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Does Preference For Negotiation Style Depends on Religious Orientation?

Moonis Shakeel¹, Anshu Banwari² and Deepak Verma³

¹Associate Professor, Jaypee Business School, JIIT, Noida, India. Email: moonis.shakeel@gmail.com

^{2,3}Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Science, JIIT, Noida, India. Email: ²anshubanwari9@gmail.com, ³deepakverma711@rediffmail.com

ABSTRACT

Business and society can never be disjointed from one another, and at the centre of this relationship lies negotiation. The purpose of this research is to examine the preferable style of negotiation of different religious communities in India, and identify the major factors that may be influencing it. Data from 915 Indians was collected using a specifically designed survey questionnaire. Data from this survey was analyzed using hierarchical multiple regression method. The interaction terms were incorporated in regression model to understand the marginal effect of independent variables. The findings suggest that different religious communities have their own preference for adopting a particular negotiation style. Results predict the preferred style of negotiation based on an individual's age, education, gender and religion. This knowledge will be helpful for negotiation practitioners to devise negotiation strategies proactively.

Keywords: Negotiation style; culture; religion; hierarchical multiple regression; interaction term; India.

1. INTRODUCTION

Business and society go together and an important and interesting aspect of this relationship is negotiation. Despite the fact that most people are not professionally trained to negotiate, still they engage themselves frequently in this activity. In every business deal, negotiation is done to strike the deal. The result of negotiation can vary from monetary gain/loss or satisfaction/dissatisfaction or a combination of both. Negotiation is considered a challenging communication process that results in an agreement between parties that are involved in the activity of buying or selling of goods or services for fiscal and non-fiscal gratification.

Negotiation being a frequent activity has been widely studied by many researchers. In the context of negotiation, researchers have suggested that an individual's cultural orientation plays an important role in deciding how the information will be processed, interpreted and influence the strategies and their approach (Sheth, 1983; Tung, 1988). It is important for negotiators who work with or for people to understand the impact of culture on negotiation to achieve their objectives in various situations (Adler and Graham, 1989; Ma and Jaeger, 2005; Kim et. al., 2007). Chang (2002) stated that the importance of observing the results of cultural differences on negotiation style has gradually increased. Barbash and Taylor (1997) expressed that culture also incorporates religion apart from other components. Countries like India, where religion plays a major role in shaping an individual's behaviour and perspective, it becomes important to study the influence of religion on negotiation styles. India is secular country with many different religions being followed, and practiced. In terms of population percentage, the three religious groups considered for this study are Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.

According to 2011 census (source: Religion census, 2011), Hindu group is in majority and comprises of 79.8% of total population. The second major group is Muslims, which consists of 14.23% population. Sikh population is approximately 2% of the population. Remaining population include other religious groups like Christian, Buddhists and Jains. Other than religion, certain other demographic statistic factors like sex, age and education additionally influence the process of negotiation.

Whenever an individual is involved in process of negotiation, he behaves in a particular way and adopts a certain approach to attain the desired results. This communication approach or preferred way of behaving while negotiating can be termed as Negotiation style. Most preferred Negotiation styles used for research work are given by Thomas, K. (1976), he suggested that there are five major negotiation styles: Collaborating, Accommodating, Competing, Compromising and Avoiding style.

The research work attempts to develop the understanding the influence of certain factors such as religion, in conjunction with gender, age and level of education on an individual's negotiation style orientation. The awareness of the said factors will help in prediction of negotiation styles and will be useful in academic and corporate world.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Negotiation is defined as a process in which two or more parties make offers, counter-offers, and concessions so that they can arrive at an agreement (Phillips and Gully, 2012). Negotiation is a repetitive process of communication among two or more parties who have distinct objectives or interests in order to reach an agreement which is acceptable to the parties involved (Gulbro and Herbig, 1994; Foroughi, 1998; Fraser and Zarkada-Fraser, 2002; Manning and Robertson, 2003; Wheeler, 2004a). Hindrikis and Jonker (2012) stated that negotiation is an emotional and complex decision-making process which aims to reach an agreement to exchange goods and services.

Kenneth Thomas (1976) categorized five commonly cited orientations of Blake and Mouton (1964) Dual concern model of leadership to conflict handling. Kenneth Thomas explained that five conflict-handling modes are distributed over two dimensions: concern for self and concern for others. The Collaborating or Integrative style is high on both the dimensions i.e. concern for self and concern for others. Accommodating style individuals are high on concern for others and low on concern for self. Competing style individuals

are high on concern for self and low on concern for others. Compromising style individuals try to partially satisfy self concern as well as other's concern. The fifth style is Avoiding style which is low on both the dimensions. Ogilvie and Kidder (2008) reviewed the literature on negotiation and they found that different styles used in negotiation were mostly linked to Thomas' theory on conflict handling styles. They also stated that most of the research in the area of negotiation styles or conflict handling styles is based on the work of Blake/Mouton and Kenneth Thomas.

Yu-Te Tu (2012) stated that the results of the negotiation process can be affected by various factors like gender, culture, education, personality, experience and information of the parties involved. Culture has an effect on how negotiators think, perceive and behave while negotiating (Guo et. al., 2008; Salacuse, 2005). Barbash and Taylor (1997) stated that culture includes religion, gender, language, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.

Nussbaum (2007) and Verghese (2008) stated that religion plays an important part in many Indians' identity; it has regularly been aroused in response to personal and social conflicts in India. Negotiation Literature with respect to religion in Indian context is very limited (Croucher et. al., 2011).

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

As Indian's identify them based on their religion and religion qualities should also be enduring traits that persist while doing business. It is important for negotiators to recognize cross-religion differences, and how it can affect the style of preference by a negotiator in a business setting. For this research work, we have considered three religious groups; Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. On the basis of extensive literature review, we developed an understanding that self- religious identification, gender, level of education and age influence the preference in negotiation styles across multiple religions and therefore formulated following research questions:

RQ1: What is the preferred negotiation style by Religion (Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs) in India?

RQ2: What is the influence of Individual's age, gender, and level of education on his/her negotiation style preference?

