
Article

Negotiating for sustainable supply chains: The impact of negotiation styles on bargaining processes and outcomes in buyer–seller negotiations

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Abstract

Negotiation is a critical mechanism for coordinating interorganizational exchanges and building sustainable, long-term relationships in supply chains. Yet, how negotiation styles shape bargaining processes and, ultimately, economically and relationally sustainable outcomes in supply chain systems remains underexplored. This study addresses that gap by examining the relationships among negotiation styles, bargaining processes, and sustainable negotiation outcomes using data from a simulated buyer–seller negotiation involving more than 200 participants. Structural equation modeling shows that competing, collaborating, compromising, and avoiding styles significantly influence bargaining processes, which in turn affect negotiation outcomes. Importantly, collaborating is the only style that consistently generates economically and relationally sustainable outcomes: it yields higher joint profits, strengthens long-term relationships, and enhances post-negotiation satisfaction. These findings demonstrate that collaboration creates value beyond immediate economic gains by fostering mutually beneficial exchanges and enduring supply chain partnerships. By uncovering the behavioral mechanisms through which negotiation styles influence both financial and relational outcomes, this study advances negotiation theory and contributes to the growing literature on sustainable supply chain management. It also offers practical guidance for managers seeking to cultivate collaborative negotiation capabilities that support long-term organizational performance and sustainable interorganizational relationships.

Keywords: Bargaining behavior, collaboration, negotiation styles, sustainable supply chains.

1. Introduction

Negotiation is a fundamental mechanism through which buyers and sellers coordinate interests and create value in business exchanges. While negotiation theory has increasingly recognized that buyer–seller relationships evolve through continuous interactions rather than isolated transactions (Achrol & Kotler, 2011; Dwyer et al., 1987; Liu & Siddiqui, 2025), much of the literature conceptualizes negotiations as discrete economic events aimed primarily at reaching agreements or maximizing immediate gains. However, in increasingly interconnected and competitive markets, sustainable



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business success depends not only on reaching favorable agreements but also on cultivating enduring supply chains characterized by trust, cooperation, mutual adaptation, and shared value creation (Yin et al., 2025). Recent negotiation research similarly argues that negotiation should be understood as a dynamic relational process in which bargaining behaviors shape both immediate agreements and long-term relationship development (Choi & Yang, 2024). Consequently, understanding how negotiations generate economic and relational outcomes has become an important challenge for both negotiation scholars and practitioners in managing sustainable supply chains (Choi & Yang, 2024; Elfenbein, 2021).

Some people are more skillful in negotiation than others. What makes these negotiators different from average ones? Negotiators vary substantially in their ability to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. While some negotiators successfully transform one-time transactions into long-term collaborative relationships, others maximize short-term economic gains at the expense of future cooperation. This variation raises a fundamental question: What distinguishes highly effective negotiators from average ones? Researchers have long sought to answer this question by examining individual differences in negotiation effectiveness (Bazerman et al., 2000; Ma, 2008; Ma et al., 2023; Thompson, 1990). Since the earliest studies of negotiation in the late 1950s, a substantial body of research has investigated how relatively stable individual characteristics influence negotiation performance (Hermann & Kogan, 1977; Rubin & Brown, 1975; Thompson, 1990). The underlying premise is that individuals exhibit consistent behavioral tendencies across situations, and these enduring characteristics influence how negotiators perceive conflicts, process information, interact with counterparts, and ultimately shape bargaining behaviors and negotiation outcomes (Thompson, 1990; Yin et al., 2020). More recently, Elfenbein (2021) further argues that individual differences exert their influence through relational negotiation processes, emphasizing that negotiation outcomes emerge from the interaction between negotiators' stable behavioral tendencies and the evolving dynamics of interpersonal exchanges rather than from isolated individual actions. This perspective highlights the importance of examining the behavioral mechanisms that connect individual characteristics to negotiation outcomes.

