



# Chameleons bake bigger pies and take bigger pieces: Strategic behavioral mimicry facilitates negotiation outcomes <sup>☆</sup>

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Received 7 July 2006; revised 12 February 2007

Communicated by Hart Blanton

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## Abstract

Two experiments investigated the hypothesis that strategic behavioral mimicry can facilitate negotiation outcomes. Study 1 used an employment negotiation with multiple issues, and demonstrated that strategic behavioral mimicry facilitated outcomes at both the individual and dyadic levels: Negotiators who mimicked the mannerisms of their opponents both secured better individual outcomes, and their dyads as a whole also performed better when mimicking occurred compared to when it did not. Thus, mimickers created more value and then claimed most of that additional value for themselves, though not at the expense of their opponents. In Study 2, mimicry facilitated negotiators' ability to uncover underlying compatible interests and increased the likelihood of obtaining a deal in a negotiation where a prima facie solution was not possible. Results from Study 2 also demonstrated that interpersonal trust mediated the relationship between mimicry and deal-making. Implications for our understanding of negotiation dynamics and interpersonal coordination are discussed.

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*Keywords:* Mimicry; Negotiations; Conflict resolution; Interpersonal behavior; Decision-making; Automaticity

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A negotiation is an inherently interpersonal interaction. Although negotiations are often limited by numerical parameters, final outcomes are largely dependent upon one's ability to influence, persuade, and interact effectively with one's opponents (Bazerman & Neale, 1992; Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 1991). Thus, it is not surprising that interpersonal variables, such as liking, trust, familiarity, and rapport are associated with more favorable negotiation

outcomes, particularly in negotiations with the potential for integrative solutions (i.e., solutions that expand the total amount of the resources available to both parties) (Bazerman & Neale, 1992; Thompson, 2005). Building trust and a positive relationship with the other party is often a precursor to increased information-sharing, which is arguably the most effective means of securing mutually beneficial settlements (Fisher et al., 1991; Thompson, 1991).

However, establishing a positive relationship within a negotiation setting is easier said than done: Negotiations typically involve the distribution of limited resources, making them fraught with incentives for competition, withholding of information, distrust, and conflict, particularly among negotiators interacting for the first time. Many people tend to expect deceit and competition within negotiation settings, and individuals often enter negotiations

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<sup>☆</sup> This research was supported by the Dispute Resolution Research Center at the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, and was facilitated by National Science Foundation Grant SES-0530380 to Elizabeth Mullen. We thank Hart Blanton, Kris Preacher, Chris Bauman, and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this article. Thanks also to Vanessa Hsieh for her help with data entry.

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expecting and preparing for the worst (e.g. Fisher et al., 1991). Yet given the critical role that cooperation and information-sharing have in securing negotiation outcomes, effective negotiators must find a tenuous balance between facilitating positive and cooperative interactions within a competitive and often distrustful environment. This necessary balancing of competition and cooperation has been dubbed the “negotiator’s dilemma” (Lax & Sebenius., 1986). One critical question for negotiators, then, is how can a positive connection be established quickly enough to have a positive impact during the short time frame in which negotiations often occur, but be simple enough so that negotiators do not lose focus on the issues on the table?

One easy and effective way of facilitating interpersonal interactions is via behavioral mimicry. Research suggests that people naturally tend to mimic others in a variety of ways: We mimic others’ accents and speech patterns, facial expressions, overt behaviors, and affective responses (see Chartrand, Maddux, & Lakin, 2005, for a review). Importantly, most of the time people mimic each other without ever consciously realizing it; we simply seem to have an innate tendency to do what others do. Researchers have demonstrated that individuals mimic others’ overt mannerisms in even the most minimal of circumstances, and that confederates who intentionally mimic the mannerisms of experimental participants are liked more than those confederates who do not mimic (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999).

However, mimicry tends to occur to a greater extent for individuals who are especially motivated to get along with others. Individuals who have a strong need to affiliate (Lakin & Chartrand, 2003), those who have an interdependent self-construal (Van Baaren, Maddux, Chartrand, De Bouter, & van Knippenberg, 2003), those high in perspective-taking (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999, Study 3), and those high in self-monitoring (Cheng & Chartrand, 2003) exhibit more interpersonal mimicry than those who do not possess these motivations. Additional research suggests that mimicry occurs across a variety of naturalistic settings, particularly among individuals who have a bond with each other. For example, among romantic couples there is a robust association between the amount of rapport they feel with each other and the amount of mimicking that takes place during their interactions (Bernieri, 1988; see also LaFrance, 1979, 1982; LaFrance & Broadbent, 1976 for related work).

