male-dominant professions, such as engineering (Cheng et al., 2008), law (Mok & Morris, 2012), and business (Sacharin et al., 2009). Similar to bicultural identity integration, women with high Gender-Professional Identity Integration (G-P-II) believe that their gender and professional identities, though different, are compatible and complementary, whereas those with low G-P-II perceive their gender and professional identities as incompatible and conflicting (Cheng et al., 2008; Sacharin et al., 2009). There is evidence that G-P-II predicts whether women in male-dominated professions exhibit assimilation versus contrast effects in response to identity cues. For example, a study of women in business found that those with high G-P-II exhibited an assimilation effect: When their gender identity was primed by gender identity cues, they had better recall of relational information (a prototypically “female” form of attentional orientation) than task information (a prototypically “professional” form of attentional orientation). The reverse was true when their professional identity was primed by professional identity cues. Conversely, women with low G-P-II exhibited a contrast effect, where their attention was opposite to the expectations of the identity cues—they recalled information consistent with gender expectations when professional cues were present and vice versa (Sacharin et al., 2009).

G-P-II and Negotiation

Drawing from the research above, we propose that the negotiation behaviors of women in business will be influenced by the salience of identity cues and individual differences in G-P-II. Specifically, we predict that businesswomen with high G-P-II perceive their gender and professional identities as more compatible and feel more comfortable embracing both. They are likely to assimilate to the identity cues present in the context, viewing them as signals of relevant and suitable identities, and will adopt the primed identity frame as a reference for their behavior. In contrast, businesswomen with low G-P-II experience greater disharmony and conflict between their gender and professional identities. They may become more defensive and exhibit psychological reactance to the identity cues, leading them to exhibit a contrast effect by shifting to the unprimed identity frame for guiding their thinking and behavior. We suggest that businesswomen with high G-P-II will assimilate to the primed gender and professional identity cues and

switch to the corresponding identity frame during negotiations. Specifically, they will negotiate in a stereotypically “female” manner (e.g., less aggressively or asking for less salary) when their gender identity is primed, and in a stereotypically “business” manner (e.g., more aggressively or asking for more salary) when their professional identity is primed. Conversely, businesswomen with low G-PII will exhibit a contrast effect in response to these identity cues, negotiating more aggressively or asking for more salary when their gender identity is primed, and negotiating less aggressively or asking for less salary when their professional identity is primed.

In summary, we predict an interaction effect between individual differences in G-PII and identity cues on businesswomen’s negotiation tendencies (H1). Specifically, we expect that individuals with high G-PII will exhibit an assimilation effect, negotiating more when primed with professional identity cues and less when primed with female identity cues (H1a). Conversely, individuals with low G-PII will demonstrate a contrast effect, showing the opposite pattern (H1b). We test this prediction in Study 1.

Valence: Associations between Identity and Negotiation

We also examine how the valence—i.e., positivity/negativity—of identity-based expectations interact with G-PII to shape businesswomen’s negotiation. Research has shown that prototypical “female” negotiation tactics—such as using relational skills to communicate and build trust with negotiation partners—can be highly effective in negotiations (Salacuse, 2022). When stereotypically “female” skills are positively framed this way, or when stereotypically “male” skills are negatively framed, women perform better in negotiation (Kray et al., 2002). In short, the valence of the relationship between gender and professional role expectations impacts how businesswomen negotiate.

We propose that the valence of the relationship between gender and professional role expectations will also impact how businesswomen negotiate. Previous studies have shown that the valence of experiences in managing multiple identities differ between high and low identity integrators. Basically, high identity integrators have more positively-valenced experiences managing their dual identity status and feel more secure in their belongingness into each social group (Cheng & Lee, 2013). They see having multiple identities as an advantage rather than a challenge, and believe that they can bring the best of both identities together to achieve more in their life (Benet-Martinez et al., 2021). Based on this research, we posit that high G-PIIs will be receptive to messages about the positive link between prototypically female traits and negotiation performance. In turn, they will assimilate to the suggested valence of the relationship between gender roles and negotiation expectations, negotiating more aggressively when female traits are framed positively, and less aggressively when female traits are framed negatively.

