


# Why are Women Less Likely to Negotiate? The Influence of Expectancy Considerations and Contextual Framing on Gender Differences in the Initiation of Negotiation

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## Abstract

According to social role theory, women are less likely to initiate negotiations and have lower expectancies about negotiation success because the feminine gender role is inconsistent with the negotiator role. However, gender differences should be amplified in masculine contexts (with even more inconsistency between the negotiator role and the feminine gender role) and reduced in feminine contexts (with more consistency between the negotiator role and the feminine gender role). We showed in Study 1 ( $N = 1,306$  students) that negotiators' expectancies about being successful in negotiations mediated the effect of gender on real retrospective negotiation behavior. In Study 2, an online scenario experiment ( $N = 167$  students and employees), we found that the framing of the negotiation context (feminine vs. masculine) moderated the mediation effect. We provide implications for theory, practice, and research methods by unearthing mechanisms and moderators of gender differences in the area of negotiations.

Negotiating is a social activity (Thompson, Wang & Gunia, 2010) taking place in all kinds of contexts such as organizations, markets, purchasing, households, families, and many more (Babcock, Gelfand, Small, & Stayn, 2006; Reif, Kunz, Kugler, & Brodbeck, 2019; Stuhlmacher & Linnabery, 2013). In these contexts, negotiations are a common mean to achieve one's goals (Kolb, 1998), to resolve conflicts (Pruitt & Kugler, 2014), or to reach agreements (Carnevale & Pruitt, 1992). However, before a negotiation can unfold at all, it has to be initiated—highlighting the importance of this first behavioral step of the negotiation process. Research has shown that, in addition to being less effective in negotiations than men (Mazei et al., 2015), women initiate fewer negotiations than men (Kugler, Reif, Kaschner, & Brodbeck, 2018). Although the overall effect of gender on the initiation of negotiations was found to be small and mainly present in settings with high situational ambiguity or high gender role inconsistency (Kugler

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et al., 2018), it can transform into considerable economic differences between men and women over the years, which often constitutes a disadvantage for women (Babcock et al., 2006). Of course, (not) initiating negotiations cannot account for all manners of disparities in economic outcomes and it is not the only reason for gender inequalities in the workplace, but it is one substantial reason for why equally qualified women and men in the same positions do not earn equal pay, a problem, that still exists (Sandberg, 2013).

When addressing the gender difference in the initiation of negotiations, it is important to ask: Why are women less likely to initiate negotiations than men? According to a theoretical model of initiating negotiations (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014), individuals—men and women—initiate negotiations depending on their expectancies, their perceptions of instrumentality, and the valence of the negotiation for them. Individuals are supposed to initiate negotiations if they feel able to negotiate successfully, if they feel that they can benefit from negotiating, and if the negotiation object at stake is important to them. Thus, the model of initiating negotiations proposes underlying psychological mechanisms explaining why individuals decide whether to negotiate or not. Thereby, the model provides starting points to explore why women might be less likely to initiate negotiations than men.

Gender differences in the area of negotiations have mainly been explained from the perspective of social role theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012). According to social role theory, gender differences in negotiations stem from the relative inconsistency between the feminine gender role and the negotiator role (cf., Stuhlmacher & Linnabery, 2013). Whereas the masculine gender role and the negotiator role are “naturally” aligned, the feminine gender role is per se inconsistent with the negotiator role. Therefore, women violate their gender role when they initiate a negotiation and are likely to experience social backlash (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Williams & Tiedens, 2016). Consequently, women more often than men decide not to negotiate, because negotiation contexts are not in line with their feminine gender role. However, if the negotiation context is aligned with the feminine gender role and role inconsistency is reduced, the gender difference also diminishes (Kugler et al., 2018). Thus, social role theory hints at contextual characteristics explaining in which contexts individuals decide whether to negotiate or not.

The (in)consistency between the negotiator and the feminine/masculine gender role also explains why women might have lower expectancies, more negative perceptions of instrumentality, and more negative estimations of valence regarding negotiations than men. Thus, the model of the initiation of negotiation, combined with gender role theory, explains why and in which contexts women more often than men decide not to negotiate. However, research exploring these mechanisms in detail is scarce (Kugler et al., 2018). In this paper, we focus on gender differences in one of the suggested mechanisms of the initiation of negotiations: expectancies. We tested the mediation effect of gender via expectancies on real retrospective negotiation initiations (Study 1) and showed with an online scenario experiment how negotiation contexts moderate the proposed mediation effect (Study 2).

## Gender Differences in the Initiation of Negotiation

When people intentionally and on their own terms begin a negotiation, a negotiation is initiated (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014). A model of the initiation of negotiation by Reif and Brodbeck (2014) emphasizes individuals' cognitive and motivational processes when considering initiating negotiations. The model specifies five variables that potentially influence whether or not individuals decide to start a negotiation: (a) a perceived discrepancy between what individuals expect and what they (are offered to) receive, (b) the degree of negative emotions that go along with a perceived discrepancy, (c) a desired outcome (i.e., valence), (d) the expectancy of being able to successfully negotiate (i.e., expectancy), and (e) considerations about the costs and benefits of negotiating versus refraining from negotiating (i.e., instrumentality).

Gender can potentially have an effect on all of these variables (and their relationships) and therefore cause or influence the gender difference in the initiation of negotiation (Kugler et al., 2018). For example, research has shown that women tend to avoid negotiations when the financial benefit is limited but enter

negotiations when they will benefit from doing so (cf. instrumentality; Exley, Niederle, & Vesterlund, 2019), that men and women demand different property characteristics (cf. valence) when negotiating in real estate transactions (Andersen, Marx, Meisner Neilsen, & Vesterlund, 2018), and that men and women differ in their negotiation self-efficacy (cf. expectancy) in stereotyped negotiation contexts (Miles & LaSalle, 2008).

