

Differences in Computer Mediated Versus Face to Face Negotiation

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Abstract

Ninety Cal Poly students participated in a study to test the hypothesis that e-negotiators would be more likely than face-to-face (FTF) negotiators to employ unethical or competitive negotiation styles in a subsequent negotiation after being lied to in a previous negotiation. Sixty-four Cal Poly students were randomly assigned to partake in a computer mediated or FTF negotiation over the sale of a car. After the initial negotiation was completed, buyers in each condition were led to believe they had been lied to about the accident history of the car. Participants then completed *The Incidents in Negotiation Questionnaire* by Robinson, Lewicki, and Donahue (2000) and *The Conflict Behaviors Questionnaire* (Rahim, 1983). These questionnaires were used to compare e-negotiators' view of unethical behavior and competitive negotiation styles to views of FTF negotiators. Twenty-six participants did not negotiate but completed surveys and acted as a comparison group. An independent means t test was conducted, and a significance level of $p < .05$ was used. Contrary to the hypothesis, FTF negotiators reported a higher likelihood of using competitive negotiation styles, competitive bargaining, misrepresentation, and overall unethical behavior in future negotiations.

Negotiation is a process in which two or more people make mutual decisions concerning the distribution of scarce resources (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). Information technology as a communication medium is increasing in prevalence, and thus negotiation is more often completed via technological means. This trend has undoubtedly raised theoretical and practical questions on how electronic negotiations vary from face-to-face (FTF) negotiations (Turban, Lee, King, & Chung, 2000). The most fundamental difference between these negotiations is that e-negotiators communicate electronically and the parties involved usually do not see each other (Thompson & Nadler, 2002).

A large amount of research has centered on how e-negotiation and FTF negotiation differ in regards to deception. In traditional negotiations, business associates frequently defend deceptive practices because they are accepted as standard (Schweitzer & Croson, 1999). In turn, these deceptive practices are encouraged to help increase a negotiator's power and control (Lewicki, 1983). However, deception may be even more prevalent in e-negotiations where potential consequences are removed and deception is harder to detect. Research has supported that deception is more difficult to detect in e-communication because there is a decrease in the amount of information that can be transmitted at a given point in time (Trevino, Daft, & Lengol, 1990). Similarly, FTF communication is more vulnerable to-deception detection due to nonverbal behaviors (facial expressions, eye contact, body movement), aural cues (loudness, speed, speech hesitation), and status cues (control, power). Many of these cues are lacking in e-communication, and thus there is less fear that deception will be detected (Schweitzer & Croson).

Citera, Beauregard, and Mitsuya (2005) tested the suggestion that because lying was harder to detect in e-negotiations, it would also be more prevalent. However, lying did not vary

significantly from FTF to e-negotiations in their experiment. Results suggested that e-negotiators were more likely to advocate using dishonesty in the future.

Similarly, theoretical explanations such as the burned bridge bias and squeaky wheel bias have suggested an increase in unethical behavior in computer mediated negotiation. The burned bridge bias is the tendency for e-negotiators to engage in risky interpersonal behaviors they would not engage in when interacting FTF. The squeaky wheel bias is the tendency for negotiators to adopt a harsher emotional style when interacting through a media lacking in communication cues such as email. The squeaky wheel bias emphasizes that the same individual may use a positive emotional style when interacting FTF. This bias has been supported by research showing that strangers negotiating over email are more likely to negatively confront one another and behave rudely or impulsively. Possible explanations for squeaky wheel behavior include people's tendency to pay more attention to content than etiquette in email, and the perception that the squeaky wheel strategy is effective in getting your way (Thompson & Nadler).