Other research has demonstrated the benefits of consciously and strategically mimicking the behaviors of others to facilitate certain desired outcomes. In one study waitresses who were instructed to verbally mimic their customers (by repeating the orders back verbatim) received bigger tips than those who were instructed not to mimic (Van Baaren, Holland, Steenaert, & van Knippenberg, 2003). In addition, being behaviorally mimicked in an initial interaction with someone increases the chances that individuals will perform an altruistic behavior in a subsequent context (Van Baaren, Holland, Kawakami, & van Knippenberg, 2004). Given these compelling results, some

researchers have postulated that mimicry seems to serve as a type of “social glue” that helps “bind and bond” people together, and that it can be used strategically for such purposes (Chartrand et al., 2005).

Overall, results from previous research provide suggestive evidence that strategically mimicking the overt mannerisms of one’s negotiation opponent may also prove beneficial in a negotiation context. If strategic mimicry can facilitate the interpersonal coordination of negotiators, this may open the channels of communication, allowing more information exchange and subsequently facilitating more efficient and effective deals for dyads as a whole (often referred to as “value-creating”). In addition, negotiators who actually perform the mimicking may have an advantage in eliciting information from the other (mimicked) party by putting their opponent at ease and leading the mimicked party to trust the mimicker. Indeed, feelings of trust for the other party are often a prerequisite for a negotiator to share information about their priorities (Butler, 1999; Kimmel, Pruitt, Magenau, Konar-Goldband, & Carnevale, 1980). Thus, an advantage in eliciting information about the other side’s priorities may also lead mimickers to be able to achieve better deals for themselves (often referred to as “value-claiming”). Lax and Sebenius (Lax & Sebenius., 1986, p. 33) adeptly described this relationship between value creation and value claiming: “Value creating and value claiming are linked parts of a negotiation...value that has been created must be claimed...there is more value to be claimed if one has helped create it first.” Thus, we predicted that mimicking would provide negotiators with advantages in value-creating and value-claiming.

Although strategic mimicry has previously been found to be beneficial for the mimicker (e.g. Van Baaren, Holland, et al., 2003, 2004) such investigations have focused on relatively simple behaviors such as tipping in a restaurant, or picking up dropped pens. Thus, it is currently unclear the extent to which mimicry can facilitate other types of more complex interpersonal interactions. In particular, negotiations necessitate a high level of cognitive engagement, and complex decisions need to be made within a high-pressure environment between parties who may have little or no knowledge about each other, but where the stakes can be high, and where there are strong incentives for competition, withholding of information, distrust, and conflict. Thus, negotiation contexts provide a strong and compelling test of the limits of mimicry’s potential interpersonal benefits.

## Study 1

### *Method*

#### *Participants*

Participants were 104 MBA students (72 men, 36 women) at a large business school enrolled in a negotiations course.

### Negotiation task

We used an employment negotiation exercise between a job candidate and a recruiter that involved eight issues (Neale, 1997). Negotiators' preferences were created by assigning points to each issue, with a higher number of points indicating a stronger preference. Of the eight issues, two issues were purely distributive (the parties' preferences were in complete opposition), two issues were compatible (the parties' preferences were identical), and the remaining four issues had integrative potential: the candidate had a stronger preference for two of these issues, whereas the recruiter had a stronger preference for the other two. Within this negotiation, then, parties could "create value" and earn more points if they conceded on the two issues of low importance to them in exchange for the two issues of high importance to them, rather than if they simply compromised and chose the midpoint for each of the four issues. Thus, reaching a good deal in this exercise is largely contingent upon cooperation and information-sharing. Negotiators who are able to discern the other side's preferences can make trade-offs (i.e., make concessions on issues that are of low priority to themselves but high priority to the other party), and expand the number of points available to both parties. In addition, by understanding the other side's priorities, an astute negotiator can offer trade-offs and deals that benefit (or at least not adversely affect) the other side, while also leaving themselves much better off as well. Through information gathering, then, negotiators can both create and claim value.

### Procedure

One week prior to the negotiation, participants were given confidential role instructions and told to prepare for their roles by themselves. The negotiation instructions indicated that participants' objective was to maximize their point total. Participants performed the negotiation at the beginning of class the following week and were given up to 30 min to negotiate.