How and why gender might affect the variables that determine whether or not individuals decide to negotiate can be theoretically explained by social role theory. One salient social role is the respective gender role of a person. Gender roles, that is, “a set of expectations and norms that are associated with being a man or a woman” (Bear, 2011, p. 50), are very salient roles in people’s lives (Bear, 2011). Gender roles are accompanied by different role expectations for men and women and thus guide their behavior accordingly: Men are expected to act in an agentic, assertive, competitive, and independent way. Women are expected to behave communally and cooperatively (Rudman & Glick, 1999; Stuhlmacher & Linnabery, 2013).

Individuals tend to comply with role expectations for intra-individual and inter-individual reasons. First, internalizing their gender role, people form a gender identity (i.e., their sense of themselves as male or female; Wood & Eagly, 2012). Because people aim at behaving consistently with their internalized gender identity (Carver & Scheier, 2008), masculine and feminine gender roles guide behavior through the process of self-regulation (Bem, 1981; Moretti & Higgins, 1999; Witt & Wood, 2010; Wood, Christensen, Hebl, & Rothgerber, 1997; Wood & Eagly, 2012). Second, violations of role expectations are penalized by others in the forms of social backlash or other negative social reactions (Bosson, Prewitt-Freilino, & Taylor, 2005; Luhaorg & Zivian, 1995; Wood & Eagly, 2012).

Current theorizing and empirical research suggest that gender differences in *negotiations* (including the initiation of negotiations) stem from the consistency between the negotiator role and the masculine gender role (i.e., assertive, competitive) and inconsistency with the feminine gender role (i.e., communal, cooperative). In other words, women who assertively and competitively negotiate violate their feminine gender role (Bear, 2011; Bear & Babcock, 2012; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Mazei, Reif, Kugler, & Hüffmeier, 2019; Stuhlmacher & Linnabery, 2013). Given that individuals tend to comply with their gender role, gender role theory proposes that women initiate fewer negotiations than men.

***Hypothesis 1.*** Women initiate fewer negotiations than men.

Social role theory does not only explain the gender differences in behavior (i.e., the initiation of negotiation), but also in the cognitive-motivational mechanisms leading to the initiation of negotiation (see above). In this paper, we focus on gender differences in one of the cognitive-motivational mechanisms: expectancies.

## Expectancies as Mediators of Gender Differences in the Initiation of Negotiation

Cognitive-motivational considerations, such as expectancy considerations, are related to the decision whether or not to negotiate (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014). Expectancy can be a driving force leading to initiative behavior (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014) as it reflects one’s confidence in one’s ability to perform effectively in a task (Miles & LaSalle, 2008) and includes feelings of self-efficacy. Research has identified negotiation self-efficacy and better expectations to positively influence negotiation processes and outcomes (Elfenbein, 2015; Miles & LaSalle, 2008; O’Connor & Arnold, 2001; Sullivan, O’Connor, & Burriss, 2006).

Building on social role theory (see above), the expectancy about negotiation ability is different for men and women. Negotiating is typically seen as a masculine domain (Bear, 2011; Kray & Thompson, 2005; Kray, Thompson, & Galinsky, 2001) resulting in women having lower competency beliefs and confidence in negotiation situations. Moreover, the disproportionate number of men’s and women’s

opportunities to practice negotiating (resulting from gendered role expectations and thus a different frequency of exposure to negotiation situations) also might result in women's lower expectancy considerations in negotiations. Research showed that women in general tend to be less confident than men (Watson & Hoffman, 1996) and have less self-efficacy regarding their negotiation ability compared to men (Reif et al., 2019; Stevens, Bavetta, & Gist, 1993). Thus, a possible explanation of gender differences on the initiation of negotiation may lie in gendered expectancy considerations:

**Hypothesis 2.** Women in comparison with men have lower expectancies of negotiation ability, which results in women initiating viewer negotiations than men (i.e., mediation hypothesis).

With testing Hypothesis 2 in the present study's design, we want to replicate and extend Reif et al.'s (2019) findings, (a) by investigating retrospection of real negotiation behavior instead of imagined negotiation intentions and (b) by the use of one specific negotiation context instead of using a set of diverse negotiation contexts.

### Contextual Cues Moderate the Mediating Role of Cognitions

Contextual cues, such as the negotiation topic or the framing of a situation, can shape a negotiation context to make it more or less consistent with masculine or feminine gender roles, a phenomenon which is also referred to as asymmetrical contextual ambiguity (Miles & LaSalle, 2008) or degree of gender role inconsistency (Kugler et al., 2018). Negotiation topics which are consistent with the feminine gender role are, for example, the price of lamp-work beads used to make jewelry (vs. its masculine counterpart "price of halogen motorcycle headlights"; Bear & Babcock, 2012), dinner decoration (vs. dinner payment plan; Babcock, 2016), or access to a lactation room (vs. compensation; Bear, 2011). Small, Gelfand, Babcock, and Gettman (2007) showed that framing a negotiation situation as opportunity to "ask", which was supposed to be more consistent with low-power social roles (such as the feminine gender role) than framing a negotiation situation as opportunity to "negotiate", reduced gender differences in the initiation of negotiation. Moreover, Kray, Galinsky, and Thompson (2002) found that women had a better negotiation performance when stereotypically feminine traits (ability to express thoughts verbally; good listening skills; insight into the other negotiator's feelings) were linked to successful negotiating.