In addition to the squeaky wheel strategy, negotiators may employ a variety of bargaining styles including competing, collaborating, compromising, accommodating, and avoiding (Shell, 2001). In negotiations individuals often find themselves in mixed motive situations where they are motivated to cooperate and reach an agreement, but also motivated to be competitive and reach a fair agreement (Komorita & Parks, 1995). People generally view mixed-motive negotiations as competitive situations, implying that people act more competitively in negotiations (Fairfield & Allred, 2007). However, research by Andes (1992) suggested that bargaining style may vary depending on media because it will affect the content and process of negotiation as well as the relationship between negotiators. Dorado, Medina, Munduate,

Cisneros, and Euwema (2002) extended research on styles used in computer mediated negotiation and concluded that computer mediated negotiators used a higher level of avoiding, and lower forcing behavior. Morgan (1998) investigated whether the bargaining style in an initial negotiation would influence the bargaining style used in a subsequent negotiation. He concluded that a previous cooperative or competitive negotiation experience between groups did not influence a subsequent negotiation task. Clearly, research on negotiation styles seems to vary significantly with the task and aspects of the negotiation at hand.

The conclusions of past researchers and theoretical explanations suggest that e-negotiators are more likely to use unethical behavior in negotiations than FTF negotiators. However, research has failed address the impact of negotiators' deception. In particular, how will being lied to by an opponent impact future unethical or competitive behavior? The research at hand offers the hypothesis that in addition to lying, e- negotiation buyers will report a higher likelihood of using unethical tactics or competitive bargaining styles in future negotiations than FTF negotiators after being deceived.

Method

Participants

Ninety undergraduate students from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo participated in this experiment. Of the 90 involved, 64 participated in a negotiation task to fulfill an introductory psychology course requirement, and were volunteers such that this experiment was one of multiple options to fulfill that requirement. The remaining 26 participants completed two surveys and were recruited from a general education class with multiple majors.

Negotiation Task

Participants completed a negotiation task similar to the one used by Nadler, Thompson, and Morris (Murnighan, 1991). In this task both negotiators (buyer and seller) had to agree on four aspects of a used 2004 Honda Civic; warranty, financing, delivery date, and price. Each feature was worth a certain amount of points, and the negotiator with the most points at the end of the research received a free pizza. Participants were given information sheets explaining their preferences for each aspect, the blue book value of the car, and a chart displaying how many points were awarded for each feature (Appendix A). Once an agreement was reached participants completed the car contract form (Appendix B). The negotiation was timed and only lasted thirty minutes, if the contract was not completed in thirty minutes both negotiators received zero points.

Procedure

Sixty-four participants recruited from an introductory psychology course were randomly assigned to a communication mode of face to face (FTF) or e-negotiation. There were 20 participants in the e-negotiation group and 44 in the FTF group. To begin the FTF negotiation, both participants waited outside the classroom in which the negotiation was to be held. At this time they were met by the researcher who gave them an informed consent form, buyer or seller point chart (assigned at random), and written instructions clarifying the task and feature preferences. Participants then sat at desks next to each other and verbally exchanged offers until a contract was completed or time ran out.

Similar to the FTF condition, the participants in the e-negotiation condition waited outside the negotiation room until greeted by the researcher. The participant received the informed consent form, point sheet, and buyer information sheet on the negotiation task and was

instructed to read all the information. In addition to the information given to FTF negotiators, the e-negotiation information sheets stated that each participant was bargaining with a student in a similar class on the east coast, when in fact they were negotiating with the researcher. The participant was told the researcher was also linked to the messaging program in case any problems or questions arose. Once the information was read the researcher excused herself by informing the participant that she needed to be available to both participants online. The researcher also clarified that leaving the room was necessary so neither negotiator would know if their opponent contacted her. Negotiators (participant and researcher) communicated through an instant messaging program on the computer.

In both conditions, after the participants had completed the car contract or the half hour expired, the researcher interrupted the interaction and instructed participants to complete two surveys as preparation for a second negotiation. In the FTF condition, the seller was escorted outside the room to complete the surveys. At this point, in both conditions, the researcher collected the car contract and informed the buyer that other participants acting as buyers agreed on a much lower price and longer warranty due to the fact that the vehicle had been in multiple accidents. Finally, the questionnaires were collected and the participants were fully debriefed on the experiment.