In order to get answers to our research questions, following hypothesis were framed:

HA1: There is significant difference in preference of Negotiation styles based on religion.

HA2: There is significant predictive influence of difference in Age on preference of Negotiation styles.

HA3: There is significant predictive influence of Gender on preference of Negotiation styles.

HA4: There is significant predictive influence of difference in education on preference of Negotiation style.

4. DATA AND ECONOMETRIC MODEL

A. Data

Based on the characteristics, which were identified through extensive literature review for each negotiation style, an attitude scale was developed in the form of a questionnaire to capture the behaviour of the people.

Seven point likert scale (1 indicates Extremely Unlikely - to 7 indicates Extremely Likely) was used to capture the responses. The scale consisted of two sections. First section was demographics. To develop the second section of the attitude scale, existing and widely used negotiation style (conflict styles) measuring instruments were reviewed. Thomas Kilmann (1974) Conflict Management of Differences (MODE) survey, Ross DeWine (1988) Conflict Management Message Style (CMMS), Putnam – Wilson (1982) Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument (OCCI), Rahim (1983) Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory - II (ROCI-II), Udai Pareek (1997) Opinion survey of Organization conflicts (OSOC) are some of the famous scales and are mainly used in organizational setting. Since these scales were designed to be used in an organizational setting; therefore, we realized that a modified version of these scales should be developed to capture the negotiation styles in an informal day to day trade setting. Based on the existing scales a list of forty-one statements was generated which were found appropriate to capture the specific negotiation styles. The developed scale was then tested for its content validity. A panel of thirty subject matter experts was formed to provide expert opinion on this questionnaire. The panel constituted of twenty negotiation practitioners having more than fifteen years of experience and ten experts from academic field. Panel responses were analyzed and only those questions were considered for scale whose acceptance was above sixty percent. Finally the scale was developed with thirty questions, six questions for each style.

In the next step the reliability of the attitude scale was checked. For this purpose, a pilot test was conducted on two hundred participants located at Delhi/NCR (National capital Region). Once the responses were received, Cronbach's Alpha was estimated for the scale, which came out to be 0.84. A high reliability score suggest that the scale is good for the purpose.

After checking for the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire, extensive data was collected from Delhi and National Capital Region of India. National Capital Region (NCR) geographically consists of New Delhi and certain districts of neighboring states of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR) being the capital of the country and one of the biggest corporate hubs, people from all over India come for job and business opportunities. People deal in different types of transactions from small monetary to large value transactions and practice negotiation for all of them. Thus Delhi/NCR becomes a unique and ideal location for studying negotiation styles. To control the response biasness, questionnaire was carefully designed and avoided any leading questions. Also it was optional for respondents to mention their names and few questions were reverse coded as well. Simple random sampling technique was employed to collect the responses.

For data collection twelve hundred questionnaires were distributed, one thousand and sixty responses were received, and nine hundred and fifteen were complete. Out of the considered nine hundred and fifteen complete responses, Hindus were four hundred and eighteen; Muslims were two hundred and fourteen and Sikhs two hundred and twenty three. Table 1 consists of breakup of respondents on the basis of demographic factors and Table 2 provides their descriptive statistics.

Table 1
Breakup of Respondents

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Hindu</i>	<i>Muslim</i>	<i>Sikh</i>
<i>Sex</i>			
Male	245	167	144
Female	173	107	79

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<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Hindu</i>	<i>Muslim</i>	<i>Sikh</i>
<i>Highest education achieved</i>			
Undergraduate (Level 1)	106	39	54
Graduate (Level 2)	101	151	117
Postgraduate (Level 3)	211	84	52
<i>Age Group</i>			
Age 1 (18-24)	187	70	68
Age 2 (25-34)	78	131	63
Age 3 (35-44)	101	33	42
Age 4 (45 & above)	52	40	50

Table 2
Descriptive by Religion, Age, Gender and Education

<i>Negotiation Style</i>	<i>Avoiding</i>	<i>Competing</i>	<i>Collaborating</i>	<i>Accommodating</i>	<i>Compromising</i>
Hindu N	418	418	418	418	418
Hindu Mean	3.85	4.83	5.7	3.61	4.19
Hindu Std. Deviation	0.75	0.79	0.72	0.9	1.47
Muslim N	274	274	274	274	274
Muslim Mean	2.96	5.37	4.97	2.47	5.92
Muslim Std. Deviation	0.76	0.58	0.46	0.77	0.57
Sikh N	223	223	223	223	223
Sikh Mean	4.45	3.67	3.45	4.91	6.17
Sikh Std. Deviation	0.6	0.78	0.88	0.64	0.85
Age1 N	325	325	325	325	325
Age1 Mean	4	4.7	5.1	3.9	5.45
Age1 Std. Deviation	0.84	0.99	1.1	1.1	1.15
Age2 N	272	272	272	272	272
Age2 Mean	3.5	4.69	4.71	3.21	5.43
Age2 Std. Deviation	0.91	0.971	1.07	1.33	1.26
Age3 N	176	176	176	176	176
Age3_Mean	3.5	4.84	5.1	3.44	4.54
Age3 Std. Deviation	0.98	0.89	1.17	1.22	1.73
Age4 N	142	142	142	142	142
Age4 Mean	3.89	4.72	4.9	3.792	4.99
Age4 Std. Deviation	0.77	1.05	1.27	0.93	1.77
Male N	556	556	556	556	556
Male Mean	3.462	4.935	4.894	3.76	5.418
Male Std. Deviation	0.9232	0.9941	1.1669	1.1816	1.3602
Female N	359	359	359	359	359
Female Mean	4.15	4.36	5	3.32	4.85
Female Std. Deviation	0.72	0.82	1.1	1.19	1.53

<i>Negotiation Style</i>	<i>Avoiding</i>	<i>Competing</i>	<i>Collaborating</i>	<i>Accommodating</i>	<i>Compromising</i>
UG N	199	199	199	199	199
UG Mean	4.116	4.628	4.938	4.013	5.678
UG Std. Deviation	0.79	0.99	1.18	1.14	1.08
G N	369	369	369	369	369
G Mean	3.7	4.57	4.66	3.56	5.51
G Std. Deviation	0.94	0.98	1.15	1.38	1.35
PG N	347	347	347	347	347
PG Mean	3.54	4.91	5.23	3.37	4.58
PG Std. Deviation	0.89	0.91	1.02	0.95	1.55