Among these individual characteristics, negotiation style represents one of the most influential yet insufficiently understood determinants of bargaining behavior. Negotiation style reflects an individual's preferred approach to resolving conflicts and pursuing objectives during negotiations (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Ma, 2007; Moberg, 1998). Different negotiation styles shape how negotiators communicate, exchange information, make concessions, respond to counterparts, and balance competitive and cooperative motives throughout the bargaining process. Despite its intuitive importance, empirical evidence regarding the effects of negotiation styles has remained fragmented and sometimes inconsistent (Antonioni, 1998; Ma, 2007; Ma & Jaeger, 2005; Rubin & Brown, 1975). Much of the existing research has focused primarily on whether certain negotiation styles improve economic performance, while paying considerably less attention to the behavioral processes through which negotiation styles influence bargaining interactions and subsequently generate both economic and relational outcomes. Consequently, our understanding remains incomplete on how negotiation styles contribute to sustainable buyer–seller relationships.

This limitation is particularly important because negotiation success extends well beyond objective economic outcomes. Recent research increasingly recognizes that negotiators also evaluate negotiations based on subjective value, including satisfaction with the negotiation process, perceptions of relationship quality, and willingness to engage in future exchanges (Liu & Siddiqui, 2025; Yan et al., 2025). These affective and relational outcomes are especially important in buyer–seller relationships, where repeated interactions, trust, and long-term collaboration often determine future business success. Negotiation styles that maximize immediate profits may therefore not necessarily generate sustainable exchange relationships, whereas collaborative approaches may simultaneously enhance economic performance, relationship quality, and post-negotiation satisfaction. Understanding these multiple dimensions of negotiations provides a more comprehensive perspective on sustainable negotiation outcomes.

Examining negotiation styles is also consistent with the growing emphasis on the micro-foundations of organizational decision-making. Since organizations ultimately negotiate through individuals, organizational outcomes originate from the behaviors and decisions of individual actors (Felin & Foss, 2008). Accordingly, research on the micro-foundations of strategy and organization has increasingly emphasized how individual characteristics shape organizational processes and outcomes. In business negotiations, negotiators' characteristic approaches fundamentally influence bargaining dynamics, affecting not only immediate agreements but also trust development, relationship continuity, and future collaboration between exchange partners. Investigating negotiation styles therefore offers an important micro-foundational perspective for understanding how sustainable business relationships emerge through bargaining interactions.

Against this backdrop, this study investigates how negotiation styles influence bargaining behaviors and, subsequently, sustainable negotiation outcomes within an integrative buyer–seller negotiation context. Specifically, we examine whether different negotiation styles generate distinct bargaining behaviors that subsequently affect both objective economic outcomes (e.g., negotiation profits) and subjective relational outcomes (e.g., relationship quality and post-negotiation satisfaction). By explicitly modeling bargaining behaviors as the behavioral mechanism linking negotiation styles to negotiation outcomes, this study moves beyond identifying whether certain negotiation styles are effective to explaining how and why they produce sustainable negotiation outcomes.

This study makes three important contributions. First, it advances negotiation theory by integrating stable individual characteristics with dynamic bargaining processes, thereby providing a more comprehensive behavioral explanation of negotiation effectiveness. Second, it extends the emerging relational perspective on negotiation by demonstrating that sustainable negotiation success encompasses not only economic gains but also subjective value, relationship quality, and enduring satisfaction (Liu & Siddiqui, 2025), thereby responding to recent calls to examine broader dimensions of negotiation performance (Choi & Yang, 2024; Yan et al., 2025). Third, it contributes to the literature on sustainable buyer–seller relationships by identifying collaborative negotiation style as a key micro-foundational capability through which negotiators simultaneously create economic value and foster long-term interorganizational relationships. Practically, the findings provide actionable guidance for organizations seeking to develop negotiation capabilities that improve profitability while strengthening enduring business partnerships and promoting sustainable value creation.

2. Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

Negotiation research has evolved considerably over the past five decades. Early studies in the 1960s and 1970s were largely grounded in social psychology and sought to explain negotiation effectiveness through individual characteristics such as personality traits, demographic variables, and cognitive attributes (Rubin & Brown, 1975). During the 1980s and 1990s, the field shifted toward behavioral decision-making, emphasizing cognitive biases, strategic choices, and information processing during bargaining (Bazerman et al., 2000). More recently, scholars have advocated a return to the social and relational nature of negotiation, arguing that negotiation outcomes emerge through dynamic interpersonal interactions rather than isolated individual decisions (Bazerman et al., 2000; Choi & Yang, 2024; Elfenbein, 2021). This relational perspective broadens negotiation research by recognizing that negotiators continuously influence one another through behavioral exchanges, making bargaining behaviors the central mechanism through which individual characteristics shape negotiation outcomes. Among many factors that influence business negotiation, individual differences remain one of the most extensively studied yet least conclusive research streams. Numerous studies have examined characteristics such as gender, emotion, authoritarianism, cognitive complexity, self-esteem, risk propensity, Machiavellianism, and assertiveness (Ford, 1983; Fry, 1985; Pruitt & Syna, 1985; Rubin & Brown, 1975). However, empirical findings have often been inconsistent or contradictory (Barry &