According to social role theory, contextual cues can influence the gender difference in the initiation of negotiation, when the cues help women to negotiate without violating their gender role. Women negotiators are less likely to violate their gender role when negotiation contexts are framed in line with the feminine gender role (Bear, 2011; Bear & Babcock, 2012; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Kray et al., 2002; Stuhlmacher & Linnabery, 2013), for example, cooperatively (Kugler et al., 2018) versus when negotiation contexts are framed in line with the masculine gender role, that is, competitively. In cooperatively framed contexts, women should be—more than in "standard" negotiation contexts—convinced that they are capable to successfully negotiate (see also Miles & LaSalle, 2008).

In sum, we suppose that the mediation effect of gender via expectancy considerations on the initiation of negotiation (see Hypothesis 2) depends on contextual cues: Framing a negotiation context (which is traditionally perceived as masculine domain and thus linked to the masculine gender role) cooperatively, that is, in line with the feminine gender role, should attenuate gender differences in expectancies and, thus, attenuate the whole mediation effect on the initiation of negotiation (Figure 1).

**Hypothesis 3.** The gender difference in the initiation of negotiation, which is mediated by expectancy considerations, is moderated by contextual cues: When the cues are in line with the feminine gender role (cooperative framing), the gender difference should be smaller; when the cues are in line with the masculine gender role or rather the negotiator role (competitive framing), the gender difference should be larger (i.e., moderated mediation effect).

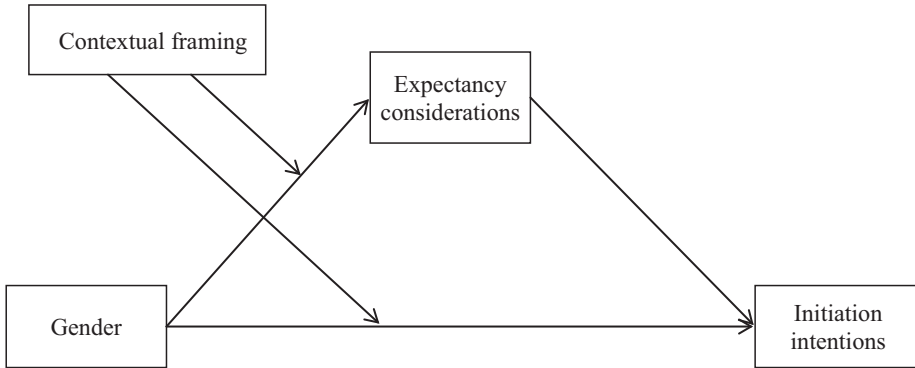


Figure 1. Moderated mediation effect of gender via expectancy considerations on initiation intentions, moderated by the contextual framing condition.

## Overview of Studies

To test our hypotheses, we conducted two studies. In Study 1, we replicated Reif et al.'s (2019, Study 2) work and further examined the mediation effect of gender on the initiation of negotiation via expectancy considerations by using retrospective data on real initiation behavior. In Study 2, we tested whether gender differences attenuated when the negotiation context was framed more consistently with the feminine gender role.

## Study 1

In Study 1, we examined the mediating role of expectancy considerations in the gender–initiation relationship. We examined retrospectively reported real negotiation behavior of students with their lecturers in a university setting. Following Kugler et al. (2018), we consider negotiating about grades in a university setting to be a “weak” negotiation situation (Mischel, 1977). Weak negotiation situations are characterized by high situational ambiguity and uncertainty about desirable and accepted behavior. Such weak situations do not provide clear scripts of desirable behavior, and people use instead general or fallback behaviors, such as gender role scripts to guide their behavior. As negotiating is more consistent with the male gender role than with the female gender role (Stuhlmacher & Linnabery, 2013), gender differences in initiation behavior are pronounced in weak negotiation situations (Kugler et al., 2018). Therefore, we expected the university setting to be a negotiation context in which gender differences are pronounced and consequently, a context which is suitable for the examination of gender differences in the initiation of negotiation.

## Method

We collected data for Study 1 as part of a larger project on the initiation of negotiations including diverse questions for both quantitative and qualitative data analyses. In the project, we investigated students' propensity to initiate negotiations about their grades as well as motives, perceptions, and expectations about the negotiation. Two publications already emerged based on the data collected in this project: Reif and Brodbeck (2017) and Reif et al. (2019). The analyses presented in this paper were not addressed by either of these publications. Besides the variables that are relevant for the research question of this paper, we also measured further quantitative variables (satisfaction with grade, see Reif & Brodbeck, 2017),

qualitative variables (see Reif et al., 2019), and demographics (status of lecturer, communication medium, relevance of grade for further studies) which were not used for this paper.

### **Sample**

The sample consisted of 1,306 students (60.1% female), mainly from Germany (90.9%; the remaining subjects were mostly from South and East Europe). Participants' mean age was 23.97 years ( $SD = 3.94$ ), ranging from 18 to 51 years.

### **Procedure**

We sent the link to the online questionnaire via email to students of a large university in Germany, who had agreed to receive mails via this specific mailing list. As an incentive to participate, participants could take part in a lottery in which three winners each received 100 Euros. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed about their right to terminate participation at any time.