### Experimental manipulations

Dyads were randomly assigned to 1 of 3 conditions. In one condition the candidate was instructed to mimic the mannerisms of the recruiter; in another condition the recruiter was instructed to mimic the candidate; in a third condition neither negotiator was instructed to mimic (control condition). Thus, there was a maximum of one mimicker per dyad in the two mimicking conditions, and no mimickers in the control condition.

At the beginning of class and approximately 5 min before the negotiation exercise began, participants were given an "important message" and were instructed that the message was part of the negotiation exercise they were about to perform. In each of the two mimicking conditions, the message read as follows:

Successful negotiators recommend that you should mimic the mannerisms of your negotiation partner to

get a better deal. For example, when the other person rubs his/her face, you should too. If he/she leans back or leans forward in the chair, you should too. However, they say *it is very important that you mimic subtly enough that the other person does not notice what you are doing*, otherwise this technique completely backfires. Also, do not direct too much of your attention to the mimicking so you don't lose focus on the outcome of the negotiation. Thus, you should find a happy medium of consistent but subtle mimicking that does not disrupt your focus.

In contrast, participants in the control condition received the following message: "Many successful negotiators recommend focusing on the information in your planning document, and to negotiate with this always in the back of your mind. They say that this will help get you through the negotiations and get a good deal." This information was redundant with information given to all students in previous classes, and all students, regardless of condition, had been asked to prepare a planning document (a preparation sheet explicitly laying out their individual strategies) beforehand. Participants opposing a negotiator who had been instructed to mimic were also given the control message. Participants were given 5 min to read and think about how to incorporate their important message instructions into their negotiation strategy. Participants then negotiated together in private rooms.

### Manipulation checks and dependent measures

Following the negotiation, participants were asked to recall the "important message" instructions they received before the negotiation. A second question assessed the percentage of time that participants had actively followed their "important message" instructions (response options ranged from 0 to 100% of the time). This also served as an independent measure of the extent to which mimicking actually took place during the negotiation.

We had two primary outcome measures. The first was the total number of points the individuals in each dyad achieved together, often referred to as "joint gain" (possible range: -8400 to 13,200 points). This measure captures the degree to which parties created value by discovering mutually beneficial tradeoffs and enlarging the number of points that were available to both sides. The second measure looked at individual gain, or the total number of points that each side obtained individually, which measures the degree to which parties claimed value for themselves.

### Results

#### Manipulation checks

All participants correctly recalled their important message. Participants who were instructed to mimic actively followed their mimicking instructions an average of 32.9% of the time during the negotiation ( $SD = 24.79$ ; responses ranged from 5 to 80%).

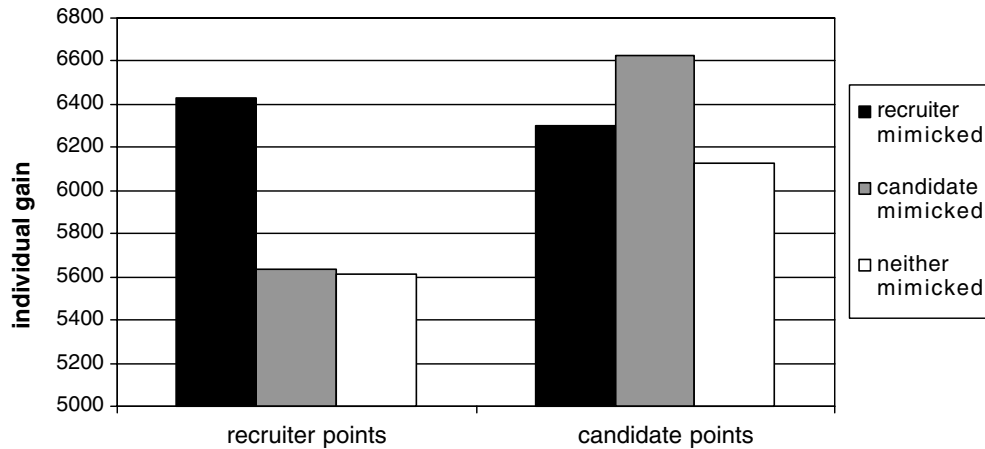


Fig. 1. Individual gain (in points) as a function of experimental condition, Study 1.

