

DO SOCIAL STEREOTYPES INTERFERE IN BUSINESS NEGOTIATIONS?

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ABSTRACT: *Does an oversimplified idea about a person interfere in the business negotiation process? In this article, we addressed that puzzling question through a t-test of N=300 Brazilian business negotiations, aiming to provide scholars with a new perspective on business negotiations. We conducted an experiment dividing ten negotiation training sessions into two groups: m1 and m2, with 150 negotiations each group, totaling 600 participants. An independent-samples T-Test was applied to the collected data. Key findings pointed out a statistical significance on the alternate hypothesis, meaning that stereotypes interfere in the business negotiation process. Finally, the implications of these findings for managerial practice are discussed.*

Keywords: Business, Negotiation, Stereotypes.

INTRODUCTION: -

Research on business negotiation activities has attracted scholars' attention as conceptual development has evolved regarding the social stereotypes, affecting somehow the business negotiations outcomes (Raiffa, 1982; Fisher Ury and Patton, 1981; Sebenius, 1992; Ury, 2015; Susskind & Field, 1996; Salacuse, 2008; Susskind & Cruikshank, 1987; Dias, 2020, 2020b, 2019).

An experiment with two sets of independent data was conducted and further analyzed. We found significance in the results regarding the null hypothesis tested. Conclusions provide managers, scholars, practitioners, professors, instructors, business negotiators, among others, with new insights into business negotiations.

According to Judd & Park (1993), A stereotype is "an individual's set of beliefs about the characteristics or attributes of a group." (p.110) Stereotypes, therefore, are related to groups. However, it is strongly related to an individual's perception and not necessarily shared by such groups. The word stereotype comes from the Greek stereos, meaning hard, and typós, meaning shape or mold. In this research, we devised an experiment involving two groups, negotiation the same Type I negotiation (Dias, 2020), i.e., two-party, one-issue role-play simulation, as illustrated in the following Figure 1:

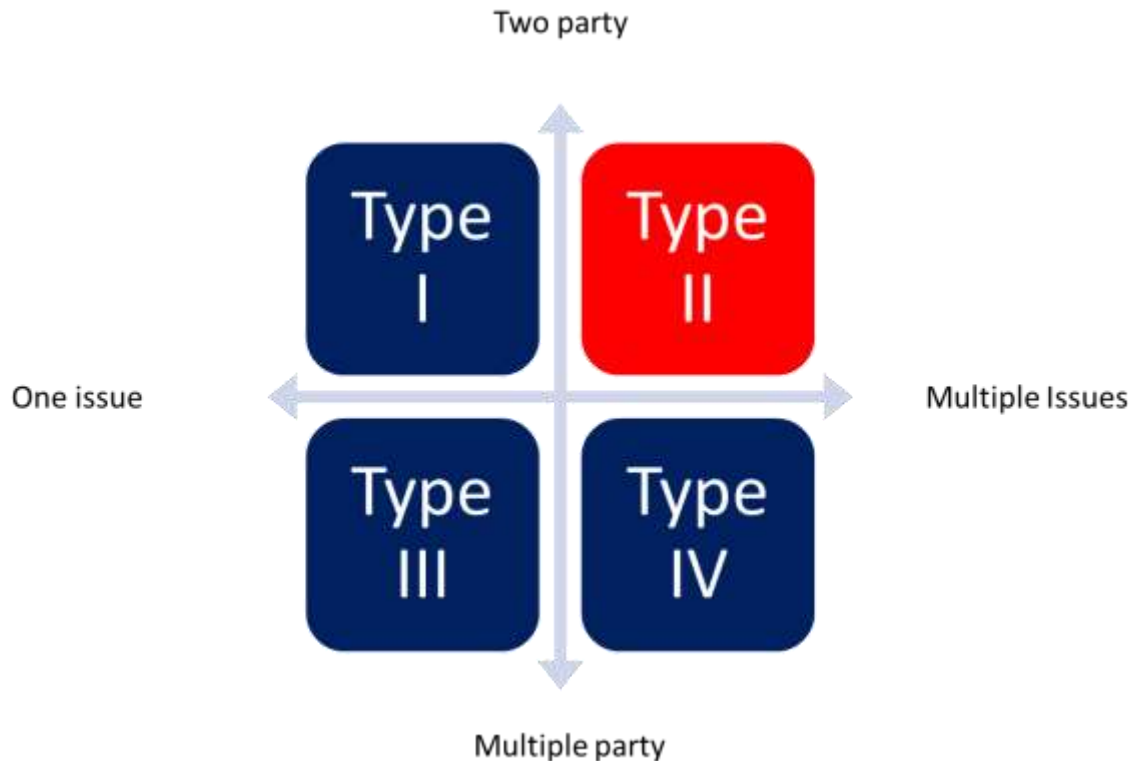


Figure 1: The Four-Type Negotiation Matrix. Source: Dias, 2020. Reprinted under permission.

In the next section, the theoretical rationale of the research is presented.

II. THEORETICAL RATIONALE ON NEGOTIATION APPROACHES

Negotiation is defined as “a process of communicating back and forth for the purpose of reaching a joint decision.” (Fisher, Ury & Patton, 1981, p. 20). Also, it is “a process of communication by which two or more persons seek to advance their individual interests through joint action.” (Salacuse, 2006, p. 7).

Observe the characteristics of the T-test equations, which are illustrated in Figure 2, where: N is the sample size, S is the variance, and \bar{x} is the sample mean, as follows:

$$t = \frac{(\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2) - (\mu_1 - \mu_2)}{S_{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}} = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{S_{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}}$$

$$S_{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2} = \sqrt{\frac{(N_1 - 1)s_1^2 + (N_2 - 1)s_2^2}{N_1 + N_2 - 2} \left[\frac{1}{N_1} + \frac{1}{N_2} \right]}$$

Figure 2: - T-test equations

The hypothesized relationships are based on the preceding theoretical rationale. A statistical hypothesis test followed an independent-samples T-test, under the null hypothesis, two investigate one hypothesis, H_1 , as follows:

H_0 : the social stereotypes do not play a significant role in business negotiations. Therefore, $H_0 = \mu_{STN} = \mu_{USTN}$, or $H_0 = \mu_{STN} - \mu_{USTN} = 0$, where: μ_{STN} is the mean Stereotypical Negotiation Approach, while μ_{USTN} is the mean Unstereotypical Negotiation.

H_1 : Unstereotypical Negotiations perform higher deal values than Stereotypical Negotiation.

Then, methods and materials, as well as the research design, are presented. Next, the managerial and conceptual implications, as well as the contribution to current knowledge on negotiation, are discussed. Finally, future research directions and potential applications are suggested.

III. METHODS AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Data were collected from a random sample of 600 MBA students, which performed $N= 300$ negotiations, from all Brazilian regions, distributed in ten different cohorts. The same two-party, one-issue, role-play simulations were applied (Type I negotiation), as follows:

Table 1
Data set: stereotypical (m_2) versus unstereotypical (m_1) negotiations

Data set	Cohort	# parties	Negotiations
m_1	1	68	34
	2	58	29
	3	48	24
	4	66	33
	5	60	30
Total m_1		300	150
m_2	6	60	30
	7	68	34
	8	58	29
	9	64	32
	10	50	25
Total m_2		300	150
Total $m_1 + m_2$		600	300

The negotiations were held from March 2018 to October 2019. Out of the 600 participants, 60 percent were male, 40 percent female, 70 percent in the middle to high-level management positions, and 20 percent

occupied low-level management positions. In this sample, 10 percent unemployed, from which 90 percent Caucasians, 60 percent married, 40 percent single or divorced; 80 percent is 25-45 years old, 12 percent above 45 years old; 35 percent speak a second language, besides Brazilian Portuguese (mostly English or Spanish).