B. Estimated Econometric Model

To test research questions RQ₁ and RQ₂, five multiple regression models for each negotiation style (Avoiding, Competing, Collaborating, Accommodating, Compromising) were made. These models are:

$$Y (\text{negotiation style}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Age1} + \beta_2 \text{Age3} + \beta_3 \text{Age4} \quad \text{Model1}$$

$$Y (\text{negotiation style}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Age1} + \beta_2 \text{Age3} + \beta_3 \text{Age4} + \beta_4 \text{Female} \quad \text{Model2}$$

$$Y (\text{negotiation style}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Age1} + \beta_2 \text{Age3} + \beta_3 \text{Age4} + \beta_4 \text{Female} + \beta_5 \text{UG} + \beta_6 \text{G} \quad \text{Model3}$$

$$Y (\text{negotiation style}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Age1} + \beta_2 \text{Age3} + \beta_3 \text{Age4} + \beta_4 \text{Female} + \beta_5 \text{UG} + \beta_6 \text{G} + \beta_7 \text{Muslim} + \beta_8 \text{Sikh} \quad \text{Model4}$$

$$Y (\text{negotiation style}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Age1} + \beta_2 \text{Age3} + \beta_3 \text{Age4} + \beta_4 \text{Female} + \beta_5 \text{UG} + \beta_6 \text{G} + \beta_7 \text{Muslim} + \beta_8 \text{Sikh} + \beta_9 \text{Age1}^* \text{Muslim} + \beta_{10} \text{Age3}^* \text{Muslim} + \beta_{11} \text{Age4}^* \text{Muslim} + \beta_{12} \text{Age1}^* \text{Sikh} + \beta_{13} \text{Age3}^* \text{Sikh} + \beta_{14} \text{Age4}^* \text{Sikh} + \beta_{15} \text{Female}^* \text{Muslim} + \beta_{16} \text{Female}^* \text{Sikh} + \beta_{17} \text{UG}^* \text{Muslim} + \beta_{18} \text{G}^* \text{Muslim} + \beta_{19} \text{UG}^* \text{Sikh} + \beta_{20} \text{G}^* \text{Sikh} \quad \text{Model5}$$

In the hierarchical regression approach, the independent variables are entered into the model one by one rather than all at once. One has to determine the set of variables they would like to keep for the analysis. This is usually done by keeping an eye on the amount of predictability/explanation that is assessed by the change in R squared and adjusted R squared values—with each new block of variables added to the previous model in forming a new (expanded) model. In the above model, all the variables are categorical variables therefore appropriate dummy coding is done for the respective variables. The coding is done as, for Male Gender = 1; for Female Gender = 2, Age: 18-24(yrs) = 1, 25-34(yrs) = 2, 35-44(yrs) = 3, 45-above(yrs) = 4; Education: Undergraduate = 1, Graduate = 2, Postgraduate = 3; Religion: Hindu = 1, Muslim = 2, Sikh = 3, Others = 4. The dummy variables were then converted into indicator variables to be used in the model for estimation. For a dummy variable with k levels there will be k-1 indicator variables. The next was to determine the base group against which all the comparisons were to be made. The identified base group in the regression analysis was Postgraduate male Hindu in the age bracket of twenty five to thirty four years. The dependent variables were the five negotiation styles. In the questionnaire, there were six statements for each of the styles. The responses of the subjects for these statements were averaged, and the value was used as the dependent variable.

In hierarchical regression approach, first, only the age variables were entered in block 1 to get model 1. Then the model was augmented by other variables such as gender added in block 2 to get model 2, education was entered in block 3 to get model 3, religion was entered in block 4 to get model 4 and the interaction terms were added in block 5 to get model 5. Based on the regression output, the model with the highest explanatory power was selected as suggested by the value of the adjusted R square. Thus, for all the five negotiation styles, the model 5 containing all the variables developed above was retained (see Table 3 - only the selected model 5 are shown in the Table 3). However, two things need to be kept in mind regarding the output of the regression models shown in the Table 3. First, for each of the five negotiation styles, some individual variables are not significant, based on the *p*-value of the *t* statistic, but are jointly significant based on the *p*-value of the F statistic. Hence, based on the *p*-value of the F statistic and the value of the adjusted R square all the variables were retained in the model for analysis.

Table 3
Models of Negotiation style

	<i>Avoiding</i>	<i>Compromising</i>	<i>Competing</i>	<i>Collaborating</i>	<i>Accommodating</i>
(Constant)	3.235 ^{***}	4.228 ^{***}	5.209 ^{***}	5.508 ^{***}	3.705 ^{***}
Age1	0.287 ^{**}	0.821 ^{***}	-0.146	-0.033	0.149
Age3	-0.103	-0.462 [*]	0.155	0.474 ^{***}	-0.426 ^{***}
Age4	0.382 ^{***}	-0.826 ^{***}	0.179	0.703 ^{***}	-0.027
Female	0.668 ^{***}	-0.559 ^{***}	-0.639 ^{***}	-0.18 [*]	-0.425 ^{***}
UG	0.517 ^{***}	0.372 [*]	-0.26 [*]	0.251 [*]	0.323 [*]
G	0.248 ^{**}	-0.196	-0.167 [*]	0.081	0.162
Muslim	-1.101 ^{***}	1.745 ^{***}	0.431 ^{**}	-0.905 ^{***}	-1.781 ^{***}
Sikh	0.809 ^{***}	1.449 ^{***}	-1.506 ^{***}	-1.622 ^{***}	0.927 ^{***}
Age1Muslim	0.572 ^{***}	-0.992 ^{***}	-0.054	0.58 [*]	1.139 ^{***}
Age3Muslim	-0.114	0.437	0.003	-0.731 ^{***}	0.388 [*]
Age4Muslim	0.375 [*]	0.771 [*]	-0.096	-0.492 [*]	1.111 ^{***}
Age1Sikh	-0.524 [*]	-1.312 ^{***}	0.232	0.419	-0.863 ^{***}
Age3Sikh	0.063	0.607 [*]	0.25	-0.476 [*]	0.689 ^{***}
Age4Sikh	-0.29	1.178 ^{***}	-0.028	-0.685 ^{***}	-0.087
FemaleMuslim	0.475 ^{***}	0.567 [*]	0.024	0.098	0.051
FemaleSikh	0.123	0.503 [*]	0.021	0.138	0.498 ^{***}
UGMuslim	-0.482 [*]	0.022	0.533 [*]	-0.397 [*]	-1.005 ^{***}
GMuslim	-0.117	0.101	0.084	0.429 [*]	0.407 [*]
UGSikh	0.076	0.61	0.522 [*]	-1.065 ^{***}	0.777 [*]
GSikh	-0.166	0.802 ^{***}	0.13	-0.74 ^{***}	0.187
F	81.961 ^{***}	59.224 ^{***}	57.638 ^{***}	91.074 ^{***}	88.682 ^{***}
R 2	0.647	0.57	0.563	0.671	0.665
adjR 2	0.639	0.56	0.553	0.663	0.657