Friedman, 1998; Liu et al., 2005). Consequently, some scholars concluded that situational factors dominate individual characteristics in determining negotiation outcomes (Lewicki et al., 1993). Such a conclusion, however, may underestimate the role of stable behavioral tendencies. As Barry and Friedman (1998) argue, individuals display considerable consistency across situations, suggesting that enduring characteristics should systematically influence social behaviors such as negotiations. Rather than abandoning the study of individual differences, scholars have called for more integrative frameworks that explain how stable characteristics are translated into negotiation outcomes through observable negotiation processes (Elfenbein, 2021).

Consistent with this perspective, we propose that negotiation style represents a fundamental micro-foundation of negotiation behavior. Negotiation style reflects an individual's relatively stable preference for balancing concern for self and concern for others during conflict resolution (Antonioni, 1998; Blake & Mouton, 1964; Ma, 2007; Moberg, 1998). Drawing upon the dual-concern model (Antonioni, 1998; Blake & Mouton, 1964; Rahim & Magner, 1995), negotiation styles differ in the extent to which negotiators simultaneously pursue personal goals and relational interests. These enduring orientations influence how negotiators exchange information, respond to counterparts, make concessions, and resolve disagreements throughout the bargaining process.

Prior research based on the dual-concern framework has produced mixed conclusions regarding the consequences of accommodating and compromising styles. Accommodating, characterized by high concern for others but low concern for self, may facilitate interpersonal harmony, reduce conflict escalation, and support relationship preservation; however, its emphasis on yielding can also weaken value claiming and encourage unilateral concessions, thereby producing unfavorable individual outcomes (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Rahim & Magner, 1995). Compromising is similarly ambiguous. By balancing concern for self and others through reciprocal concessions, it can facilitate agreement and reduce negotiation impasse, yet its emphasis on splitting differences may lead negotiators to settle prematurely rather than search for integrative solutions that maximize joint value (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986; Rahim, 1983). These seemingly contradictory findings suggest that negotiation styles do not translate mechanically into outcomes. We address this inconsistency by distinguishing strategic orientation from behavioral enactment and introducing bargaining behaviors as the mechanisms connecting negotiation styles with outcomes. From this perspective, accommodating or compromising orientations influence outcomes only to the extent that they are translated into specific observable bargaining behaviors, and different behavioral enactments can generate different economic and relational consequences. This mechanism also helps explain our finding that accommodating style does not significantly predict the three focal bargaining behaviors: concern for the counterpart may be expressed through heterogeneous actions—such as restraint, concession, responsiveness, or conflict avoidance—rather than through a single stable behavioral pathway. By contrast, when a negotiation style is systematically translated into particular bargaining behaviors, its downstream consequences become more predictable. Thus, the behavioral mediation framework helps reconcile inconsistent style–outcome findings by showing that the consequences of negotiation styles depend not simply on the underlying orientation, but on whether and how that orientation is behaviorally enacted during negotiation.

Importantly, negotiation styles may not directly determine negotiation outcomes. Instead, their effects are expected to unfold through bargaining behaviors enacted during negotiation. This argument is consistent with the relational process model proposed by Elfenbein (2021), which suggests that stable individual characteristics influence negotiation outcomes indirectly by shaping interaction patterns between negotiating parties. Likewise, Choi and Yang (2024) argue that negotiation is an evolving interpersonal process in which behaviors exchanged between negotiators determine both economic agreements and the quality of subsequent relationships. Therefore, bargaining behaviors provide the missing behavioral mechanism linking negotiation style to negotiation outcome.