At the beginning of the questionnaire, participants were given a short introduction to the study: "Most students are familiar with the situation of having received a grade for an oral or written exam, a presentation, or a paper, with which they did not agree and consequently considered talking to the lecturer about this grade. In the following, you will find questions about your behavior concerning the evaluation or grading in seminars, lectures, or similar courses." (see also Reif & Brodbeck, 2017; the text was translated from German by the authors). Next, students indicated how often they had already initiated a negotiation regarding their grade with their lecturer by choosing one of the categories: 1 = *never*; 2 = *almost never*; 3 = *rarely*; 4 = *sometimes*; 5 = *often*; 6 = *most of the time*; 7 = *always*. Students who had indicated they had never initiated a negotiation concerning their grades were labeled "non-initiators", and students who had chosen categories 2–7 were labeled "initiators".

We instructed initiators to reconsider a specific case, where they had decided to negotiate their grade with their lecturer. Non-initiators were asked to think about a specific case where they had deliberately decided not to negotiate their grade with their lecturer. Both initiators and non-initiators were then asked questions about their expectancy considerations in this specific case followed by demographic data.

### **Measurement**

*Gender* was coded with 1 = *male* and 2 = *female*.

*Expectancy* in the form of subjective negotiation ability was measured as a composite of two items ("I could initiate a negotiation any time if I wanted to", "I have problems initiating negotiations"—reverse) on a scale from 1 = *completely disagree* to 7 = *completely agree* (inter-item correlation  $r = .458$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Reif & Brodbeck, 2017). We chose this measurement of expectancy, because one's expectancy regarding the initiation of negotiation expresses itself in one's subjective likelihood of being able to initiate and negotiate successfully (Reif & Brodbeck, 2017). Moreover, the items contain aspects of perceived ability (Locke & Latham, 1990), behavioral control (Ajzen, 1985; Custers & Aarts, 2005), feasibility (Gollwitzer, 1990), or confidence about future success (McMahan, 1973), which represent the construct of expectancy.

*Initiation of negotiation* was a binary variable, with initiators being assigned the value 1 and non-initiators being assigned the value 0.

## **Results and Discussion**

Six participants were excluded from the analysis due to throughout missing values. Table 1 provides descriptive information about the variables. Figure 2 shows the percentages of men and women (not) negotiating their grades.

Table 1  
Study 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1 Gender (1 = male, 2 = female)	1.61	0.49	–			
2 Expectancy (1 = low, 7 = high levels)	4.23	1.50	-.17**	–		
3 Initiation of negotiation (0 = no, 1 = yes)	0.58	0.49	-.09**	.20**	–	
4 Age (years)	23.97	3.94	-.08**	-.01	.07*	–

Note. N = 1,300.  
\*\*p < .01. \*p < .05, two-tailed.

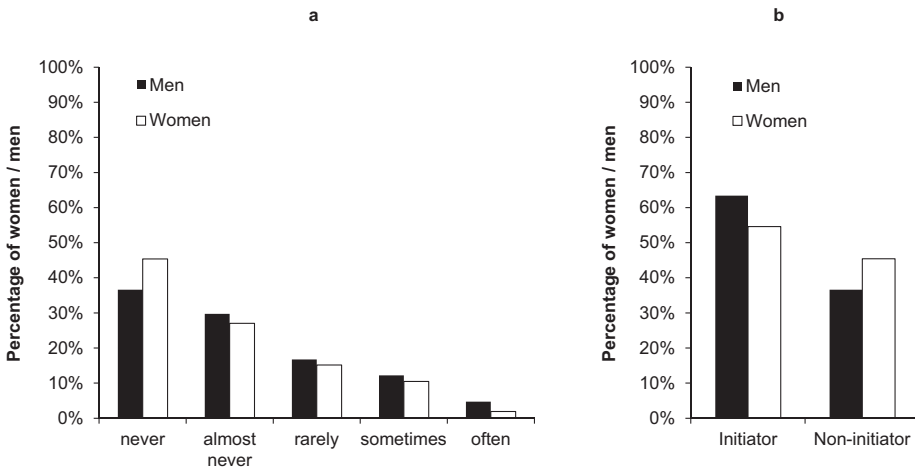


Figure 2. Study 1: Percentage of women and men (not) initiating a negotiation. (a) Negotiation frequency: how often have you already initiated a negotiation concerning a grade with your lecturer? (b) Initiation of negotiation: negotiation frequency was summarized to the binary variable “Initiation of negotiation” (no = never; yes = almost never, rarely, sometimes, often).

We used the software PROCESS (Hayes, 2012) to calculate the proposed mediation effect (1,000 bootstrap samples). For the statistical analyses, all variables were z-standardized. Furthermore, we controlled for age as previous research has identified changes in female and male traits over time (Diekmann & Eagly, 2000; Twenge, 1997). In Study 1, age was also significantly related to the initiation of negotiation ( $\beta = .06, p = .021$ ).

Supporting Hypothesis 1, gender significantly influenced the initiation of negotiation ( $\beta = -.08, p = .005$ ) with men having higher initiation rates than women. There was also a significant effect of gender on expectancy considerations ( $\beta = -.17, p < .001$ ) with men holding higher expectancy considerations than women. When included in the regression together with the mediator, gender was not significantly related to the initiation of negotiation anymore ( $\beta = -.05, p = .102$ ), but expectancy considerations were ( $\beta = .20, p < .001$ ). The indirect effect was significant, as the 95% CI = [-0.104; -0.044] did not include zero.

Results of Study 1 show that men have a higher propensity to negotiate than women (supporting Hypothesis 1). The study replicates expectancy considerations as a mediating variable regarding the gender difference in the initiation of negotiations (supporting Hypothesis 2). Thus, targeting expectancy considerations can be helpful for addressing the gender difference in negotiations and fostering equal opportunities for men and women. It is therefore of particular interest to investigate moderators of the demonstrated mediation effect.