Note: * *p* < .05, ** *p* < .001, *** *p* < .0005.

5. INTERPRETATION OF ESTIMATED MODEL

A. Findings Based on Religion

Coefficients for Muslim religion (Accommodating (-1.781^{***}), Compromising (1.745^{***}), Avoiding (-1.101^{***}), Collaborating (-.905^{***}), Competing (.431^{**})) indicates that Muslim religion significantly predicts all negotiation style. Thus, individuals belonging to Muslim community are more inclined to prefer Compromising and Competing style and less inclined to prefer other styles as compared to Hindu community.

Similarly, Coefficients for Sikh religion (Collaborating (-1.622^{***}), Competing (-1.506^{***}), Compromising (1.449^{***}), Accommodating (.927^{***}), Avoiding (.809^{***})) indicates that Sikh religion significantly predicts all negotiation style. Thus, Sikh community have more tendencies to prefer Compromising, Accommodating and Avoiding style, and less inclined to prefer other negotiation styles than Hindu community.

B. Findings based on Demographic Variables

Coefficients for Age1 (Compromising (.821^{***}) and Avoiding ($b = .287^{**}$)) indicates that Age1 significantly predicts Compromising and Avoiding style. Therefore, individuals within age group eighteen to twenty four are more inclined to exhibit Compromising and Avoiding style as compared to people within age group of twenty five to thirty four. Coefficients for Age3 (Collaborating (.474^{***}), Compromising ($b = .462^*$), Accommodating (-.426^{***})) significantly predicts Collaborating, Compromising and Accommodating styles. Therefore, an individual within age group 35 to 44 are more inclined to exhibit Collaborating style and less inclined to exhibit Compromising and Accommodating styles as compared to people within age group of 25 to 34. Coefficients for Age4 (Avoiding 0.382^{***}), Compromising (-.826^{***}) and Collaborating (.703^{***}) significantly predicts Avoiding, Compromising and Collaborating styles. Therefore, an individual within age 45 and above are more inclined to exhibit Collaborating and Avoiding style and less inclined to exhibit Compromising style as compared to people within age group of 25 to 34. So we accept alternate hypothesis HA2 for Avoiding, Compromising and Collaborating negotiation styles.

Therefore, we can say that as age increases the tendency to exhibit Compromising style decreases and tendency to exhibit Collaborating style increases. Age has no effect on Competing style. For Avoiding style, individuals belonging to age 18 to 34 are high on Avoiding style, then their inclination for this style decreases and again after the age of 45, their inclination to exhibit this style increases. For Accommodating style, Individuals belonging to age group 35 to 44 are lower on Accommodating style as compared to age group 35 to 44.

Coefficients for female Gender (Avoiding (.668^{***}), Compromising (-.559^{***}), Competing (-.639^{***}), Collaborating (-.180^{*}), Accommodating (-.425^{***})) significantly predicts all negotiation styles. Therefore, we can say that females are more inclined to prefer Avoiding negotiation style than males and less inclined to prefer other negotiation styles than males. Males are more inclined to prefer Competing style followed by Compromising and then Collaborating style as compared to females when negotiating.

Coefficients for Undergraduate qualification (Avoiding (.517^{***}), Compromising (.372^{*}), Accommodating (.323^{*}), Competing (-.260^{*}) and Collaborating (.251^{*})) significantly predicts all negotiation styles. Therefore, we can say that Undergraduates are less inclined to prefer Competing negotiation styles and more inclined to prefer other styles as compared to Postgraduates. Coefficients for Graduate qualification Avoiding (.248^{**}), Competing (-.167^{*}) significantly predicts Avoiding and Competing negotiation styles. Therefore we can

say that Graduates are less inclined to prefer Competing negotiation styles and more inclined to prefer Avoiding styles as compared to Postgraduates. For Collaborating and Accommodating style individuals with Undergraduate qualification are higher on these styles as compared to Postgraduates.

Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4 and Figure 5 depicts the influence of level of education on each negotiation style as a function of gender and religion. In order to understand the effect of level of education, gender and religion on the likelihood of adopting a certain negotiation style as compared to base group of Hindu males belonging to age group twenty five to thirty four with post graduation qualification, zeros and ones are inserted at the appropriate places in the estimated regression equation. For example, for Muslim male UG one is inserted for variables Muslim, Male and Undergraduate in avoiding style regression model 5 and for rest of the terms zeros are inserted i.e. $3.235 - 1.101 + .517 - 0.482 = 2.169$.