### Joint gain

All dyads reached an agreement in this exercise. Our first analysis assessed joint gain by summing the individual outcome scores of the negotiators in each dyad and submitting this measure to a one-way ANOVA. Results revealed a significant effect for mimicking condition on joint gain,  $F(2, 49) = 4.02$ ,  $p = .02$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .14$ . When either the candidate or the recruiter mimicked their opponent, the dyad earned higher joint gain ( $M = 12,511.76$ ,  $SD = 850.23$ ) relative to when no one in the dyad mimicked their opponent ( $M = 11,738.89$ ,  $SD = 1440.24$ ),  $F(1, 49) = 6.06$ ,  $p = .02$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .11$ . However, there was no significant difference in joint gain as a function of whether the candidate ( $M = 12,266.67$ ,  $SD = 1012.86$ ) or the recruiter mimicked their opponent ( $M = 12,787.50$ ,  $SD = 523.93$ ),  $F(1, 32) = 3.41$ ,  $p = .074$ .

We also examined joint gain as a function of the actual amount of mimicking that took place, and this was positively correlated with joint gain,  $r(52) = .372$ ,  $p = .007$ . Thus, the more participants mimicked their opponents, the more points negotiators were able to make available to both parties.

### Individual gain

We then proceeded to examine how this increase in joint gain occurred by analyzing individual gain for each party as a function of experimental condition, controlling for the effect of the opposing party's individual gain. Thus, we ran two separate one-way ANCOVAs with condition as our independent variable and either (1) candidate individual gain, or (2) recruiter individual gain as our dependent measure, and with opponent's individual gain as a covariate.

Results for recruiter individual gain showed a significant effect for mimicking condition  $F(2, 48) = 4.45$ ,  $p = .017$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .15$ . Continuing to control for opponents' individual gain, mean comparisons indicated that the recruiter secured significantly more points when he/she mimicked ( $M = 6431.25$ ,  $SD = 1564.06$ ) than when the candidate mimicked, ( $M = 5638.89$ ,  $SD = 1384.43$ ),  $F(1, 31) = 6.46$ ,

$p = .016$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .17$ , and significantly more individual points compared to the control condition in which neither party mimicked, ( $M = 5611.11$ ,  $SD = 1927.78$ ),  $F(1, 31) = 7.49$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .20$  (see Fig. 1).

Analyses for the individual gain for the candidate were conducted in the same manner, and results also showed a significant effect for mimicking condition  $F(2, 48) = 3.36$ ,  $p = .043$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .12$ . Mean comparisons indicated that the candidate secured more points when he/she mimicked ( $M = 6627.78$ ,  $SD = 1913.97$ ) than when the recruiter mimicked, ( $M = 6356.25$ ,  $SD = 1638.69$ ),  $F(1, 31) = 4.00$ ,  $p = .054$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .11$ , and significantly more points compared to the control, ( $M = 6127.78$ ,  $SD = 1920.42$ ),  $F(1, 31) = 5.57$ ,  $p = .025$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .15$  (see Fig. 1). Thus, the increase in joint gain for both parties resulted from increases in individual gain by whichever of the two parties actually performed the mimicking.

However, additional mean comparisons indicated that *being mimicked* did not adversely affect one's individual gain. There was no difference in the recruiter's individual gain in the control condition compared to the condition where the candidate mimicked,  $p > .32$ . In addition, there was no difference in the candidate's individual gain in the condition where the recruiter mimicked compared to the control condition,  $p > .21$  (see Fig. 1.) In sum, then, mimicry had positive overall benefits for the dyad by increasing joint gain (i.e., mimicry facilitated value-creating tactics). In addition, mimicry enhanced benefits for the party doing the mimicking (i.e., value-claiming), but it did not adversely affect the party being mimicked.

### Study 2

The main goal for Study 2 was to conceptually replicate results from Study 1 in a qualitatively different type of negotiation setting, and to test the underlying psychological mechanism that accounts for the beneficial effects of mimicry on negotiated outcomes. Results from Study 1

suggest that negotiators who mimic create more value than negotiators who do not mimic. Presumably this is because mimicking leads to increased cooperation and information sharing that, in turn, facilitates value-creation in a negotiation. In addition, the advantage held by mimicking negotiators (as opposed to mimicked negotiators) in claiming value suggested that they are better able to extract information and concessions from the other side and use this information to create agreements that are especially valuable to them. In Study 2, we tested the generalizability of this effect by employing a negotiation where a deal appears impossible, but where one party's ability to extract information allows both parties to reach a deal.