Measures

The post negotiation questionnaires given included *The Incidents in Negotiation Questionnaire* by Robinson, Lewicki, and Donahue (2000), and *The Conflict Behaviors Questionnaire* (Rahim, 1983). The *Incident in Negotiation Questionnaire* was given to measure the participants' views on what tactics are appropriate and inappropriate in negotiation such as competitive bargaining, attacking opponent's network, false promises, misrepresentation, and

inappropriate information gathering (Appendix C). *The Conflict Behaviors Questionnaire* was given to measure what type of conflict behavior participants used. Each participant was rated as accommodating, avoiding, confronting, compromising, or collaborating (Appendix D). A significance level of $p < .05$ was used for all statistical tests.

Results

An independent t test using SPSS was used to explore the hypothesis that e- negotiation buyers would report a higher likelihood of using unethical tactics in future negotiations than FTF negotiators after being deceived. Table 1 depicts the differences between e-Buyers and FTF buyers in conflict behaviors. A significant difference was found between the groups in competitive conflict behavior; there were no significant differences between the groups in avoidance, accommodation, compromising, or collaborating. Table 2 illustrates differences between e-buyers and FTF buyers in unethical behaviors. Significant differences were found regarding competitive negotiation styles, competitive bargaining, misrepresentation, and overall unethical techniques. Differences were found in the opposite direction of the hypothesis, such that FTF negotiators agreed it was more appropriate to act competitively, employ competitive bargaining, use misrepresentation, and engage in unethical behavior.

No significant differences were found when comparing the control group e-buyers to control group FTF buyers. However, the relationship between these groups was similar to the differences between the experimental groups such that FTF buyers were more likely to employ competitive conflict behavior and unethical behavior than e-Buyers.

Table 1: Differences Between e-Buyers and FTF buyers in Conflict Behavior				
Conflict Behavior	Mean: Face to Face Negotiation Buyers	Mean: E Negotiation Buyers	T	P
Avoidant	2.89	2.84	.159	Not significant
Accommodating	2.92	2.63	1.2	Not significant
Competing	3.67	3.3	2.02	Significant, .05
Compromising	4.05	4.22	-.83	Not significant
Collaborating	4.27	4.42	-.78	Not significant

Table 2: Differences Between e-Buyers and FTF buyers in Unethical Behavior				
Unethical Behavior	Mean: Face to Face Negotiation Buyers	Mean: E Negotiation Buyers	T	P
Competitive Bargaining	5.89	4.84	2.63	Significant, .01
Attack Network	2.19	1.8	1.11	Not Significant
False Promise	2.95	2.19	1.91	Not Significant
Misrepresentation	3.4	2.45	2.57	Significant, .02
Inappropriate Info. Gathering	2.6	2.03	1.48	Not Significant
Overall Unethical Behavior	3.41	2.76	2.25	Significant, .03

Discussion

In general, few significant differences were found between the FTF and e negotiation groups than expected. However, the FTF group reported an increased likelihood of using competitive negotiation styles, competitive bargaining, misrepresentation, and overall unethical behavior in future negotiations. Although these results appear to be inconsistent with past literature, Hancock (2009) clarifies that technology not only facilitates lying, but paradoxically promotes honesty and self-disclosure as well. Multiple factors beyond technology itself influence whether a negotiator chooses to be dishonest or honest.

The lack of unethical/competitive behavior in e-negotiations may be explained by outside effects such as hesitancy to document unethical behavior in writing. Xiao and Houser (2009) found that economic exchange decisions were fairer when the threat of written disapproval was present. Similarly, managers are less likely to use communication technology because they have the capability of recording error (Levi & Rinzel, 1998). Clearly, the possibility of having negative information relevant to oneself, such as disapproval, mistakes, or dishonesty, documented in writing is enough to deter dishonest or unethical behavior. Participants in the FTF negotiation did not have the threat of their dishonest words being saved on a computer and used against them.

As previously mentioned, FTF communication presents more cues to aid in deception detection such as nonverbal behaviors, aural cues, and status cues (Schweitzer & Croson). However, status cues not only enable deception detection, they often allow negotiators to use physical or emotional tactics that increase their perceived power. Wolfe and McGinn (2005) found that when dyads negotiated and one perceived the other as more powerful, the agreements

were less likely to be integrative. Unlike e-negotiators, FTF negotiators had nonverbal cues available to them that may have allowed them to increase their perceived power, and possibly facilitated the use of unethical tactics.