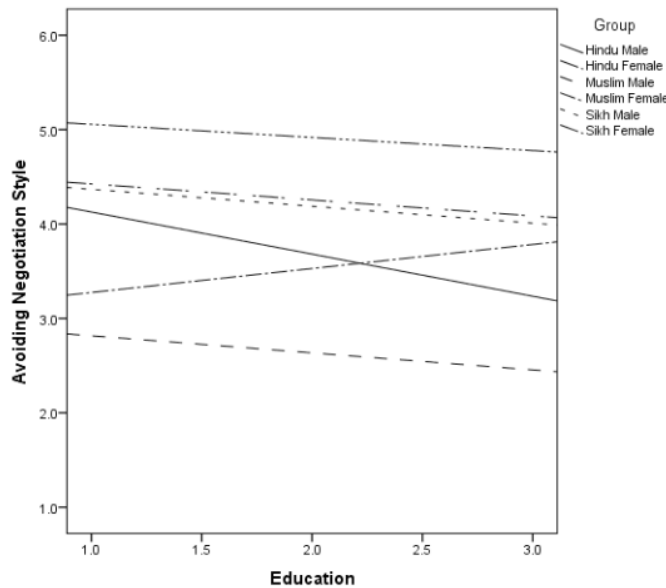


Figure 1: Effect of Level of Education on Avoiding Style as a function of Gender and Religion

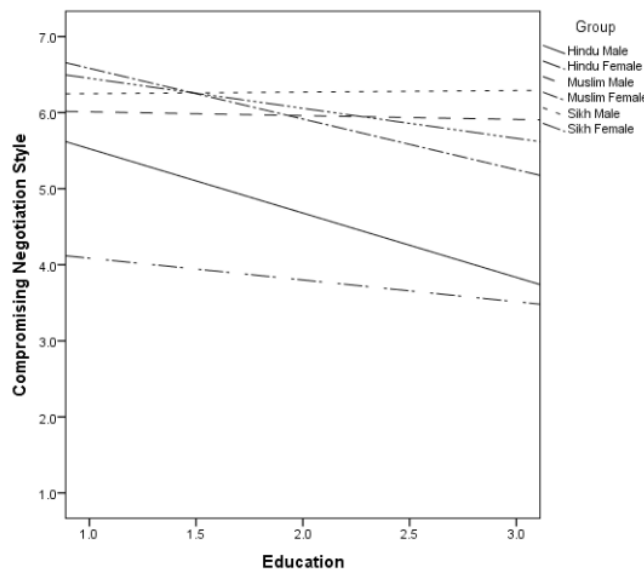


Figure 2: Effect of Level of Education on Compromising Style as a function of Gender and Religion

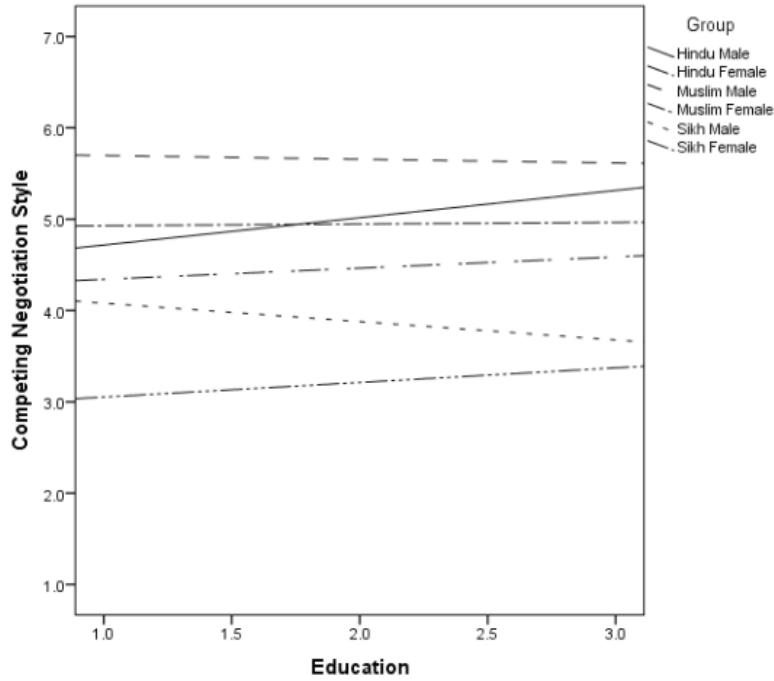


Figure 3: Effect of Level of Education on Competing Style as a function of Gender and Religion

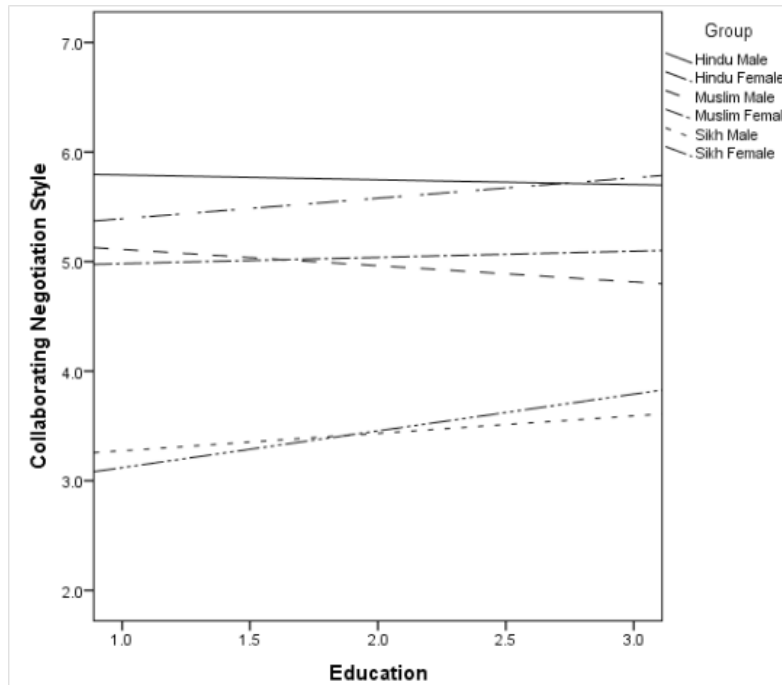


Figure 4: Effect of Level of Education on Collaborating Style as a function of Gender and Religion

At all levels of education, male Sikhs are indifferent between adopting and not adopting the Avoiding style for negotiation, as the value hovers around four on the Likert scale. On the other hand, male Hindus are unlikely, while male Muslims are very unlikely to adopt this style for negotiation. Similarly, at all levels

of education, female Muslims are moderately unlikely for adopting Avoiding negotiation style, while both female Hindus and Sikhs are very likely of adopting Avoiding style in their negotiation.