## Study 2

In Study 2, we built on the mediation effect of gender via expectancy considerations on the initiation of negotiation and expected that framing a negotiation context more consistently with the feminine gender role should attenuate the gender difference regarding the initiation of negotiation (Hypothesis 3, moderated mediation).

### Method

We conducted an online scenario experiment in which participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. After the online scenario experiment, participants were fully debriefed and informed about the research question of the study. Participants were recruited via a mailing list for research at the authors' department, a research assistant's personal contacts, and postings in Facebook groups. Within the scope of the data collection, a student collected data for her thesis that was completed under supervision of one of the authors (Reif & Nesar, 2013). For the thesis, other scales were included assessing personality (Big Five Inventory; John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991).

### Sample

The sample consisted of 167 participants (64.1% female); 47.3% were students, and the others were employed. The mean age was 32.71 years ( $SD = 13.84$ ).

### Procedure

In the online scenario experiment, participants were asked to imagine that they had applied for a job, had been invited to a job interview, and were offered the job. Moreover, participants should imagine that they were invited to an additional meeting in which details of the employment contract were to be discussed. In the scenario, we pointed out that it was possible to initiate a salary negotiation during the meeting. After this introduction, we offered general information about salary negotiations. The general information about salary negotiations differed by experimental condition: In one condition, salary negotiations were framed as being generally competitive, and in the other condition, salary negotiations were framed as being generally cooperative. Whereas competition is in line with the masculine gender role, cooperation is a typical characteristic of the feminine gender role (Rudman & Glick, 1999).

In the *competitive framing condition*, competitive aspects of salary negotiations were pronounced. We described salary negotiations as being characterized by manipulation, mistrust, tactic communication, short-term goals, an orientation toward assertion, and self-orientation. In the *cooperative framing condition*, cooperative aspects of salary negotiations were pronounced. We described salary negotiations as being characterized by making concessions, mutual trust, open communication, long-term goals, an orientation toward cooperation, and an orientation toward compromising.

Subsequently, participants were asked, whether they would initiate a salary negotiation during the meeting. Moreover, we assessed whether participants were able to imagine themselves in the situation. Then, data regarding expectancy considerations and demographic data were collected. Participants could win two Amazon vouchers of 25 Euros. Student participants could additionally get extra credit for participation. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed about their right to terminate participation at any time.

To examine whether the framings had an impact on the perception of the negotiation context, we tested them with 42 participants (69.0% female). Participants in the competitive framing condition rated salary negotiations as significantly ( $t(40) = 2.44, p = .019$ ) more competitive ( $M = 4.53, SD = 1.56$ ) than participants in the cooperative framing condition ( $M = 3.48, SD = 1.17$ ) and as significantly ( $t(40) = -4.87, p < .001$ ) less cooperative ( $M = 3.18, SD = 1.50$ ) than participants in the cooperative framing condition ( $M = 5.15, SD = 1.05$ ).



**Measurement**

The coding of *gender* was 1 = *male* and 2 = *female*. The coding of the *framing condition* was 0 = *competitive* and 1 = *cooperative*.

*Expectancy considerations* were measured via three items: “I think the salary offer is negotiable”, “I think I would have a good chance if I started to negotiate the salary offer”, and “I am sure that I would do a good job in a salary negotiation” (1 = *completely disagree*, 7 = *completely agree*; Cronbach’s alpha = .716; Reif & Brodbeck, 2011).

*Intentions to initiate a negotiation* were measured with the item “Would you initiate a salary negotiation in this meeting?” (1 = *not by any means*; 7 = *by all means*).

**Results and Discussion**

Table 2 and Figure 3 provide descriptive information about the variables.

We used the software PROCESS (Hayes, 2012) to calculate the proposed moderated mediation effect (1,000 bootstrap samples). All variables were z-standardized. Participants ( $N = 65$ ) who indicated that they had not been able to adequately imagine the scenario (value > 4 regarding the question “How well could you imagine yourself in the described situation?” scaled from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *completely*) were not included in the analyses. Therefore, the final number of participants was  $N = 102$ .

First, we tested the moderation effect of framing on the link between gender and the initiation of negotiation, controlling for age which was not significantly related to the initiation of negotiation ( $\beta = -.01, p = .940$ ). Regression analysis showed that across the two experimental conditions, there was no significant effect of gender on the initiation of negotiation ( $\beta = -.12, p = .222$ ). However, a regression including gender ( $\beta = -.18, p = .077$ ), framing ( $\beta = .27, p = .007$ ) and the interaction term gender  $\times$  framing ( $\beta = .22, p = .032$ ) showed a significant moderation effect: In the competitive framing condition, gender significantly predicted the initiation of negotiation ( $\beta = -.34, p = .027$ ) with men ( $M = 4.42, SD = 1.77$ ) having higher initiation intentions than women ( $M = 3.08, SD = 1.50$ ). In the cooperative framing condition, gender (men:  $M = 4.43, SD = 2.11$ , women:  $M = 4.60, SD = 1.75$ ) did not significantly predict the initiation of negotiation ( $\beta = .06, p = .639$ ; Figure 4).