The style–behavior–outcome process is not deterministic because negotiation styles represent strategic orientations that shape, rather than prescribe, negotiators' behavioral choices. Bargaining behaviors therefore constitute the proximal mechanisms through which these orientations influence economic and relational outcomes. For example, a collaborative orientation should facilitate information exchange and joint problem solving, which can reveal differences in priorities and enable value-creating trade-offs, thereby improving both agreement quality and relational outcomes. However, these benefits depend on the negotiation context. Collaboration may be less effective in predominantly distributive or one-shot negotiations, where opportunities for joint value creation or future relational returns are limited, and under substantial power asymmetry or strongly competitive counterpart behavior, where information sharing may create vulnerability without reciprocal cooperation. Thus, collaboration should be understood as conditionally effective rather than universally superior, with its consequences depending on the opportunity for integrative exchange, relationships, relative power, and counterpart behaviors.

2.1. Negotiation Styles and Bargaining Behaviors

Negotiation is a dynamic interaction through which buyers and sellers attempt to reconcile conflicting interests and reach mutually acceptable agreements (Carnevale & Pruitt, 1992; Wall & Blum, 1991). Throughout this process, negotiators engage in a variety of bargaining behaviors, most notably competitive, collaborative, and compromising behaviors (Barry & Friedman, 1998; Greenhalgh et al., 1985; Lewicki & Litterer, 1985; Ma et al., 2023). Competitive behavior is characterized by a strong concern for one's own interests and the strategic use of power, persuasion, or positional leverage to maximize individual outcomes. Collaborative behavior reflects joint problem solving, open information exchange, and the search for integrative solutions that maximize mutual gains. Compromising behavior occupies an intermediate position, emphasizing reciprocal concessions and expedient settlements that partially satisfy both parties while preserving the negotiation relationship.

According to the dual-concern model (Antonioni, 1998), negotiation styles represent enduring preferences that guide the selection of these bargaining behaviors. Negotiators adopting competing and collaborating styles are both highly engaged in negotiation and actively attempt to influence outcomes. However, they differ in motivational orientation. Individuals with a competing style prioritize self-interest and therefore rely more heavily on competitive bargaining behaviors. In contrast, negotiators with a collaborating style simultaneously pursue their own interests and those of their counterparts, making them more likely to employ collaborative behaviors characterized by information sharing, joint problem solving, and integrative value creation (Ma, 2007; Moberg, 1998; Yin et al., 2020).

Conversely, negotiators characterized by accommodating, avoiding, or compromising styles generally exhibit lower levels of confrontation and greater willingness to preserve interpersonal harmony. These negotiators are less inclined to engage in aggressive bargaining or intensive joint problem solving and instead prefer concession making, conflict avoidance, or middle-ground solutions (Antonioni, 1998). Consequently, they are expected to rely more heavily on compromising behaviors while exhibiting lower levels of competitive and collaborative bargaining. Accordingly, we hypothesize that:

H1. *Confrontational negotiation styles, including competing and collaborating styles, are positively associated with competitive and collaborative bargaining behaviors and negatively associated with compromising bargaining behaviors.*

H2. *Non-confrontational negotiation styles, including avoiding, accommodating, and compromising styles, are negatively associated with competitive and collaborative bargaining behaviors and positively associated with compromising bargaining behaviors.*

This conceptualization provides a behavioral explanation for how stable negotiation styles are translated into observable bargaining processes. Rather than assuming that negotiation styles directly determine negotiation success, our framework positions bargaining behaviors as the mechanism through which individual characteristics influence negotiation outcomes. Furthermore, consistent with recent negotiation research (Yan et al., 2025), these bargaining behaviors ultimately shape not only objective economic outcomes but also subjective negotiation value, including relationship quality, post-negotiation satisfaction, and willingness to engage in future exchanges. This process perspective offers a more comprehensive understanding of sustainable negotiation outcomes than traditional models that focus exclusively on economic agreements.

2.2. Negotiation Outcomes

Negotiation research has traditionally evaluated negotiation success primarily in terms of objective economic outcomes, particularly the profits or value captured by individual negotiators. While economic performance remains a central criterion in buyer–seller negotiations, recent research argues that successful negotiations should also be evaluated according to their relational and psychological consequences because these outcomes determine the sustainability of future exchanges (Choi & Yang, 2024; Elfenbein, 2021; Yan et al., 2025). Accordingly, this study conceptualizes negotiation outcomes as comprising three complementary dimensions in order to achieve sustainable success: individual profits, relationship building, and negotiator satisfaction.