In all negotiations, there was no significant background noise that could somehow interfere with the negotiations. They occurred in calm, comfortable, and bright places. In this experiment, both groups received different instructions:

- (i) Group m_2 — the unsterotypical group, all parties should read the negotiation case and engage in the negotiations immediately.
- (ii) Group m_1 — the stereotypical group, received additional tasks: (ii.1) all parties received stickers filled in the blank, with pen markers; (ii.2) the parties were told to write down stereotypical social adjectives (one adjective-sticker per individual); (ii.3) the stickers were scrambled; (ii.4) each student received a sticker, place in his shoulder, and turn, applied a sticker in any other participant, except the negotiation party, as depicted in the following Figure 3:



Figure 3: warm-up tasks for the stereotypical group m_1 . Source: author's picture

Observe in Figure 3 the sticker positioned in the shoulder of a participant. All parties were instructed to read in silence the sticker on the other party's shoulder, without verbalizing it during the entire negotiation process. Nevertheless, the parties should treat the other party according to the sticker in the back of the counterpart. Finally, they would read their parts and engage in the negotiation process.

Only two students did not take part in the experiment because they declared feeling uncomfortable with the exercise. In these two cases, the participants were told to be observers.

Finally, after the negotiations ended, the results should be presented to the facilitator. When asked about the sticker in their shoulders, 30 participants (5 percent) declared to know about the sticker's content of the sticker, while the absolute majority (95 percent) declared not having the slightest clue about the sticker content.

In the research design, we selected the independent-samples test to analyze the relationship between the

hypotheses, because the samples are mutually excluding, and the sample met the T-test requirements, like the descriptive, exploratory analysis illustrated in Figure 4:

Descriptives

	GROUP		Statistic	Std Dev		
VALUE DEAL	STEREOTYPICAL (STN = m ₁)	Mean	6,2247	,07712		
		95% de Intervalo de Confiança para Média	Limite inferior	6,0723		
			Limite superior	6,3771		
		5% da média aparada	6,1978			
		Mediana	6,5000			
		Variância	,892			
		Erro Padrão	,94450			
		Mínimo	4,50			
		Máximo	8,00			
		Amplitude	3,50			
		Amplitude interquartil	1,00			
		Assimetria	,293	,198		
		Curtose	-,683	,394		
		UNSTEREOTYPICAL (USTN = m ₂)	UNSTEREOTYPICAL (USTN = m ₂)	Mean	7,6673	,05020
				95% de Intervalo de Confiança para Média	7,5681	
7,7665						
5% da média aparada	7,7174					
Mediana	8,0000					
Variância	,378					
Erro Padrão	,61486					
Mínimo	5,00					
Máximo	10,00					
Amplitude	5,00					
Amplitude interquartil	,43					
Assimetria	-1,451			,198		
Curtose	6,006			,394		

Fig. 4: descriptive statistics. Source: SPSS 26.

The statistical significance attributed to this research encompassed a 99 percent confidence level. Therefore, the p-value is one percent ($p=0,01$). The negotiation process is also supported by Goffman's dramaturgical theory (1959, 1961).

Then, the data set was analyzed through SPSS 26. Initially, the variable GROUP was assigned to encompass two positions: "1", for UNSTEREOTYPICAL NEGOTIATION, and "0", for STEREOTYPICAL NEGOTIATION (independent variables). On the other hand, DEALVAL (deal value) is the dependent variable under investigation.

Regarding the deal values, we opted for presenting the results in percentages, rather than the equivalent in BRL, to eliminate the necessity of currency exchanges. The variations did not interfere in the calculations.

Finally, Group statistics were performed, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, as well as the T-test for Equality of Means. In the next section, the results are displayed and further analyzed and discussed.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Regarding the test of the hypothesis H_1 , group statistics revealed that unsterotypical negotiations performed higher mean value deals, than the stereotypical negotiations, as illustrated in the following Figure 5:

	GROUP	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Std Error Mean
DEAL	UNSTEREOTYPICAL (USTN = M2)	150	7,6673	,61486	,05020
VALUE	STEREOTYPICAL (STN = M1)	150	6,2247	,94450	,07712

Fig. 5: - Group statistics. Source: SPSS version 26.