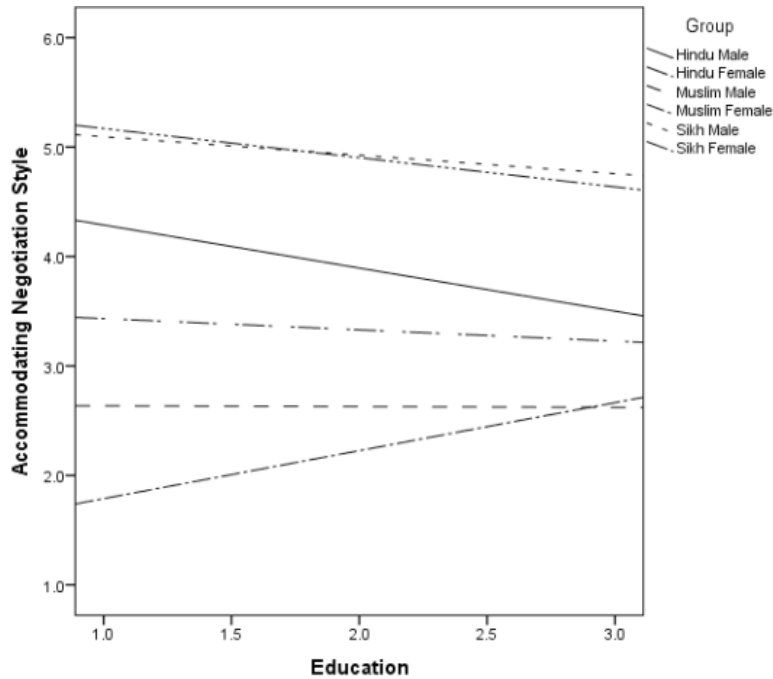


Figure 5: Effect of Level of Education on Accommodating Style as a function of Gender and Religion

Both Muslim and Sikh males are very likely of adopting Compromising style in their negotiation, while Hindu males are close to indifferent in adopting this negotiation style. Like Muslim and Sikh males, Muslims and Sikh females are also very likely of adopting Compromising style for negotiation. Hindu females, just like Hindu males, are just about indifferent between adopting and not adopting this style while negotiating.

Muslim males and females, both are very likely to adopt Competing negotiation style at all levels of education. Hindu males are likely to adopt this negotiation style, while Hindu females are the borderline of just likely to adopt this negotiation style as per the rating value on the likert scale, at all levels of education. On the other hand, Sikh males are indifferent between adopting and not adopting this style, while females are just about unlikely to adopt this style.

Irrespective of the level of education, both males and females among Hindus are very likely (rating score of five) to adopt Collaborating style for negotiation. Contrary to this, Sikh males and females lie between (rating score of three) and indifferent (rating score of four) of adopting this style for negotiation. However, Muslim males and females, at all levels of education, lie between a rating of four and five on the likert scale, that is, between being indifferent and likely of adopting Collaborating style.

Accommodating style is the least favourite among Muslim males and females at all levels of education. They are certain about not adopting this style while negotiating. Hindu males and females are just about indifferent at adopting Accommodating style. Sikhs males and females are quite likely to adopt this negotiation style.

Figure 6, Figure 7, Figure 8, Figure 9 and Figure 10 depicts the influence of age on negotiation style as a function of gender and religion. The preference rating score of the individuals for the various negotiation styles, given their age category, gender and religion as compared to base group of Hindu males belonging to age group twenty five to thirty four with post graduation qualification is calculated by inserting zeros and ones at the appropriate places in the estimated regression equation.