In comparison, low G-PIIs tend to have more negative experiences managing their gender and professional identities. Because they perceive their multiple identities as incompatible and conflicting, they often feel insecure and threatened by the challenges

of possessing multiple identities (Benet-Martinez et al., 2021; Mor, 2018). Positive associations between their multiple identities—for example, claiming that female traits are advantageous in negotiations—are not representative of their own personal experiences (Cheng et al., 2006, 2021). This in turn leads to psychological reactance and contrast effects to positive identity cues. Consistent with this argument, it is found that exposure to negative gender stereotypes caused psychological reactance and boosted women's negotiation performance (Kray et al., 2001).

In summary, we predict an interaction effect between G-PII and the perceived valence of female traits on businesswomen's negotiation tendencies (H2). Specifically, we anticipate that individuals with high G-PII will exhibit an assimilation effect, negotiating more when prototypical "female" traits are framed as advantageous and less when these traits are framed as disadvantageous (H2a). In contrast, individuals with low G-PII are expected to demonstrate the opposite, showing a contrast effect (H2b). We test this prediction in Study 2.

Study 1

In Study 1, we test the prediction of an interaction effect between individual differences in G-PII and identity cues on businesswomen's negotiation tendencies (H1). Specifically, we expect that individuals with high G-PII will exhibit an assimilation effect, negotiating more when primed with professional identity cues and less when primed with female identity cues (H1a). Conversely, individuals with low G-PII will demonstrate a contrast effect, showing the opposite pattern (H1b). We test this hypothesis in the context of a salary negotiation scenario, one of the first and most important negotiations that impact workers' engagement and satisfaction.

Method

Participants

We test our hypothesis using female business students. These students are already well-socialized into the business culture and are knowledgeable about the stereotypes and expectations associated with gender and professional identities (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Sacharin et al., 2009). A priori power analysis of .95 power conducted with G*Power (Faul et al., 2007, 2009) revealed that a sample size of 89 is sufficient to detect a small effect ($f^2 = .15$). One hundred and nine undergraduate female business students were recruited at a university in Singapore ($M_{Age} = 21.01$, $SD_{Age} = 1.27$. Skewness = .36). All participants had a business-related major. Participants were recruited via flyers and received monetary compensation (S\$10 = US\$7.14) for their participation. The present studies received approval from the Institutional Review Board and written consent from participants.

Procedure and Materials. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two identity cue conditions: gender identity condition versus professional identity condition. Then, participants engaged in a negotiation simulation. Lastly, they filled out a questionnaire that measured their level of G-PII and provided demographic information.

Experimental Manipulation of Identity Cue

First, participants were instructed to work on a word de-scrambling task (adapted from [Vohs et al., 2006](#)). Participants were provided with 10 sets of words (five words in each set) and were instructed to create sensible phrases using four out of the five words in each set. In the gender identity condition, six of the 10 sets contained prototypically female-related words such as “woman”, “sister”, and “mother”. An example is: “Homemade, Stew, Beef, Baby, Mother’s”. In the professional identity condition, six of the 10 sets contained business-related words such as “manager”, “company”, and “professional”. An example is: “In, Finance, A, Professional, Consultant”. The remaining four sets contained neutral words that are not relevant to gender or business. An example is: “Warm, Is, Dot, It, Outside”. Participants were instructed to finish this task as quickly as possible. A pilot study with 89 female business students found that those with high G-PII exhibited a higher competitive tendency (i.e., a prototypical trait of a businessperson) under the professional identity condition and a higher cooperative tendency (i.e., a prototypical trait of a female) under the female identity condition, demonstrating an identity assimilation effect. In contrast, students with low G-PII showed the opposite pattern, demonstrating an identity contrast effect. These findings support the validity of the identity manipulation task.

Negotiation Task

Next, participants were instructed to engage in a salary negotiation task with the instructions below:

“Imagine that you are negotiating with a potential employer about the terms of their job offer to you. The manager you’d be working with calls you on the phone with the offer, including a monthly salary of S\$2,800. This figure might be acceptable to you, but is noticeably below what you know similar people make in similar positions (S\$3,000-S\$3,400)¹. The job is your top choice, but you were expecting a considerably higher offer. You are fairly sure there is room for negotiation. The manager asks you if you’re ready to accept.”

After reading the above scenario, participants answered three questions: (a) Will you accept this offer immediately? (Yes or No); (b) Will you make a counteroffer and ask for a higher salary? (Yes or No); (c) If you decide to/were to make a counteroffer, how much salary (per month) would you ask? Responses to questions (a) and (b) were used as indicators for participants’ willingness to engage in a negotiation. Responses to question (c) indicate the degree to which the participants claim value for themselves, a

measure of aggressiveness or competitiveness. These measures—engagement and aggressiveness—are commonly used in previous research examining negotiation effectiveness (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Kray et al., 2004).