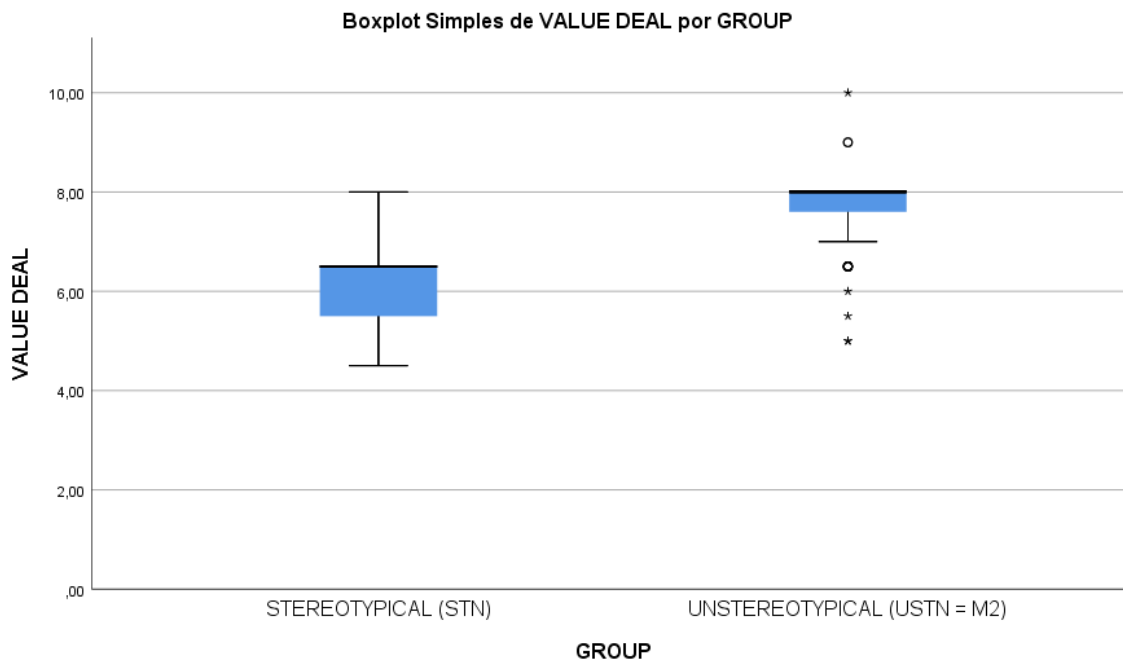


Fig. 6: Boxplot. Source: SPSS version 26

Regarding the distribution of the data set, notice the boxplot in Figure 6, and compare the medians from both groups: 50 percent of the unsterotypical results are higher than the stereotypical negotiations.

Observe in Figures 5 and 6, the higher performance of the Unsterotypical Negotiation group (m2), in comparison to the Stereotypical Negotiation group (m1). Finally, the independent samples test result is depicted in the following Figure 7, as follows:

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		Z	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	99% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
DEALVAL	Equal Variances Assumed	39,147	,000	15,678	298	,000	1,44267	,09202	1,26158	1,62376
	Equal Variances not Assumed			15,678	256,062	,000	1,44267	,09202	1,26146	1,62388

Fig. 7: - Independent Samples Test. Source: SPSS, version 26.

According to the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, as illustrated in Figure 7, observe $p < 0,05$ for DEALVAL; therefore, equal variances are not assumed.

Therefore, regarding the Deal Values from the data sample drawn (DEALVAL), the Independent T-Test evidenced that the group “Unsterotypical Negotiation” presented a superior performance in comparison to the group “Stereotypical Negotiation” ($t(256,062) = 15,678; p < 0,05$).

In these data, regarding DEALVAL, the null hypothesis H_0 is rejected at the $\alpha = 0,05$ level of significance, because the difference between the Unsterotypical Negotiation, in comparison to the Stereotypical Negotiation, is statistically significant ($p = 0,000$), i.e., less than in one hundred samples might result by chance. Therefore, we conclude that the alternate hypothesis of H_1 is statistically significant. The implications are discussed in the following section (see Figure 7).

V. DISCUSSION

Theoretical Implications

The purpose of this research was to test the hypothesized relationships between the variables regarding the stereotypical versus unsterotypical negotiations' validity, using data collected from negotiators participating in executive training sessions on MBA courses dispensed in Brazil. The parameters estimated (Deal value) is significant, and a scrutiny of the hypothesized relationships in the negotiations provided consistent support on reinforcing the necessity of avoiding any sort of prejudice or social stereotypes in a business negotiation.