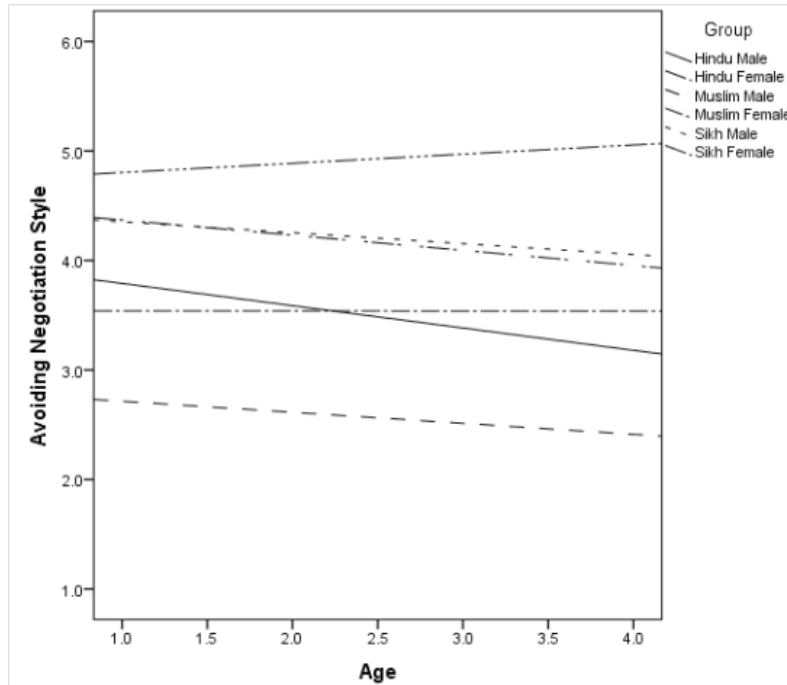


Figure 6: Effect of Age on Avoiding Style as a function of Gender and Religion

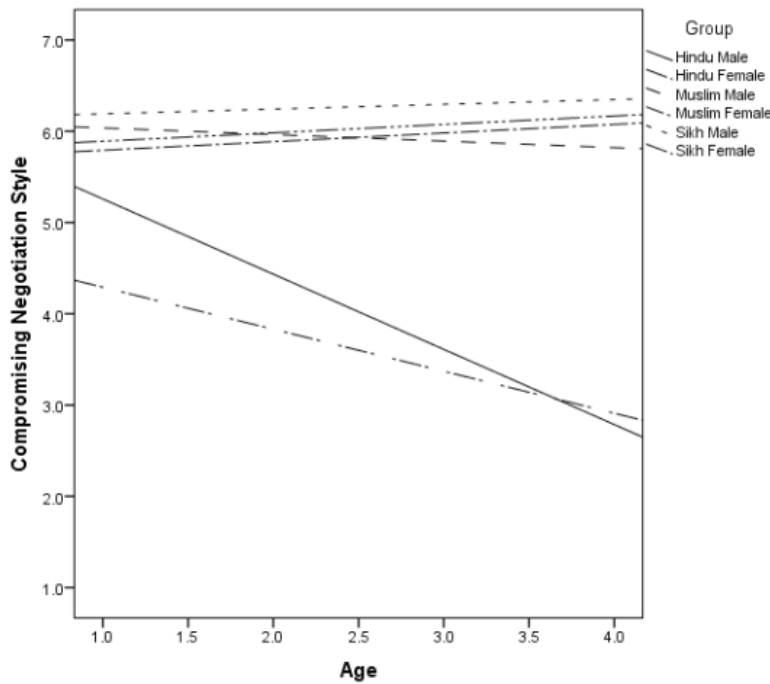


Figure 7: Effect of Age on Compromising Style as a function of Gender and Religion

Does Preference For Negotiation Style Depends on Religious Orientation?

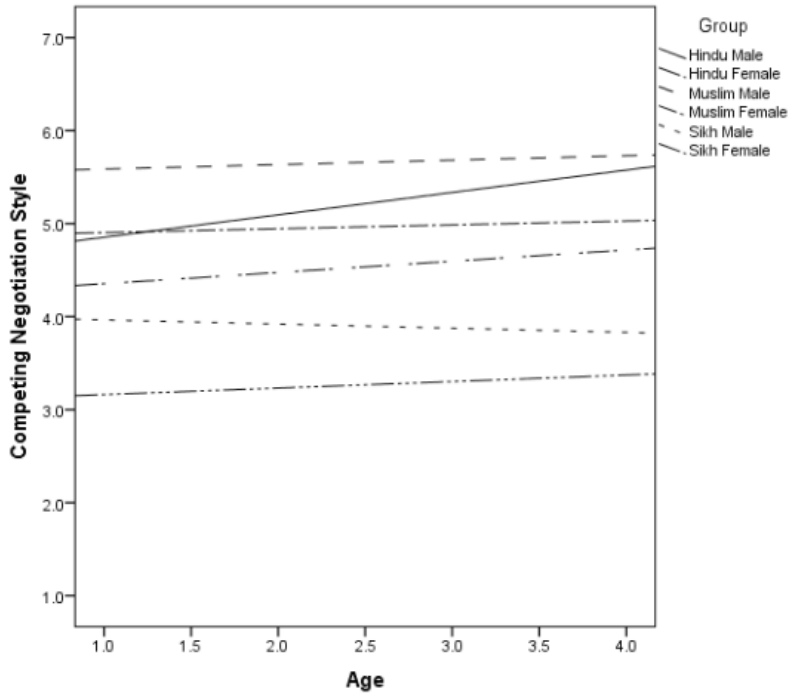


Figure 8: Effect of Age on Competing Style as a function of Gender and Religion

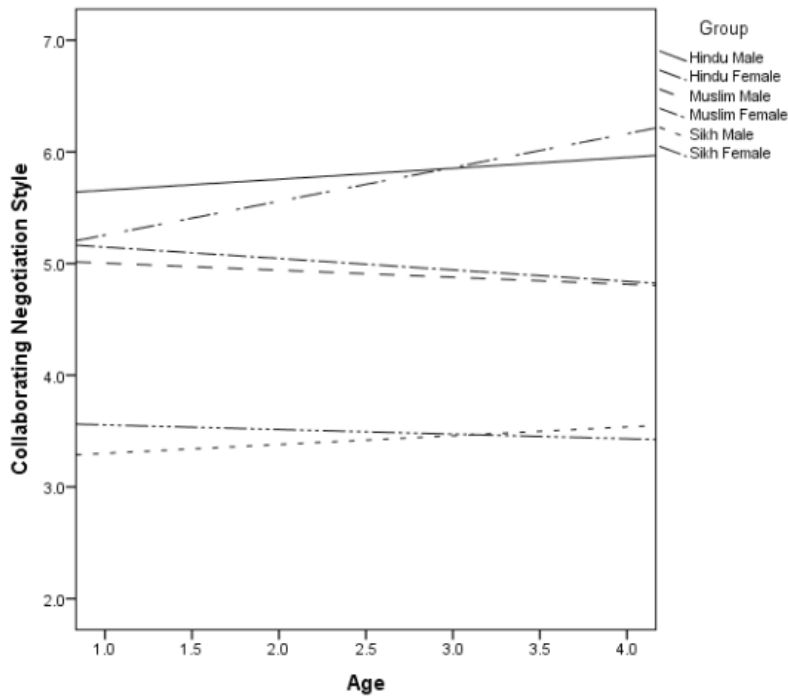


Figure 9: Effect of Age on Collaborating Style as a function of Gender and Religion

Overall, the Muslim male is reluctant to use Avoiding style in negotiation at all levels of age. However, to be precise, male Muslims in the age category of eighteen to twenty-five years and forty-five years and above are unlikely to adopt this style, while female Muslims in the age group of twenty-five to thirty-four and thirty-five to forty-four years of age are very unlikely to adopt this negotiation style. Hindu males are

hovering between unlikely to being indifferent, while Sikh males are indifferent to adopting the Avoiding style. Muslim females in the age bracket of eighteen to twenty-five years and forty-five years and above are neutral towards this style, while the Muslim females in the age group of twenty-five to thirty-four and thirty-five to forty-four years are unlikely to adopt this style. Hindu females, at all age groups, are neutral towards this style, while Sikh females are very likely to adopt the Avoiding style at all age levels.