Individual profits represent the most widely adopted measure of negotiation effectiveness because negotiations ultimately seek to allocate economic value between exchange partners. Accordingly, a primary objective of buyer–seller negotiations is to identify strategies that maximize favorable price settlements and improve negotiators' economic returns. Consistent with this objective, individual profits are included as an important indicator of objective negotiation performance in the present study.

However, objective gains alone provide only a partial assessment of negotiation success. Buyer–seller negotiations frequently occur within ongoing exchange relationships in which future interactions are expected. Consequently, relationship quality and negotiator satisfaction have emerged as equally important indicators of negotiation effectiveness because they influence future cooperation, trust development, and repeated exchange opportunities (Churchill et al., 1990; Ma, 2007, 2008; Ma & Jaeger, 2010; Ma et al., 2002; Ruekert & Churchill, 1984). Recent negotiation research further argues that negotiators evaluate outcomes not only by what they obtain economically but also by the subjective value they derive from the negotiation process, including perceived fairness, relationship quality, and willingness to negotiate again (Elfenbein, 2021; Liu & Siddiqui, 2025; Yan et al., 2025). These relational and affective outcomes are particularly important in integrative buyer–seller negotiations, where sustainable value creation depends on maintaining mutually beneficial long-term partnerships rather than achieving one-time transactional victories.

Drawing on the relational process perspective (Choi & Yang, 2024; Elfenbein, 2021), we argue that bargaining behaviors constitute the immediate behavioral mechanism through which negotiation styles influence these multiple negotiation outcomes. Different bargaining behaviors embody distinct approaches to balancing value claiming and value creation, thereby generating different combinations of economic and relational outcomes.

Competitive bargaining behaviors primarily emphasize value claiming by maximizing one's own interests through positional bargaining, persuasive tactics, or the strategic use of bargaining power (Barry & Friedman, 1998; Greenhalgh et al., 1985; Lewicki & Litterer, 1985). Because negotiators employing competitive behaviors focus on protecting and advancing their own interests, they are more likely to obtain favorable individual economic outcomes. Moreover, achieving desired economic

objectives is expected to enhance negotiators' satisfaction with the negotiation process. However, the self-oriented nature of competitive bargaining may simultaneously reduce opportunities for trust development and mutual cooperation. Competitive tactics often encourage reciprocal competition from counterparts, making their influence on long-term relationship building uncertain.

H3. *Competitive bargaining behaviors are positively associated with individual profits and negotiator satisfaction.*

Compromising bargaining behaviors represent an intermediate approach that emphasizes reciprocal concessions and expedient settlements. By encouraging both parties to relinquish part of their initial demands, compromising facilitates mutually acceptable agreements while reducing negotiation conflict (Barry & Friedman, 1998). Nevertheless, because negotiators settle for middle-ground solutions rather than fully exploring integrative opportunities (Ma, 2007), compromising behaviors are less likely to maximize economic value creation, resulting in relatively lower individual profits. At the same time, reciprocal concessions foster perceptions of procedural fairness, reduce interpersonal tension, and strengthen relational goodwill, thereby enhancing negotiator satisfaction and supporting future relationship development.

H4. *Compromising bargaining behaviors are negatively associated with individual profits but positively associated with negotiator satisfaction and relationship building.*

Collaborative bargaining behaviors differ fundamentally from both competitive and compromising approaches in that they emphasize joint problem solving, open information sharing, and the pursuit of integrative solutions that simultaneously satisfy both parties' interests. Rather than merely dividing a fixed bargaining pie, collaborative negotiators seek to expand the available value through creative problem solving and mutual learning (Greenhalgh et al., 1985; Liu & Siddiqui, 2025). Such behaviors facilitate both value creation and value claiming, enabling negotiators to achieve superior economic outcomes while simultaneously strengthening interpersonal trust and long-term cooperation.