Gender-Professional Identity Integration Scale

After completing the salary negotiation task, participants filled out a 4-item scale to measure G-P-II or perceived compatibility between their gender and professional identities (see Cheng et al., 2008). This scale was originally adapted from an early version of the scale measuring bicultural identity integration (BIIS-1; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). Higher scores indicated higher levels of G-P-II. The four items are: “I keep everything about being a woman separate from being a businessperson” (reverse-scored), “I am someone whose behavior switches between the norms of my gender and the norms of my profession” (reverse-scored), “I feel torn between the expectations of my gender and of my (future) profession” (reverse-scored), and “I don’t feel conflicted between my identity as a woman and my identity as a businessperson”. Participants rated their agreement to each of these items using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*).

Strength of Gender and Professional Identities

We measured the strength of participants’ identification with their gender and profession identities as control variables. This approach helps distinguish their influence from that of Gender-Professional Identity Integration (G-P-II). The items read as: “To what extent do you identify yourself as a woman/businessperson?”. Participants responded using a 6-point Likert scale (1 = *very weak*; 6 = *very strong*).

Demographics

Participants reported their gender, age, year, and major(s).

Ethics Consents

The current research (including Studies 1 and 2) has received ethics clearance. All materials and data are available at https://osf.io/z46k8/?view_only=27e7ab1444f24c4daf85ea9e44b9376f.

Results

Preliminary Considerations

Participants’ G-P-II levels were normally distributed, and reliable (Cronbach $\alpha = .74$). Both strength of identification with being a woman and being a business professional

were normally distributed and significantly higher than the scale mid-point ($t_s > 2.02$, $p_s < .05$). Descriptive statistics are listed in [Table 1](#).

Hypothesis Testing

To test our hypotheses, we regressed immediately accepting the offer, making a counteroffer, salary in counteroffer respectively on identity cue (gender identity = 1; professional identity = 0), G-PII (mean-centered), and the two-way interaction of these variables, with age and identity strength as covariates.

First, we performed a binary-logistic regression using the dependent variable of immediate acceptance of offer (yes = 1; no = 0). A higher number would indicate lower levels of engagement with the negotiation, a more prototypical female response. The results yielded no main effects but indicated a significant two-way interaction of identity cue and G-PII, $B = 1.01$, $SE = .50$, $\chi^2 = 4.13$, $p = .04$, $CI: [.14, .97]$, supporting H1 (Please see [Figure 1](#)). As predicted, high G-PIIs (estimated as 1 standard deviation above the mean) exhibited a trend consistent with the assimilation effect: They were more likely to accept the offer immediately when their gender identity was salient (15.6%) compared to when their professional identity was salient (6.3%). However, the pairwise comparison was not significant ($B = .65$, $SE = .48$, $Wald = 1.82$, $p = .18$, 95% $CI: [-.75, 4.90]$), which does not support H1a. Low G-PIIs (estimated by 1 SD below the mean) exhibited a trend consistent with the contrast effect: They were less likely to accept the offer immediately when their gender identity was salient (9.5%) than when their professional identity was salient (23.9%). The pair-wise comparison was marginally significant, $B = -.73$, $SE = .45$, $Wald = 2.57$, $p = .10$, 95% $CI: [-.20, 1.18]$, not supporting H1b.

Second, we conducted a binary-logistic regression using the dependent variable of whether a counteroffer was made. The results revealed no significant main effects nor two-way interactions. Third, we conducted a general linear regression using the proposed amount of the counteroffer as the dependent variable, with higher levels indicating a more aggressive negotiation tactic. The results revealed no significant main

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics in Study 1.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Age	21.00	1.26						
2.Gender identity	4.49	.91	-.17					
3.Profession identity	3.71	1.14	.10	.04				
4.G-PII	3.46	.68	-.01	.07	.23*			
5.Accepting initial offer	.14	.35	-.11	-.07	-.05	.03		
6.Making counteroffer	.90	.30	.05	.15	-.06	-.03	-.42**	
7.Proposed salary	3194.85	168.64	-.13	-.01	-.09	.34**	-.26*	.12

Note. $N = 109$. Variables 6 and 7 were coded as yes = 1, no = 0.