We also sought to explore the underlying dynamics of how mimicry facilitated outcomes by investigating the potential effects of interpersonal variables such as trust, liking, and rapport. As far as the authors are aware, no previous investigations on the effects of mimicry have demonstrated the mediating effect of an interpersonal variable (e.g., trust, liking) on a behavioral outcome variable (e.g., deal-making, tipping.) However, results from Study 1 suggest that the advantage that mimicking negotiators have may be the result of their opponents trusting or liking them more, and this in turn may facilitate final outcomes. We sought to further explore these underlying, interpersonal dynamics in Study 2.

### Overview

Study 2 was a dyadic negotiation exercise involving the sale of a gas station (Goldberg, 2000). In this negotiation, a deal based solely on the price of the gas station was impossible: According to the information in the roles, the buyer's reservation price (the maximum he/she was authorized to pay) of \$500,000 was substantially lower than the seller's reservation price (the minimum he/she was willing to accept) of \$553,000. Thus, the negotiation was one involving a "negative bargaining zone," a negotiation where the seller's reservation price is higher than the buyer's reservation price. In other words, there was no overlap in the amount of money each party was willing to buy or sell the station for (i.e., there was no overlap in reservation prices.) However, the underlying interests or motivations of the parties were compatible: In addition to desiring to purchase the station, the buyer was also interested in hiring managers to run the station in the future, whereas the seller (who had been an excellent manager of the station over the past five years) desired to sell the station but also needed to obtain employment after returning from a trip. Thus, a deal was possible if parties were able to recognize these common underlying interests, and structure a creative solution that included issues other than simply the sale price of the station. For example, parties could agree to a sale price below the seller's reservation price (e.g. \$495,000), but with a stipulation that the seller would work as a manager upon returning from the trip, with the value of the future salary

giving the seller a deal that would meet or exceed his/her reservation price.

Adding to the complexity of this negotiation is the fact that the seller is particularly desperate to get a deal; he/she is suffering from burnout and wants to sell the station immediately so he/she can sail around the world with his/her spouse, but also needs to obtain employment upon his/her return. Thus, achieving a deal is largely dependent on whether the seller feels comfortable sharing this sensitive information; only then can the potential buyer structure a creative agreement that can satisfy both parties' needs.

### Method

#### Participants

Participants were 62 full-time MBA students (44 males, 16 females) who were enrolled in a negotiations class.

#### Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to dyads playing the role of either buyer or seller. One week prior to the negotiation, participants were given confidential role instructions for the negotiation and told to prepare for their roles by themselves. Participants were given 45 min in class the following week to negotiate.

#### Experimental manipulations

All participants received an "important message" immediately prior to the negotiation, and were told that the message was part of their role materials. Participants in both conditions were given the same respective messages as in Study 1; participants in the mimicry condition were told to strategically mimic their partners, whereas the control participants were given the important message encouraging them to focus on their planning documents.

Participants playing the role of the buyer were randomly assigned to a mimicry condition or a control condition. All participants assigned to play the role of the seller were assigned to the control condition. This was done because, although the key to getting a deal in this exercise largely hinges on sellers revealing their underlying interests for selling the station, it is the onus of the buyer to make the seller comfortable enough to reveal this information, understand the seller's needs, and structure a deal to accommodate the seller's interests. If the buyer does not elicit this information, does not understand the seller's interests, or is unwilling to accommodate them, a deal is unlikely to be reached. Because results from Study 1 imply that the mimicking party has an advantage in extracting information from the other party, we thought it was more important for the buyer to mimic the seller in this negotiation.

#### Outcome measure

The main dependent measure was whether participants were able to negotiate a deal based on the parties' interests that was allowable within the parameters of each party's

reservation price. An outcome was considered an acceptable deal if the terms involved (1) a sale price not greater than the buyer's reservation price, and (2) the addition of some type of extra issue(s), such as a job, where the value of the issue(s) could help the seller reach his/her reservation price. Outcomes were considered unsuccessful if they involved only the sale price of the station (which indicated a disregard for one of the parties' reservation prices), or if parties reached an impasse.<sup>1</sup>

#### Post-negotiation measures

After the negotiation, participants completed a questionnaire to assess potential underlying psychological variables that could further explicate the facilitative effects of mimicry. Participants answered the following questions on scales ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*): (a) How much did you trust the other party during the negotiation? (b) How much rapport did you feel with the other party during the negotiation? (c) How much did you like negotiating with the other person? In addition, participants answered the same two manipulation check items that were used in Study 1.