Therefore, regarding the research question posed — based on the analysis from the data set studied, we conclude that cognitive schemas, or the oversimplification of thinkings and perceptions, prejudices, and social stereotypes,

interfere in the negotiation process, affecting the Deal Value (see boxplot in Figure 6).

Thus, the null hypothesis H_0 is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis H_1 is statistically significant. Analysis of these results evidenced how vital is the Unstereotyped Negotiations to business negotiations.

Implications for managerial practice

The subject under investigation has implications in many fields of managerial business negotiations in different areas, for instance (i) aerospace and civil aviation (Cruz and Dias, 2020; Dias, 2019; Dias and Lopes, 2019; Dias and Teles, 2018]; (ii) brewing industry (Dias, 2020d; Dias and Falconi, 2018) (iii) mining industry (Dias and Davila, 2018); (iv) civil works (Dias et al., 2016); (v) public transportation (Dias and Teles, 2018b); (vi) debt collection negotiations (Dias, 2019c, 2019d); (vii) vitiviniculture industry (Dias et al. 2017); streaming video (Dias and Navarro, 2018), among others.

Negotiation practitioners can benefit from the research findings in many ways. First, the alternative hypothesis is supported; therefore, stereotypes undermine the negotiation process. This implication serves as alerts to potential future business negotiations. We observed first hand how stereotypes during negotiations could be detrimental to the parties. As a remark — not investigated here, the same dynamics were applied to an Angolan group of 48 business negotiators with similar results.

Brazil is a continental country with diverse cultures. Despite Brazilians speak the same language (Brazilian Portuguese), and there are no dialects in Brazil — what facilitate the communication process to a large extent, there are subcultures from north to south Brazil, at least with four different subcultures (Volkema, 2012). We conclude that any kind of stereotypes — generally based on misconceptions on the other side of the table, should be prevented.

The final advice to business negotiators is clear: stereotypes undermine the negotiation results and should be prevented at all costs.

Study Limitations

This study is also limited to the Brazilian business negotiation scenario. Other scenarios or countries may differ in their results and are not part of this study. Government negotiations, for instance, are not the scope of the present research and should be addressed in additional studies.

Also, this research is limited to Type I negotiation (Dias, 2020), i.e., two-parties, and one issue negotiated (see Figure 1). Other types of negotiation (Types II, III, or IV) may differ in results and are not the scope of the present research.

This research is limited to situational negotiations (Dias, 2020b). In all cases, the parties did not invest time for ensured, systematic preparation. After reading their parts, the negotiators engaged in the negotiations as soon as the instructions were dispensed. According to Dias, "negotiation planning through a structured negotiation process leads to fruitful deals compared to situational approaches, i.e., negotiation engagement without ensured preparation." (2020b, p.1597). Dias has also found evidence that ensured preparation has statistical significance in both deal values and the number of options created in business negotiations. Therefore, ensured preparation is not the scope of this study.

The conclusions drawn are limited to the data set investigated, in an artificial, controlled environment, where the issues at stake are not real, but interpreted. Other groups may perform differently.

Finally, this research has the merit of successfully testing the negotiation performance from Brazilian business

negotiations regarding the influence of social stereotypes at the bargaining table. Finally, this article is suitable to scholars, business negotiators, facilitators, instructors, and other practitioners in general.

FUTURE RESEARCH

In this research, we investigated the impact of social stereotypes in Brazilian business negotiations and how the mean deal value dropped in stereotyped negotiations, regarding the unstereotyped ones.

Future research is encouraged on other types of stereotypes regarding multicultural business negotiations, that irritate most Brazilians. First, Brazil is the land of Carnival (every day), beautiful women in bikinis, jungle backdrop (as if the Amazon forest was part of the backyard), or that Brazil is exceptionally dangerous. These are some of the most common misconceptions about the stereotyped perception of the Brazilian way of life. The impact of such stereotypes and misconceptions in the deal value of business negotiations should be investigated in future research. Also, stereotypes of ethnocentrism are suggested for future appreciation regarding developed and underdeveloped countries, interfering in business negotiations, as well.

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