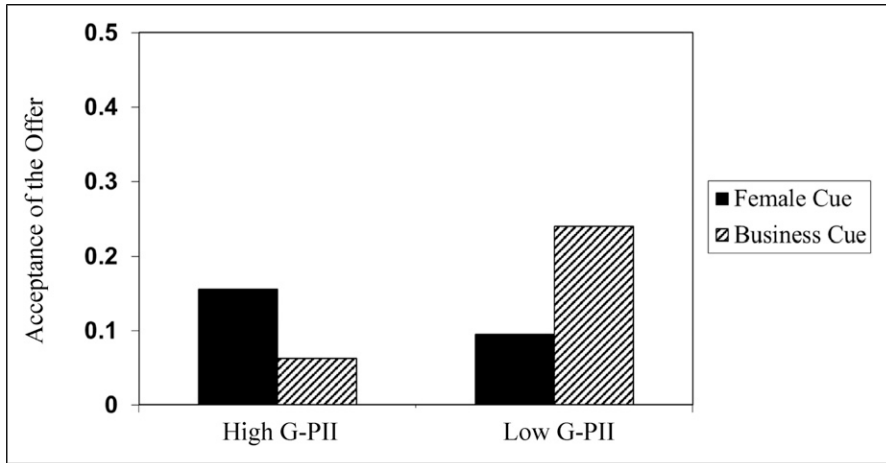


Figure 1. Interaction Effect of Identity Cue and Level of Perceived Compatibility of Gender and Professional Identities on Acceptance of the First Offer in the Simulated Salary Negotiation (Study 1).

Note. Yes is coded as 1 and No is coded as 0. A higher score indicates higher agreement. Probabilities are predicted at 1 SD above and below the mean on G-PHI.

effects but a significant two-way interaction of identity cue and G-PHI, $B = 59.44$, $SE = 24.85$, $t(101) = 2.39$, $p = .019$, 95% CI: [10.16, 108.72], supporting H1 (Please see Figure 2). As predicted, high G-PHIs exhibited a trend consistent with the assimilation effect and proposed a lower amount when their gender identity was salient ($M = 3143.55$) than when their professional identity was salient ($M = 3203.45$). However, the pair-wise comparison did not reach significance, $B = -28.63$, $SE = 24.09$, $t(101) = -1.19$, $p = .24$, 90% CI: [-76.41, 19.15], not supporting H1a. Low G-PHIs exhibited a contrast effect; the pair-wise comparison showed that they proposed a higher amount when their gender identity was salient ($M = 3290.91$) than when their professional identity was salient ($M = 3167.25$), $B = 51.88$, $SE = 23.23$, $t(101) = 2.23$, $p = .028$, 95% CI: [5.81, 97.95], supporting H1b.

Discussion

Study 1 supported the predicted interaction between G-PHI and identity cues on businesswomen's negotiation tendencies. However, the findings only provided partial evidence for high G-PHIs' assimilation effect and low G-PHIs' contrast effect in response to identity cues. For two of the three measures of negotiation outcomes—immediate acceptance of the offer and the amount of counteroffer—the predicted interaction between identity cues and GPHI was significant, thereby supporting H1. The results indicated that high G-PHIs displayed the predicted assimilation effect: they were more engaged and aggressive in a salary negotiation task when their professional identity was

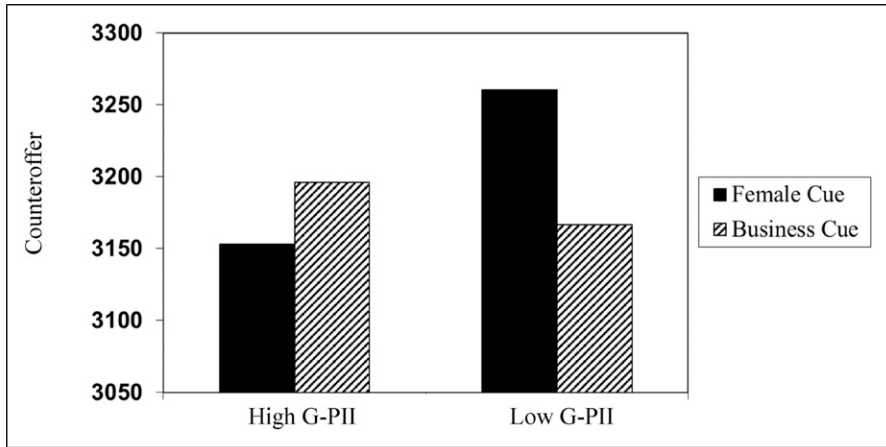


Figure 2. Interaction Effect of Identity Cue and Level of Perceived Compatibility of Gender and Professional Identities on Counteroffer in the Simulated Salary Negotiation (Study 1).