#### Results

##### Manipulation checks

All participants correctly recalled their important message instructions. Participants in the mimicking condition reported that they followed their mimicking instructions an average of 42.47% of the time ( $SD = 21.24$ ; responses ranged from 12 to 80%).

##### Performance

Overall 12 out of 31 dyads (38.7%) reached an acceptable deal in this exercise within the confines of the roles.<sup>2</sup> We examined the percentage of deals achieved in dyads where the buyer mimicked versus dyads where the buyer did not mimic. Ten of 15 dyads (67%) in which a buyer mimicked achieved a deal, whereas only 2 of 16 dyads (12.5%) reached a deal when the buyer did not mimic. A chi-square analysis revealed that these percentages were significantly different,  $\chi^2(1, N = 31) = 9.57, p = .002$  (see Fig. 2).

As in Study 1, we also investigated whether the actual amount of mimicking performed during the negotiation predicted whether a deal was reached. We conducted a binary logistic regression analysis with percentage of time the buyer spent mimicking as our independent variable and presence or absence of a deal as our dependent variable. Results indicated that amount of mimicking was a significant predictor of whether a deal was reached, *Odds*

*Ratio* = 1.047, *Wald test* = 6.36,  $p = .012$ . Thus, the more participants actually mimicked their opponents, the more likely they were to get a deal.

##### The mediating role of trust

We then examined the effect of mimicking on each party's ratings of trust, liking, and rapport for the other party. We regressed each of the six post-negotiation measures on the actual amount of mimicry that was performed in the negotiation. However, only one of the six variables was significantly predicted by the amount of mimicking performed by the buyer: the degree to which the seller trusted the buyer,  $F(1, 29) = 8.71, p = .006, \beta = .48$  (all other  $p$ 's  $> .23$ ). We then tested whether seller trust mediated the relationship between mimicry and deal-making (Baron & Kenny, 1986). As noted above, buyer mimicry significantly predicted both deal-making and seller trust. However, the direct effect of mimicry on deal-making became non-significant when controlling for seller trust, *Odds Ratio* = 1.026, *Wald test* = 1.03,  $p = .312$ , whereas the effect of seller trust remained significant, *Odds Ratio* = 17.49, *Wald test* = 6.97,  $p = .008$ . A Sobel's test confirmed that the mediational effect of seller trust was significant,  $z = 1.99, p = .047$ . Thus, mimicry facilitated deal-making and this effect was mediated by the amount of trust the buyer (i.e., the mimicker) elicited from the seller (i.e., the mimicked).

#### General discussion

The current research investigated the hypothesis that negotiators who strategically mimic their opponents' overt behaviors secure better negotiation agreements than those who do not mimic. In Study 1, strategic behavioral mimicry facilitated both individual and joint gains in a multi-issue employment negotiation. The mimicking party directly benefited in terms of individual gain, although mimicry did not adversely affect the individual gain of the party being mimicked. In Study 2, compared to negotiators who did not mimic, negotiators who mimicked their opponents' mannerisms were more likely to create a deal that benefited both parties in a negotiation involving a negative bargaining zone. Study 2 also obtained evidence that buyers who mimicked sellers elicited higher levels of trust, and that seller trust mediated the relationship between mimicry and deal-making. Overall, our results suggest that mimicry can indeed have positive benefits in a very complex, mixed-motive interpersonal interaction such as a negotiation.

It is important to point out that across both studies, none of the participants who were mimicked noticed that their opponents were copying their behaviors, suggesting that the effects of being mimicked occurred automatically and unconsciously. In addition, it is compelling that our effects emerged even when participants with no prior training in strategic mimicry received a brief instruction to mimic just prior to a very complex task that demanded

<sup>1</sup> We considered the actual terms of the deal of less importance than the presence of an interest-based deal itself.

<sup>2</sup> Of the 19 dyads that did not achieve an acceptable deal, 10 reached an impasse, 8 reached a deal below the seller's reservation price, and 1 reached a deal that would have been illegal.