Second, we found a similar pattern for expectancy considerations: Only in the competitive framing condition, gender had an influence on expectancy considerations ( $\beta = -.38, p = .011$ , Figure 5) with men ( $M = 5.37, SD = 0.675$ ) having higher expectancy considerations than women ( $M = 4.41, SD = 1.13$ ). In the cooperative framing condition, there was no significant gender effect on expectancy considerations ( $\beta = -.10, p = .461$ , men:  $M = 5.42, SD = 0.933$ ; women:  $M = 5.20, SD = 0.853$ ).

Third, we tested the moderated mediation model suggested in Hypothesis 3 (Hayes, 2015, Model 8, 1,000 bootstrap samples, see Figure 1 and Table 3). We found an indirect effect of gender via expectancy considerations on initiation intentions moderated by framing condition (*Index of moderated*

Table 2  
Study 2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1 Gender (1 = male, 2 = female)	1.59	0.50	–			
2 Expectancy (1 = low, 7 = high levels)	5.09	0.99	-.26**	–		
3 Initiation of negotiation (1 = low, 7 = high levels)	4.16	1.87	-.12	.37**	–	
4 Age (years)	33.25	12.97	-.08	.02	.00	–

Note.  $N = 102$ .

\*\* $p < .01$ . \* $p < .05$ , two-tailed.

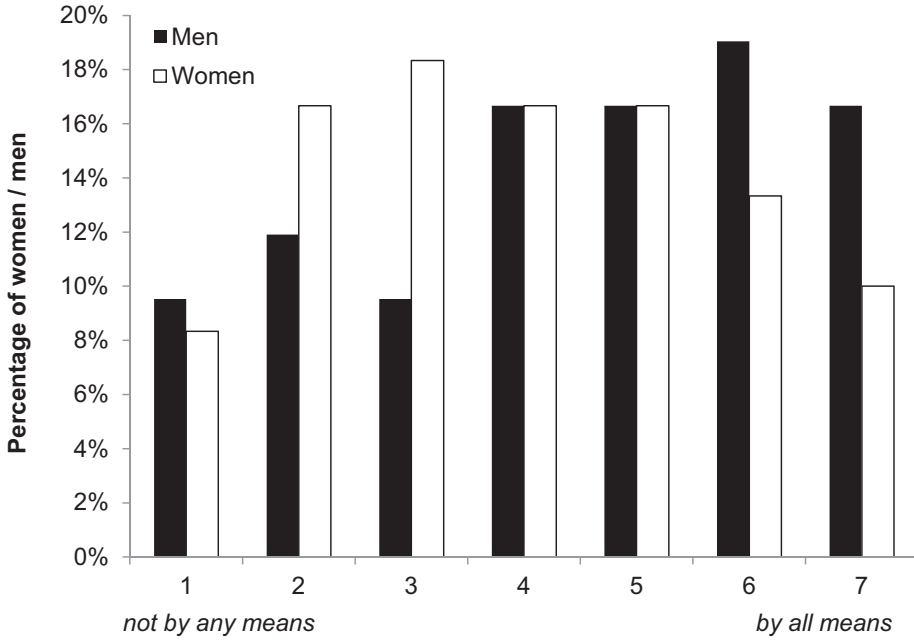


Figure 3. Study 2: Percentage of women and men (not) intending to initiate a negotiation. Would you initiate a salary negotiation in this meeting?

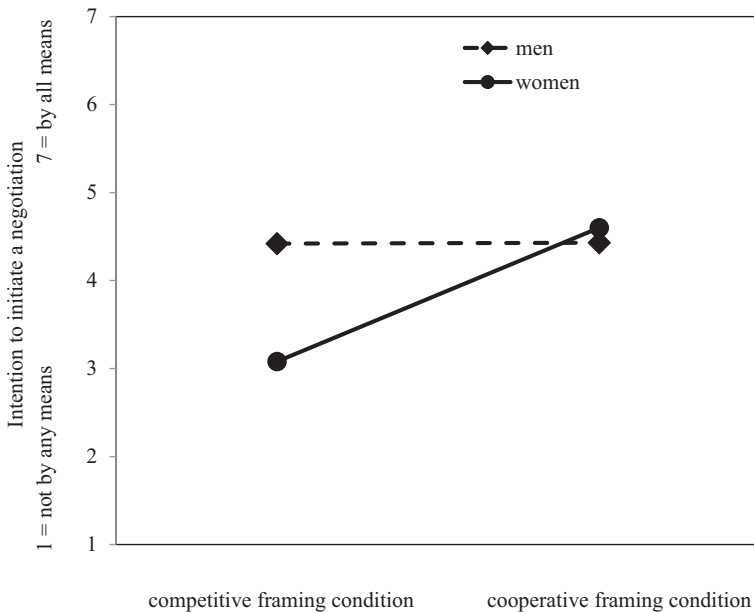


Figure 4. Study 2: Moderation effect of framing condition on the relationship between gender and intentions to initiate a negotiation.