Note. Means are predicted at 1 SD above and below the mean on G-PII.

salient, and less engaged and aggressive when their gender identity was salient. In contrast, low G-PiIs exhibited the opposite contrast effect. The analysis testing whether a counteroffer was made was not significant. Although all the means were in the predicted direction, not all pairwise comparisons were significant. Specifically, the effect of identity cues was significant only when examining the amount of counteroffer for low G-PiIs, which supports H1b. This lack of significance could be attributed to the limited response range of the items, specifically the dichotomous nature of responses (i.e., yes or no). To explore this further, we turn to Study 2.

Study 2

In Study 2, we examine the interaction effect between G-PII and the perceived valence of female traits on businesswomen's negotiation tendencies (H2). Specifically, we predict that individuals with high G-PII will exhibit an assimilation effect, negotiating more when prototypical "female" traits are framed as advantageous and less when these traits are framed as disadvantageous (H2a). In contrast, individuals with low G-PII are expected to demonstrate the opposite, showing a contrast effect (H2b).

Method

Participants

A priori power analysis of .95 power conducted with G*Power (Faul et al., 2007, 2009) revealed that a sample size of 89 is sufficient to detect a small effect ($f^2 = .15$). Ninety-

three undergraduate female students with a business-related major (e.g., Marketing, Finance, etc.) were recruited at a Singapore university ($M_{Age} = 20.59$, $SD_{Age} = 1.02$). Participants were recruited via flyers and received partial course credits for their participation.

Materials and Procedure

The study was conducted online. To manipulate the valence of female characteristics, participants read a short excerpt about how successful business negotiation is associated with gender-typed traits. In the positive condition, negotiation success is associated with stereotypical female characteristics including warm, tender, cheerful, and compassionate. In the negative condition, negotiation success is associated with stereotypical male characteristics including ambitious, forceful, and dominant. This task was adapted from [Kray et al. \(2002\)](#). A third, control condition linked negotiation success to non-gender typed characteristics including extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience. After reading the excerpt, participants were instructed to complete the same salary negotiation task used in Study 1. Next, participants completed a questionnaire to measure G-PII, strength of identification with their gender and professional identities, and demographic information. We also asked participants to report any business-related working experience.

Results

Preliminary Considerations

Participants' G-PII was normally distributed and reliable (Cronbach $\alpha = .76$). Strength of identification with gender and professional identities were negatively skewed and above the scale midpoint ($M_{Female\ ID} = 4.65$, $SD = .87$, skewness = $-.26$; $M_{Business\ ID} = 3.52$, $SD = .99$, skewness = $-.22$) indicating strong gender and business identification. [Table 2](#) lists the descriptive statistics.

Hypothesis Testing

We regressed immediate acceptance of offer, making a counteroffer, and the amount of counteroffer (each as dependent variables, respectively) on cue valence (positive = 1, negative = -1 , control = 0), G-PII (mean-centered), and the two-way interaction. Age, strength of identification with one's gender and profession, and length of business-related working experience were entered as covariates.

The first binary logistic regression used immediate acceptance of offer as the dependent variable (yes = 1; no = 0). The results yielded neither main effects nor an interaction effect, $Walds < 1$. The second analysis used the dependent variable of making a counteroffer (yes = 1; no = 0). Results revealed no significant main effects and a significant two-way interaction effect, $B = -1.02$, $SE = .53$, $Wald = 3.71$, $p = .05$,

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics in Study 2.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.Age	20.59	1.02							
2.Gender identity	4.65	.87							
3.Profession identity	3.52	.96	-.11	.38					
4.Work experience (Months)	7.46	6.85	-.14	.06	.05				
5.G-PII	3.05	.61	-.13	.14	.15	.08			
6.Accepting initial offer	.27	.45	.08	-.17	-.17	-.15	.03		
7.Making counteroffer	.87	.34	-.09	.14	.04	-.02	-.03	-.42**	
8.Proposed salary	3212.37	200.50	.01	.08	.23*	.03	.34**	-.26*	.12

Note. N = 93. Work Experience was coded by number of months. Variable 6 and 7 were coded as yes = 1, no = 0.