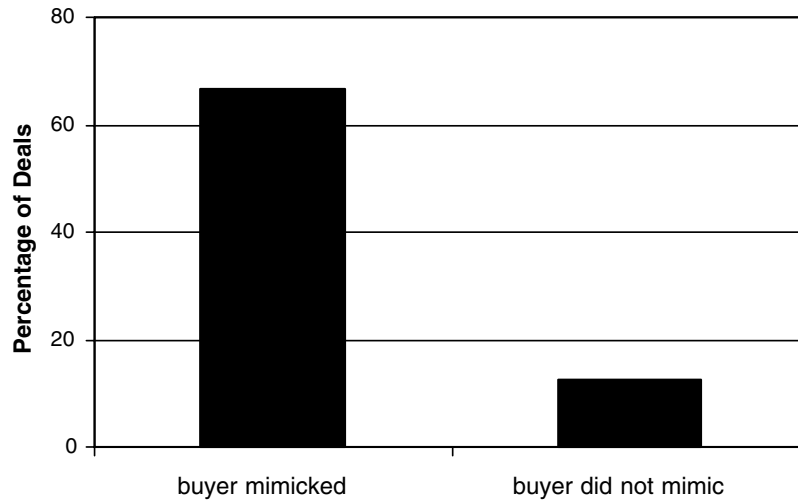


Fig. 2. Percentage of deals as a function of whether the buyer mimicked the seller, Study 2.

substantial mental concentration; furthermore, these individuals' primary goal during the interactions with their opponents was to achieve the best negotiation outcomes for themselves. Thus, compared to most prior research that employed trained confederates engaging in simple tasks (e.g., Chartrand & Bargh, 1999), the results from the current studies speak to the robustness of the ability of mimicry to facilitate interpersonal interactions, and in this instance, deal-making. In addition, as far as the authors are aware, results from Study 2 offer the first evidence of an underlying, mediational mechanism between mimicry and a behavior outcome. Thus, the current research not only demonstrates the robustness of mimicry's ability to facilitate even complex types of interpersonal interactions, but also offers some insight into the underlying processes responsible for these benefits, namely instilling perceived trust of the mimicker.

Although our results were consistent across two different types of negotiation tasks, future research is needed to determine the extent to which mimicry is an effective tool across a variety of negotiation contexts. For example, future research should investigate whether mimicry helps resolve disputes or whether it helps mediators be more effective. It stands to reason that mimicry might help defuse highly charged and emotional situations by helping participants feel more in sync with each other, thereby facilitating dispute resolution. However, disputes are especially fraught with distrust and animosity, and would provide an interesting test of the potential boundary conditions of mimicry on negotiations.

In addition, it is currently unclear whether mimicry can impact negotiations involving only distributive (i.e. zero-sum) issues with no opportunity for an integrative outcome. The results from Study 1 suggest that mimicry is effective at increasing both individual and joint gain; however, this negotiation involved multiple issues with multiple potential trade-offs between the two parties. In fact, the

authors conducted an additional study investigating the effect of mimicry on a single issue, distributive negotiation exercise with 112 participants and 56 dyads (from a similar participant population—MBA students from the same university—as in Studies 1 and 2) and found that mimicry had no significant impact on outcomes. Although results from a single study do not necessarily rule out the possibility that mimicry may be able to facilitate purely distributive negotiations, at present mimicry appears to be most effective in negotiations with integrative (i.e. win–win) potential.

Related to the differential benefits of mimicry for distributive and integrative issues are the different effects of our mimicry manipulation on post-negotiation assessments of interpersonal trust, liking, and rapport. In Study 2, trust emerged as an important mediating variable, a finding consistent with previous research that has found that trust is often a prerequisite for information sharing in negotiations (Butler, 1999; Kimmel et al., 1980). Mimicry by the buyer may have imbued sellers (those being mimicked) with a sense that their opponent was trustworthy enough to share their private and sensitive information about reasons for selling. Research should continue to explore whether trust is the critical interpersonal factor in other negotiations involving mimicking, or if the underlying psychological variables change depending on the dynamics and structure of a given negotiation.

The results of the current research demonstrate that mimicking can be a highly effective tool in negotiations. Negotiators often leave considerable value on the table, mainly because they feel reluctant to share information with their opponent due to their fears of exploitation. Yet building trust and sharing information greatly increases the probability that a win–win outcome will be reached (Bazerman & Neale, 1992). Our research suggests that mimicking is one way to facilitate building trust and, consequently, information sharing in a negotiation. By creating trust in and soliciting information from their oppo-

ment, mimickers bake bigger pies at the bargaining table, and consequently take a larger share of that pie for themselves.

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