Lastly, people are less likely to lie to someone when they care about the relationship and feel close to the person (DePaulo & Kashy, 1998). It may have been falsely assumed that the participants in this study cared about the relationship with their opponent/classmate and thus would be hesitant to lie. The class from which students were selected has over 300 students, and the likelihood of encountering your opponent again is very unlikely. This distant relationship may have minimized the differences between FTF and computer mediated groups, because neither expected to see their opponent again or cared about the relationship.

Past literature and current research findings suggest it may be of value to complete further research to explore the complex factors involved in online and FTF negotiations. Possible manipulations of the current experiment include adding a third and fourth condition. In addition to having groups one and two negotiate FTF and online respectfully, group three would involve a FTF negotiation without verbal communication. Instead, group three would pass messages on paper. This condition would allow research on both nonverbal behavior, which may aid in deception, and the role of documenting negotiation. In condition four, participants would meet before they negotiate, and then complete the negotiation electronically. This would allow personalization of the opponent, and also make possible consequences of deception more realistic. Lastly, a variation to this experiment would change the script to inform e negotiation participants that their messages will not be saved, and perform the negotiation on software that allows conversations to be deleted permanently. This may eliminate factors discussed in suggestion one.

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Appendix A

Used Car

Role of Buyer—E Negotiation

In this exercise you will be negotiating the purchase of a used car with a student who lives on the east coast. Negotiation will occur through an instant messaging program in which the messages you send are labeled Participant 0003, and the seller's messages are labeled Participant0004. If assistance is needed at any time you may message the researcher at Researcher0001.

You are a potential buyer that is interested in a 2004 Honda Civic EX Sedan with 4 doors. Your negotiating partner is a salesperson employed by Hal's Used Cars. You would really like a CD player, but know the most important quality of the car is a clean accident history. There are four issues to negotiate before buying this car: warranty, financing, delivery date, and price. You don't need to know anything about cars for this negotiation, just try and earn as many points as possible.

To assist you in your negotiation a point chart has been given to indicate the value of each factor. The number of points you will receive is in parenthesis. In addition, you have the blue book information on a similar car in excellent condition. By comparing your potential purchase to this ideal car you can determine a fair price for the vehicle. This information will allow you to reach your goal of maximizing the amount of points you earn. The negotiator who receives the most points by the end of fall quarter will receive a free pizza.

Both negotiators must reach an agreement on all four terms or zero points will be rewarded for the negotiation. One member from each pair will be given a final contract which must be completed for the agreement to be final. The negotiation will last thirty minutes, once the time has elapsed the researcher will reenter the room and give you further directions.

Buyer Point Chart

Warranty (months)	Financing	Delivery Date	Price
6 (0)	2% (1,600)	24 hours (2,400)	\$10,000 (6,000)
12 (1,000)	4% (1,200)	1 week (1,800)	\$11,000 (4,500)
18 (2,000)	6% (800)	2 weeks (1,200)	\$12,000 (3,000)
24 (3,000)	8% (400)	3 weeks (600)	\$13,000 (1,500)
30 (4,000)	10% (0)	4 weeks (0)	\$14,000 (0)

Used Car

Role of Buyer—Face to Face

In this exercise you will be negotiating the purchase of a used car. You will play the buyer, and will be negotiating with a salesperson employed by Hal's Used Cars.

You are interested in a 2004 Honda Civic EX Sedan with 4 doors. You would really like a CD player, but know the most important quality in a used car is a clean accident history. There are four issues to negotiate before buying this car: warranty, financing, delivery date, and price. You don't need to know anything about cars for this negotiation, just try and earn as many points as possible.

To assist you in your negotiation a point chart has been given to indicate the value of each factor. The number of points you will receive is in parenthesis. You may disclose as much information to the seller as you wish, but you may not let the other person see your payoff schedule. In addition, you have the blue book information on a similar car in excellent condition. By comparing your potential purchase to this ideal car you can determine a fair price for the vehicle. This information will assist you in reaching your goal of maximizing the amount of points you earn. The negotiator who receives the most points by the end of fall quarter will receive a free pizza.