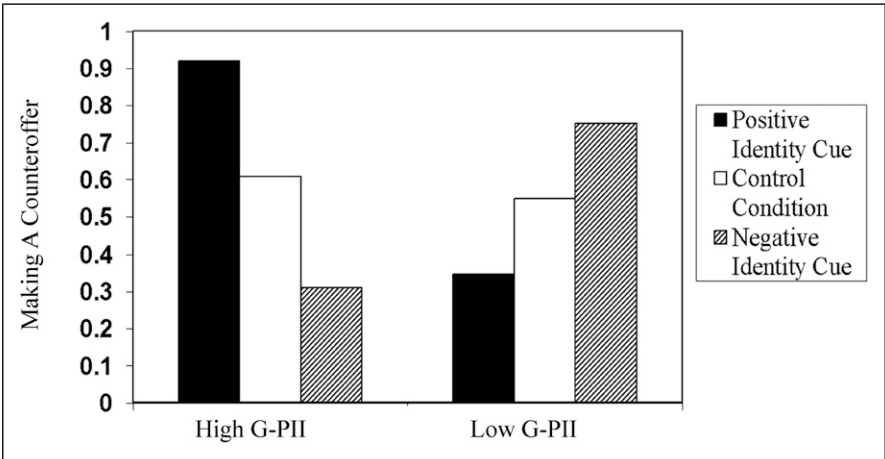


Figure 3. Interaction Effect of Identity Cue and Level of Perceived Compatibility of Gender and Professional Identities on Making A Counteroffer in the Simulated Salary Negotiation (Study 2).

Note. N = 93. Yes is coded as 1 and No is coded as 0. A higher score indicates a higher tendency to make a counteroffer. Probabilities are predicted at 1 SD above and below the mean on G-PII.

90%, CI: [.034, 1.03] (See [Figure 3](#)), supporting H2. As predicted, high G-PIIs (1 SD above the mean) exhibited a trend consistent with the assimilation effect; those in the positive condition (92.0%) were most likely to make a counteroffer, followed by those in the control condition (61.6%), and the lowest were those in the negative condition (31.1%). Planned contrast with weights of 1, 0, -1 corresponding to the positive, control, and negative conditions was marginally significant with the confidence interval not including zero, B = 1.21, SE = .72, Wald = 2.81, $p = .09$, 95% CI: [.82, 13.73],

partially supporting H2a. Low G-PIIs (1 SD below the mean) exhibited a trend consistent with the contrast effect; those in the negative condition were most likely to make a counteroffer (75.2%), followed by those in the control condition (54.9%), and the lowest was those in the positive condition (34.6%). However, the planned contrast using the same weights as above was not significant, $B = -.99$, $SE = .69$, $Wald = 2.07$, $p = .15$, 95% CI: $[-.10, 1.43]$, not supporting H2b.

In the third analysis, we conducted a general linear regression with the amount of the counteroffer as the dependent variable. Results showed no significant main effects but a significant two-way interaction, $B = -96.61$, $SE = 47.78$, $t(86) = -2.02$, $p = .046$, 95% CI: $[-191.59, -1.64]$ (See Figure 4), supporting H2. High G-PIIs exhibited a trend consistent with the assimilation effect; those in the positive condition proposed the highest amount ($M = 3178.42$), followed by those in the control condition ($M = 3142.45$), and the lowest amount was in the negative condition ($M = 3106.48$). However, the planned contrast was not significant, $B = 30.61$, $SE = 39.52$, $t(86) = .77$, $p = .44$, 95% CI: $[-47.96, 109.17]$, not supporting H2a. Low G-PIIs exhibited a contrast effect; those in the negative condition proposed the highest amount ($M = 3394.88$), followed by those in the control condition ($M = 3304.22$), and the lowest amount was in the positive condition ($M = 3213.56$). The planned contrast was significant, $B = -96.02$, $SE = 37.50$, $t(86) = -2.56$, $p = .012$, 95% CI: $[-170.58, -21.47]$, supporting H2b.

