

DOES EXPERIENCE ALWAYS LEAD TO BETTER RESULTS?

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STUDENT AND PROFESSIONAL NEGOTIATORS

Theoretical Background

- The vast majority of laboratory experiments in negotiation research involve student samples
- However, it is still unclear if students perform similarly to professionals and are thus suitable substitutes for professionals in a distributive negotiation
- Previous research has only compared students and professionals in terms of negotiation *outcome* and not negotiation *process*


Factors that influence the negotiation process:

- 1. Time:** concessions at the beginning can differ from concessions at the end of the negotiation (e.g., Faratin, Sierra & Jennings, 1998; Vetschera, 2015)
- 2. Reciprocity:** negotiators make concessions according to the concessions of the opponent (e.g., Esser & Komorita, 1975)
- 3. First offers:** tougher first offers lead to better outcomes (e.g., Galinsky & Mussweiler, 2001)

Research Question

How do students and professionals differ in the negotiation process in terms of the influence of the three factors *time*, *reciprocity* and *first offers* on individual concessions?

Method

- Buyer-seller business negotiation simulation about the price of a custom-built machine 
- Dyadic negotiations via anonymous online chat
- Duration: ca. 1h
- Incentive: 50 Euros for best negotiators
- 2 samples: 119 master student dyads and 41 mixed dyads with professionals (key account manager) as seller and students on buyer side

Results

- 1. Time:** for students and professionals, larger concessions are made at the beginning of a negotiation and smaller at the end
- 2. Reciprocity:** students are influenced by the concessions of the opponent whereas professionals are independent in their concessionary behavior
- 3. First offers:** tougher own first offers lead to higher concessions for both samples but only students are additionally influenced by the opponent's first offer

Conclusion

When investigating the process of negotiations, students are not always appropriate proxies for professionals in experimental negotiation research.