Both negotiators must reach an agreement on all four terms or zero points will be rewarded for the negotiation. One member from each pair will be given a final contract which must be completed for the agreement

to be final. The negotiation will last thirty minutes, once the time has elapsed the researcher will reenter the room and give you further directions. Please refrain from discussing the negotiation once time has elapsed.

Buyer Point Chart

Warranty (months)	Financing	Delivery Date	Price
6 (0)	2% (1,600)	24 hours (2,400)	\$10,000 (6,000)
12 (1,000)	4% (1,200)	1 week (1,800)	\$11,000 (4,500)
18 (2,000)	6% (800)	2 weeks (1,200)	\$12,000 (3,000)
24 (3,000)	8% (400)	3 weeks (600)	\$13,000 (1,500)
30 (4,000)	10% (0)	4 weeks (0)	\$14,000 (0)

Used Car

Role of Seller—Face to Face

In this exercise you will be negotiating the sale of a used car. You will play the role of a used car salesperson employed by Hal's Used Cars. A buyer has approached you about a 2004 Honda Civic EX Sedan with 4 doors. You have this model in stock, but have struggled to sell it because it does not have a CD player and has 60,000 miles on the odometer. However, the car is in good shape and has never been in an accident which is in your advantage. There are four issues to negotiate before selling this car: warranty, financing, delivery date, and price. You don't need to know anything about cars for this negotiation, just try and earn as many points as possible.

To assist you in your negotiation a point chart has been given to indicate the value of each factor. The number of points you will receive is in parenthesis, do not let the other person see your payoff schedule. To ensure you sell at a price that is profitable to your company you have been given the blue book information on a car that is similar to the one you are selling. This information will assist you in reaching your goal of maximizing the amount of points you earn. The negotiator who receives the most points by the end of fall quarter will receive a free pizza.

Both negotiators must reach an agreement on all four terms or zero points will be rewarded for the negotiation. One member from each pair will be given a final contract which must be completed for the agreement to be final. The negotiation will last thirty

minutes, once the time has elapsed the researcher will reenter the room and give you further directions. Please refrain from discussing the negotiation once time has elapsed.

Seller Point Chart

Warranty (months)	Financing	Delivery Date	Price
6 (4,000)	2% (0)	24 hours (0)	\$10,000 (0)
12 (3,000)	4% (400)	1 week (600)	\$11,000 (1,500)
18 (2,000)	6% (800)	2 weeks (1,200)	\$12,000 (3,000)
24 (1,000)	8% (1,200)	3 weeks (1,800)	\$13,000 (4,500)
30 (0)	10% (1,600)	4 weeks (2,400)	\$14,000 (6,000)

Blue Book Information: *2004 Honda Civic EX Sedan 4D*

Car is equipped with: Automatic transmission, air conditioning, power steering, power windows, power door locks, cruise control, AM/FM stereo, cassette player, dual front air bags, ABS brakes, tilt wheel, alloy wheels

Mileage: 50,000

Blue Book Suggested Retail Value (Excellent Condition): \$12,655

The Kelley Blue Book Suggested Retail Value is representative of dealers' asking prices and is the starting point for negotiation between a consumer and a dealer. This Suggested Retail Value assumes that the vehicle has been fully reconditioned and has a clean title history. This value also takes into account the dealers' profit, costs for advertising, sales commissions and other costs of doing business. The final sale price will likely be less depending on the vehicle's actual condition, popularity, type of warranty offered and local market conditions.

Characteristics of excellent condition:

- Looks new, is in excellent mechanical condition and needs no reconditioning.
- Never had any paint or body work and is free of rust.
- Clean title history and will pass a smog and safety inspection.
- Engine compartment is clean, with no fluid leaks and is free of any wear or visible defects.
- Complete and verifiable service records.
- Less than 5% of all used vehicles fall into this category.