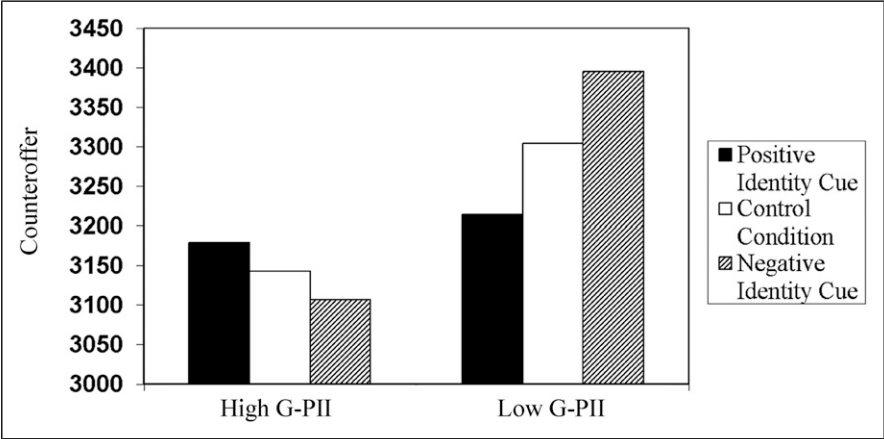


Figure 4. Interaction Effect of Identity Cue and Level of G-PII on Counteroffer in the Simulated Salary Negotiation (Study 2).

Note. $N = 93$. Means are predicted at 1 SD above and below the mean on perceived compatibility of gender and professional identities.

Discussion

The results of Study 2 supported our proposed H2, which predicted an interaction between G-PII and the valence of female traits on businesswomen's negotiation tendencies. Although the pattern of results supported our predictions, not all the pairwise comparisons and planned contrasts reached conventional levels of significance in all the dependent variables. For example, the planned contrast of whether high G-PIIs assimilated to positive framings of female traits was only marginally significant (even though the confidence interval did not include zero), and the same analysis on the amount of the counteroffer was not significant. In short, there is no clear support for H2a. Furthermore, the planned contrast for low G-PIIs was significant only for the amount proposed, supporting H2b, but was not significant regarding their tendency to make a counteroffer.

In short, we found partial empirical support for the contrast effect exhibited by businesswomen with low G-PII, but not the assimilation effect exhibited by businesswomen with high G-PII. In all, this suggests that emphasizing positive associations between stereotypical female traits and negotiation performance may undermine negotiation outcomes for low G-PIIs, though it is not clear whether the same effect occurs for high G-PIIs. More research needs to be done.

General Discussion

Two experiments show evidence suggesting that Gender-Professional Identity Integration (G-PII) may shape negotiation behaviors among businesswomen in response to identity cues. In Study 1, we found partial evidence that businesswomen with high G-PII, who perceive their gender and professional identities as congruent, displayed an "assimilation" effect. Even though not all the analyses were significant, the general trend of the results suggested that those with high G-PII negotiated more aggressively when their professional identity was primed by professional identity cues rather than gender identity cues. In contrast, the general trend of the results showed that businesswomen with low G-PII, or those who perceived their gender and professional identities as incongruent, exhibited the opposite, "contrast" effect. In Study 2, we found some evidence that stereotypical negative associations between gender role and negotiation success can be reversed for businesswomen with high G-PII. Specifically, emphasizing positive correlations between female characteristics and negotiation success facilitate some, though not all, of the negotiation outcomes we had examined.

Theoretical Implications

The present studies add to the existing literature on negotiation and identity integration. First, we argue that gender is not the only identity that matters in explaining how businesswomen negotiate; their professional identity must be considered, too. We find that perceptions of the relationship between these two identities, rather than any single

identity, plays a critical role in how women negotiate. Further, our findings complicate previous findings showing that women's negotiation success can be raised by creating a positive association between stereotypical female characteristics and negotiation effectiveness (Kray et al., 2002, 2004). Although not all the planned comparisons reached traditional levels of significance, we found that businesswomen with high G-PII generally followed this pattern, but those with low G-PII actually negotiated less successfully when a positive association was highlighted. In short, there is some reason to suggest that positive associations may not always be helpful, and they have the potential to impede negotiation success for women who view these positive associations as incongruent with their own experiences. Our results are consistent with previous studies demonstrating high G-PIIs' receptiveness to identity cues, agility in adjusting their behaviors to align with identity-relevant norms, and possession of more positive views of their dual identity status.

Our findings also shed light on the role of psychological reactance among low G-PIIs. Previous research suggests that psychological reactance may arise from perceived incompatibility between multiple identities, as well as the incongruence between external and internal identity expectations. Psychological reactance can explain why seemingly effective interventions to attenuate the underperformance of women in negotiations—such as salience of professional identity cues and positive associations of female traits and negotiation success—can backfire for some negotiation outcomes. It is therefore critical that future research in this area considers businesswomen's perceived compatibility between gender and professional identities. Furthermore, future research should examine the psychological mechanisms underlying tendencies to exhibit assimilation and contrast effects of high and low G-PIIs respectively. Specifically, researchers should investigate whether and how psychological reactance influences the relationship between G-PII and businesswomen's identity shifts in response to identity cues, as well as how to address this reactance when businesswomen feel threatened by their gender or professional identities.