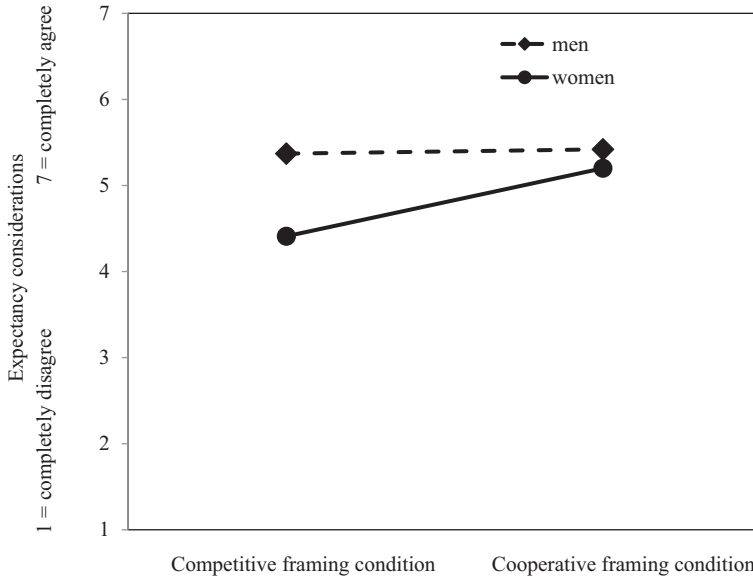


Figure 5. Study 2: Moderation effect of contextual framing condition on the relationship between gender and expectancy considerations.

mediation = .114, 95% CI = [0.011, 0.339]). Expectancy considerations mediated the gender effect on initiation intentions only in the competitive framing condition (95% CI = [-0.326, -0.049]) but not in the cooperative framing condition (95% CI = [-0.126, 0.042]).

Study 2 showed that the indirect effect of gender on initiation intentions via expectancy considerations depended on the framing of the context. The gender effect mediated via expectancy considerations was found only in the competitive framing condition but not in the cooperative framing condition (support for Hypothesis 3). Thus, negotiation situations may be framed in a way that attenuates gender differences by pronouncing aspects of the situation that are consistent with the feminine gender role. In such “femininely” framed contexts, women are not disadvantaged regarding the initiation of negotiation compared to men (and are also not advantaged compared to men).

Table 3  
Study 2: Moderated Mediation Analysis

	Expectancy		Dependent variable			
	β	p	Initiation intentions (without expectancy)		Initiation intentions (expectancy included)	
			β	p	β	p
Age	-.06	.511	-.07	.471	-.05	.579
Gender	-.31	.001	-.18	.077	-.09	.392
Expectancy					.29	.005
Framing	.27	.005	.27	.007	.19	.052
Gender × framing	.20	.042	.22	.032	.16	.108
Model summary	$R^2 = .16$		$R^2 = .12$		$R^2 = .19$	
	$F(4, 97) = 4.77, p = .001$		$F(4, 97) = 3.17, p = .017$		$F(5, 96) = 4.35, p = .001$	

Note. Impact of gender (independent variable) via expectancy considerations (mediator), moderated by framing conditions (moderator) on intentions to initiate a negotiation (dependent variable), tested in Study 2.

## General Discussion

Men seem to be more prone to negotiate compared to women. In our studies, we highlighted one psychological mechanism for this gender difference: Expectancy considerations mediated the effect of gender on the initiation of negotiations (also see Reif et al., 2019). Moreover, we showed how the gender difference can be influenced to create equal opportunities for women and men. We found that a “feminine” frame (i.e., cooperative instead of competitive) attenuated the gender difference in expectancies and the subsequent initiation of negotiation. In other words: Women and men had equal expectancies and equally intended to initiate negotiations when the negotiation context was framed in line with the feminine gender role (in the above sense). Women in comparison with men had lower expectancies and intentions to initiate negotiations when the negotiation context was framed in line with the masculine gender role.

### Theoretical Contributions

With our findings, we contribute to negotiation theory and research in the following ways: First, we offer a theoretically derived mediator (expectancy considerations), which (partly) explains gender differences in the initiation of negotiation. Building on a model of the initiation of negotiations (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014), we do not only add one further aspect to previously identified mediators, such as nervousness (Bowles, Babcock, & Lai, 2007) or recognition of opportunities (Babcock et al., 2006), but suggest a higher order category of mediators—expectancy considerations. With our focus on expectancy considerations, we also add to existing research on negotiator self-efficacy. We showed that positive assumptions about one’s negotiation ability not only increase negotiation performance as was shown by Miles and LaSalle (2008) but also increase one’s probability to initiate negotiations. Moreover, we provide a replication of Reif et al.’s (2019) work who demonstrated the mediating role of expectancy considerations across a broad range of negotiation contexts.

Second, with our focus on the initiation of negotiation, we add to existing work by Kray et al. (2002), who showed that stereotype threat mattered in “each stage of the negotiation process” (p. 398), preparation, actual negotiation, and performance assessment (also see Thompson, 2001), by affecting performance expectations. However, Kray et al. (2002) did not consider the very first phase of the negotiation process, the initiation of negotiation, which takes place even before one begins to prepare the actual negotiation. We showed that gender already influences the selection of men and women into negotiations by affecting expectancy considerations.

Third, we investigated a contextual moderator which affects the (in)consistency between social roles (in our case: the negotiator role and the gender role). Men and women equally intended to initiate negotiations when a salary negotiation was framed in a cooperative way. Again, we did not only add one further moderator to previous findings. Instead, we explain our moderator with a higher order theoretical rationale—gender role (in)consistency: A cooperatively framed salary negotiation aligns the negotiator role and the feminine gender role and makes the two roles more consistent. It is noteworthy that shifting the negotiator role toward the feminine gender role did not misalign the negotiator role with the masculine gender role in the particular context chosen for Study 2.

Fourth, by studying a moderated mediation effect, we combine research on contextual moderators and explaining mechanisms. We add to Reif et al. (2019), who descriptively compared mediation effects in feminine versus masculine contexts. We statistically tested and proved the moderated mediation effect: The mediating effect of expectancy in the gender–initiation relationship was significant when the negotiation context was framed competitively (in line with the masculine gender role) and disappeared when the negotiation context was framed cooperatively, that is, in line with the feminine gender role.