Appendix B

Used Car

Final Contract

PLEASE CIRCLE TO INDICATE THE FINAL NEGOTIATION AGREEMENT:

Warranty (months)	6	12	18	24	30
Financing	2%	4%	6%	8%	10%
Delivery Date	24 hours	1 week	2 weeks	3 weeks	4 weeks
Price	\$10,000	\$11,000	\$12,000	\$13,000	\$14,000

Signatures of Negotiators (first name only):

Buyer _____

Seller _____

Appendix C

INCIDENTS IN NEGOTIATION QUESTIONNAIRE

©Robinson, Lewicki, & Donahue, 1997

This questionnaire is part of a research study on how people react in certain business negotiations. In completing this questionnaire, **it is important that you be as open and honest as you can about what you would actually do in this situation and not what you believe you should do.** Clearly, you are being asked about tactics that are controversial: However, be assured your responses on this questionnaire are completely anonymous, and **no one** will ever know your individual responses. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to complete the survey.

You are asked to consider a list of tactics that people sometimes use during negotiations. You should consider these tactics assuming you are a _____ negotiating _____ with a stranger. During the negotiation you will determine the price, warranty, finance, and delivery date of a used 2004 Honda Civic. For each tactic, you are asked to rate how appropriate the tactic would be to use in this specific situation. Ratings are based on the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all appropriate			somewhat appropriate			very appropriate

(If you have any need to explain your rating on a tactic, please do so in the margin or at the end / back of the questionnaire.)	
	Rating
1. Promise that good things will happen to your opponent if he/she gives you what you want, even if you know that you can't (or won't) deliver these things when the other's cooperation is obtained.	
2. Intentionally misrepresent information to your opponent in order to strengthen your negotiating arguments or position.	
3. Attempt to get your opponent fired from his/her position so that a new person will take his/her place.	
4. Intentionally misrepresent the nature of negotiations to those you work for in order to protect delicate discussions that have occurred.	
5. Gain information about your opponent's negotiating position by paying your friends, associates, and contacts to get this information for you.	

6. Make an opening demand that is far greater than what you really hope to settle for.	
7. Convey a false impression that you are in absolutely no hurry to come to a negotiated agreement, thereby trying to put time pressure on your opponent to concede quickly.	
8. In return for concessions from your opponent now, offer to make future concessions which you know you will not follow through on.	
9. Threaten to make your opponent look weak or foolish in front of a boss or others to whom he/she is accountable, even if you know that you won't actually carry out the threat.	
10. Deny the validity of information which your opponent has that weakens your negotiating position, even though that information is true and valid.	
11. Intentionally misrepresent the progress of negotiations to your constituency in order to make your own position appear stronger.	
12. Talk directly to the people who your opponent reports to, or is accountable to, and tell them things that will undermine their confidence in your opponent as a negotiator	
13. Gain information about your opponent's negotiating position by cultivating his/her friendship through expensive gifts, entertaining or "personal favors."	
14. Make an opening demand so high/low that it seriously undermines your opponent's confidence in his/her ability to negotiate a satisfactory settlement.	
15. Guarantee that those you work for will uphold the settlement reached, although you know that they will likely violate the agreement later.	
16. Gain information about an opponent's negotiating position by trying to recruit or hire one of your opponent's co-workers (on the condition that the co-worker bring confidential information with him/her).	

Appendix D

SURVEY: CONFLICT RESOLUTION STYLES

Directions. Using the scale below, indicate the amount of agreement with each of the following statements about how you deal with conflict when negotiating with others.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

- _____ 1. I try to avoid stating my opinion in order not to create disagreements.
- _____ 2. When there is a disagreement, I try to satisfy the needs of the other people involved.
- _____ 3. I use my influence to get my position accepted by others.
- _____ 4. I try to find the middle course to resolve differences.
- _____ 5. I try to discuss an issue with others to find a solution acceptable to all of us.
- _____ 6. I keep my opinions to myself if they disagree with others.
- _____ 7. I usually go along with the desires of others in a conflict situation.
- _____ 8. I am usually firm about advocating my side of an issue.
- _____ 9. When I negotiate, I usually win some and lose some.
- _____ 10. I like to work with others to find solutions to a problem that satisfy everyone.
- _____ 11. I try to stay away from disagreements with others.
- _____ 12. I often go along with the recommendations of others in a conflict.
- _____ 13. I stick to my position during a conflict.
- _____ 14. I negotiate openly with others so that a compromise can be reached.
- _____ 15. To resolve a conflict, I try to blend the ideas of all of the people involved.