Practical Implications

Previous studies have shown that, whereas II is often considered a stable individual difference, it can also be changed (Cheng & Lee, 2009, 2013). For example, biculturals increased their bicultural II—or perceptions of compatibility between their two cultural identities—when instructed to recall positive bicultural experiences (Cheng & Lee, 2013). Similarly, women's level of G-PII may be increased by reporting experiences when their female identity facilitates and/or complements their professional identity (Mor, 2018). As such, interventions that change perceptions of G-PII may impact businesswomen's negotiation effectiveness.

Despite our mixed results, it is clear that there will be no “one size fits all” intervention that can boost negotiation success for all women in business. Under certain circumstances, we found that factors that will increase the performance of some may undermine the performance of others. Nevertheless, organizations can find ways to

facilitate perceptions of compatibility between gender and professional identities such that all businesswomen can have elevated levels of G-PII. For example, providing mentoring programs for businesswomen to address the challenges arising from being a woman in business can afford valuable, unique, and advantageous perspectives in professional settings, which facilitate the development of G-PII (Prasad, 2021). As more women develop higher levels of G-PII, organizations can reduce the probability that solutions to enhancing businesswomen's effectiveness in negotiation will "backfire".

Limitations and Future Research

Our research is not without limitations. First, as we mentioned earlier, not all our predicted effects were significant. Only one of the dependent variables—amount of counteroffer—showed significant effects across both studies. Also, some of the pairwise comparisons and planned contrasts were not significant even though the two-way interactions were significant and in the predicted direction. Several methodological issues may explain these mixed findings. Our participants were female undergraduate students with a business major. Even though they might be socialized about expectations associated with gender and professional identities, they might not have sufficient experience managing their gender and professional identities in real work settings. Further, we engaged participants in a simulated negotiation that may not have the same relevance to participants. In addition, factors known to affect negotiation—such as the gender of the negotiation partner—may be an important factor that will influence how G-PII and identity dynamics influence negotiation outcomes. Future research needs to be done to replicate our findings in actual negotiations in work settings. Overall, G-PII and its effects on negotiation are a new domain of research, and more studies need to be conducted in the future to understand the conditions under which G-PII moderates negotiation outcomes for women.

Additionally, including businessmen as a comparison group would facilitate a more comprehensive exploration of how G-PII influences negotiation behaviors and outcomes across various gender groups for two related reasons. Successful business negotiators often necessitate both "hard" skills, such as agentic, assertive, and aggressive traits traditionally associated with masculinity, and "soft" skills, such as being friendly, collaborative, and communicative, which are typically associated with femininity, especially in long-term negotiations (Kray et al., 2002). While men often emphasize toughness and agentic behaviors to affirm masculinity and social status (Manzei et al., 2021), these traits may not always lead to optimal negotiation outcomes. Increasingly, "feminine traits" like empathy, relational competence, and cooperation are recognized as vital for negotiation success, and more broadly for leadership, employee well-being, and even organizational-level financial performance (Scott et al., 2010; Simionescu et al., 2021). Thus, the gap between expectations associated with gender and professional identities could also affect businessmen's negotiation performance.

Conclusion

Two studies suggest that individual differences in perceived compatibility of gender and professional identities (i.e., G-PII) shape some negotiation outcomes among businesswomen. We argued that those who perceive their gender and professional identities as compatible (i.e., high G-PII) may exhibit an assimilation effect, negotiating in ways that align with identity cues and cue valence. In contrast, those who perceive their identities as incompatible (i.e., low G-PII) may exhibit the opposite, contrast effect. Our research suggests that studies on businesswomen's negotiations should consider individual differences in the psychological management of gender and professional identities. The opposing ways businesswomen with high versus low G-PII respond to identity cues, explain why "one size fits all" interventions to enhance businesswomen's negotiation effectiveness may not be effective. Rather, interventions that focus on increasing perceived compatibility and positivity between gender and professional identities may prove to be more promising.

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Data Availability Statement

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Note

1. Salary range is taken from a graduate employment survey ([Ministry of Education, Singapore, 2020](#)) in Singapore in 2020.

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