Fifth, we add to research on individual differences in negotiation, a topic that has largely been abandoned for decades (Elfenbein, 2015). Individual differences, such as gender and expectancy

considerations, are “characteristics that can differ from one person to another” (Elfenbein, 2015, p. 131). We showed that gender and expectancy considerations have an influence on the initiation of negotiation. Positive expectations are also among the strongest and most reliable predictors of negotiation performance (Elfenbein, 2015). As expectancy considerations are open to personal change, training them would benefit both initiating negotiations and negotiating effectively.

Sixth, we add to the cooperation–competition literature by studying gender effects in two different framing conditions: a cooperative versus a competitive framing condition. Our results showed that gender differences in the initiation of negotiation appeared in a competitive framing condition but disappeared in a cooperative framing condition. Indeed, in the cooperative framing condition, men and women were equally willing to initiate a negotiation. The shared responsiveness of men and women to cooperativeness fits with meta-analytical findings, which show that “men and women do not differ in their overall amounts of cooperation” (Balliet, Li, Macfarlan, & Van Vugt, 2011, p. 881). However, Balliet et al.’s (2011) meta-analysis also showed that the link between gender and cooperation depended on the social context: “Male–male interactions are more cooperative than female–female interactions (. . .), yet women cooperate more than men in mixed-sex interactions” (p. 881).

The cooperation–competition literature also hints at different motives of men versus women in cooperative contexts which might help to explain men’s and women’s equal proclivity to negotiate in the cooperative context: Women and men respond differently to the social features of cooperative contexts (Simpson & Van Vugt, 2009). Whereas men, driven by greed (Simpson & Van Vugt, 2009), might interpret a cooperative context as invitation to make the most of a negotiation, women, driven by fear (Simpson & Van Vugt, 2009), might feel less threat to their feminine gender role in a cooperative negotiation setting.

## Practical Implications

Training women to interpret negotiation situations as opportunities for open communication in order to find a mutual agreement and, thus, to systematically integrate negotiation situations into the feminine gender role could help to sustainably reduce gender differences. In this way, women are not just trained to negotiate more like men, which might imply that the feminine way of negotiating is ineffective. Instead, stressing and carving out the advantages of the feminine negotiation style might elevate collective intelligence, sustainable long-term relationships, subjective value, relational capital, and ethical behavior in negotiations (Kennedy & Kray, 2015), which, in the long run, will also positively affect economic outcomes.

## Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Future research should account for the limitations of our study by not only studying the mediation effect of expectancy in a real negotiation situation but also the moderated mediation effect, which was examined in a scenario experiment in the current study. Future research could also investigate officially documented grade changes by analyzing university registrars to operationalize initiation of negotiations. For the population we drew from, in which formal negotiation procedures are very seldom, we thought to have a better approximation to the real number of grade negotiations by asking students about their frequencies of negotiating grades.

Moreover, future research should apply multi-item measurements for expectancy, building on the measurement of expectancy in Study 2. The measurement of expectancy in Study 1 is limited because the items (although capturing core aspects of expectancy such as perceived ability or confidence) could also be interpreted in terms of accessibility of negotiation, negotiation anxiety or entitlement. We did not focus on social contexts, such as the influence of the negotiation partner’s gender on negotiation initiation, although literature about cooperation suggests possible interaction effects. Thus, future research

should consider and experimentally manipulate the negotiation partner's gender in cooperative versus competitive framing conditions, as well as repeated interactions, which have been found to influence gender differences in cooperativeness (Balliet et al., 2011). Research on cooperativeness also suggests that women's and men's motives for (not) initiating negotiations in different contexts might be different (see above), which also should be investigated in future research.

Our results methodologically imply that negotiation researchers should be aware of the wording they use in their scenarios or study descriptions (Kolb, 2012). Even nuances in the wording can create different degrees of situational ambiguity within a negotiation scenario or can act as gender triggers (Bowles, Babcock, & McGinn, 2005) that may moderate mediators unnoticed by investigators, and accordingly, can blur interpretation of the results regarding gender differences in negotiation behavior.

Our study focused on the initiation of negotiation—which distinguishes it from related work investigating the effect of stereotype threat via performance expectations on negotiation performance (Kray et al., 2002). However, by solely focusing on the initiation of negotiation, we cannot draw conclusions about the further process of the negotiation. Exley et al. (2019) showed that women self-select in those negotiations, in which they can benefit. If they are forced to always negotiate, they gain lower returns. Consequently, pushing women into negotiations could be disadvantageous for their outcomes—but not necessarily if the negotiation setting fits their gender role and increases their expectancy of negotiating successfully, as it was the case in our study. Future research should examine the consequences of manipulated or induced negotiation initiations on men's and women's negotiation outcomes.

Moderators and mediators of gender differences in negotiation initiating behaviors should be systematically combined in future research. Besides expectancy considerations, two further cognitive-motivational categories of mediators can be derived from the model of the initiation of negotiation: instrumentality considerations and estimations of valence (also see Kugler, Reif, & Brodbeck, 2019). To advance theorizing in gender and negotiation research, we suggest to examine the three classes of cognitive-motivational mediators derived from the model of the initiation of negotiation (expectancy, instrumentality, and valence; Reif & Brodbeck, 2014) in combination with the two classes of moderators derived from social role theory (situational ambiguity and role (in)consistency, Kugler et al., 2018). Using these higher order rationales to systematically examine gender differences and their underlying mechanisms in negotiation contexts might help to integrate previous research on moderators and mediators and make future gender-in-negotiation research more theoretically sound and practically useful.

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