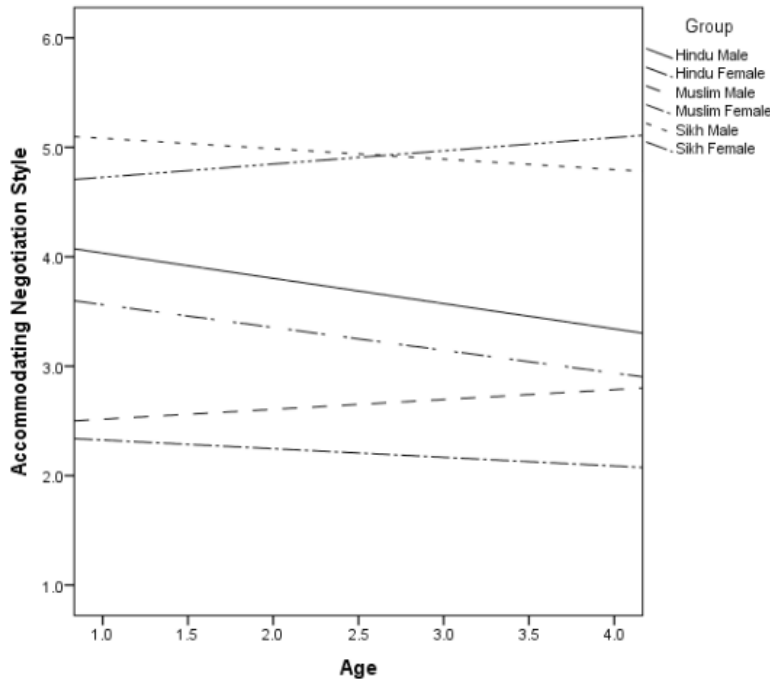


Figure 10: Effect of Age on Accommodating Style as a function of Gender and Religion

Compromising style of negotiation seems to be the favourite of the minority community (Muslims and Sikhs) males in India, as at all age groups they are very likely to adopt it in their negotiation. The majority Hindu community males have varied preference for this style. Males in the age group of eighteen to twenty-five years are very-likely of adopting this style; those in the age group of twenty-five to thirty-four and thirty-five to forty-four years are neutral and forty-five years and above are unlikely to adopt this style. The behaviour of females of both the minority communities (Muslims and Sikhs) is similar to their male counterparts. They are very likely to adopt this style at all age categories.

If one looks through the coefficients of the Competing style regression equation it is strikingly clear that Sikhs, whether male or female, at all age groups are just around being indifferent in adopting this style of negotiation. On the other hand, Hindus and Muslims, whether male or female, at all age groups are likely to very likely of adopting this negotiation style.

Sikhs again are somewhat indifferent in adopting Collaborating style of negotiation, while Hindus are likely to very likely to adopt such a style. Muslims, on the other hand, lie between being neutral to likely of adopting this style.

Indian Muslims, irrespective of their gender and age are very decisive in not adopting Accommodating negotiation style. Sikhs lie between being indifferent to likely of adopting it, while Hindus lie between indifferent to being unlikely of adopting such a style.

6. DISCUSSION

India being a traditional country, people here not only give lot of importance to religion but also are emotionally connected to their religions. In their entire lifespan, people in India associated with each religion try to follow its preaching's, beliefs and practices with best of their efforts. Thus religion has a key impact on the overall behaviour of the people. The three Indian religious communities considered for the study are Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Apparently many times these communities are at conflict with one another. It is therefore interesting to know the inclination of people for a negotiation style in conflict situations. This research work was an attempt to understand people's preferred negotiation styles based on their religious identification and demographic factors.

Based on the findings we suggest that Muslims irrespective of their gender, age and level of education are inclined towards adopting a Compromising style of negotiation. Oetzel (2006) have also agreed that compromising style is most acceptable styles among Muslims. About 40% of the Muslims living in cities belong to poor class and this in turn affects their schooling and thus less job options (Source: *The Economist*, 2006). So there is a possibility that they understand that they are not financially strong and regular inflow of money is must for them to make their living, thus may become ready to compromise to get whatever business advantage they can get. Negotiation using a Compromising style involves one or both negotiators to settle for less than what they want. This style is used when one has no option but to trust the other party. The flipside of adopting this style is that if one starts giving concessions with no strong rationale but with intention to close the deal then the opposite party may dominate and bargain further to get more concessions.

On the other hand, Hindus, the majority community of India, irrespective of their gender, age and level of education, prefer Collaborating style of negotiation. Hindus have a tendency of seeking a solution that involves and pleases everyone (Moran & Stripp, 1991). Such type of negotiators usually exhibit assertiveness and cooperation while negotiating.

Sikhs, the other minority community of India have shown preference for adopting compromising style. Sikhs are an entrepreneurial community and so they are mostly into business. The probable reason behind following this style is that they might be looking at the quantum of work to maximize their gains and so want to close the deal fast.

Everyone has one predominant style of negotiation while other remaining styles are intermittently present. If people involved in negotiation have better understanding about each other's predominant negotiation style, arriving to an agreement will be easier. Awareness of negotiation style will lead to better business dealings. This study helps us in understanding the role of religion with reference to preference for a style of negotiation. The advance assessment of a preferred style by a religious group can empower strategists to adopt a more appropriate style of negotiation in order to maximize the commercial gains.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

This research work has certain limitations. The first limitation is that though the sample size was substantial in number and it differs in terms of topography, education and sexual orientation still there is a possibility that it is not overall representative of the NCR population. Future research could be done with a bigger sample size to cross-validate the study. Also other minority religious groups like Christian, Buddhists and

Jains can be included to understand their preference of negotiation styles. The second limitation is use of self-report instruments to capture data, though we have taken certain measures as mentioned earlier to control response biasness while reporting to survey questionnaire, but still we cannot overlook the possibility that participants could have responded diplomatically so that their responses appear more desirable or appropriate.

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