Recent negotiation research suggests that collaborative interactions generate the greatest subjective value because negotiators perceive greater fairness, mutual respect, and relational commitment throughout the bargaining process (Elfenbein, 2021; Yan et al., 2025). Moreover, Choi and Yang (2024) argue that collaborative bargaining promotes enduring buyer–seller relationships by encouraging repeated cooperation and mutual adaptation over time. Consequently, collaborative bargaining behaviors are expected to produce the most sustainable negotiation outcomes by simultaneously maximizing objective economic performance and subjective relational value.

H5. *Collaborative bargaining behaviors are positively associated with individual profits, negotiator satisfaction, and relationship building.*

Finally, relationship development and negotiator satisfaction are conceptually related but distinct negotiation outcomes. Satisfaction reflects a negotiator's overall evaluation of the negotiation experience, whereas relationship building reflects the intention to maintain future cooperation (Ruekert & Churchill, 1984; Liu & Siddiqui, 2025). Individuals who experience greater satisfaction with both the negotiation process and its outcomes are more likely to trust their counterparts, perceive future interactions positively, and express willingness to continue the exchange relationship (Churchill et al., 1990; Ma, 2007, 2008; Ma & Jaeger, 2010; Ma et al., 2002). Consistent with the subjective value perspective of negotiation (Yan et al., 2025), higher post-negotiation satisfaction should therefore strengthen long-term relationship building.

H6. *Negotiator satisfaction is positively associated with relationship building.*

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants and Procedure

A total of 227 undergraduate business students from a major Canadian university voluntarily participated in a simulated buyer–seller supply chain negotiation for course credit or on a voluntary basis. Of the participants, 51% were male, and the average age was 19.7 years. To eliminate the potential confounding effects of gender on negotiation behaviors, participants were randomly matched into same-gender buyer–seller dyads.

Approximately two weeks before the negotiation exercise, participants completed a questionnaire measuring their negotiation styles. Before the experiment, participants were informed that they would engage in a simulated buyer–seller negotiation and were instructed to negotiate as realistically and creatively as possible. They were assured that the study was conducted solely for academic purposes and that all responses would remain confidential. To protect participants' anonymity, each individual was assigned a unique identification code, and no personally identifiable information was collected.

On the day of the experiment, participants were randomly assigned to either the buyer or seller role within each same-gender dyad. Each participant received confidential role instructions describing a negotiation between a large retail chain and a multinational small-appliance supplier involving the purchase of three consumer products. Participants were informed that they could disclose any information they deemed appropriate during the negotiation but were prohibited from revealing their written instructions to their counterparts.

Participants were given 30 minutes to review their confidential instructions and prepare for the negotiation, followed by a maximum of 45 minutes to reach an agreement. Dyads that reached an agreement completed a written contract specifying the negotiated prices for the three products. After the negotiation, all participants completed a post-negotiation questionnaire measuring their bargaining behaviors and negotiation outcomes. All dyads successfully reached an agreement within the allotted 45-minute period; therefore, the complete sample was retained for subsequent analyses.

3.2 Negotiation Exercise

The negotiation exercise employed a variable-sum, buyer–seller simulation adapted from Thompson and Hastie (1990) and Drake (2001). Participants negotiated the prices of three consumer products: (1) a large-screen television, (2) a digital camcorder, and (3) a laptop computer. For each product, participants received a confidential payoff schedule consisting of nine possible price alternatives, labeled Price A through Price I. Each price corresponded to a specific profit value for the participant. The payoff structures differed between buyers and sellers, creating opportunities for both integrative and distributive bargaining.

Specifically, the products varied in their relative importance to each negotiating party. For example, sellers could earn up to \$1,000 from the sale of a large-screen television but only \$600 from a laptop computer, whereas buyers faced the opposite pattern for certain products. These asymmetrical payoff structures created opportunities for mutually beneficial trade-offs, allowing negotiators to exchange concessions on lower-priority issues in order to maximize joint gains on higher-priority issues.

To capture distributive negotiation, the simulation also included issues characterized by directly conflicting interests. For example, both buyers and sellers could earn between \$0 and \$800 on the digital camcorder, creating a zero-sum bargaining situation in which one party's gain necessarily reduces the

other's profit. Consequently, negotiators were required to balance competitive value claiming with collaborative value creation throughout the negotiation process.

The negotiation simulation was designed to achieve structural correspondence with real-world buyer–seller negotiations rather than reproduce a specific commercial transaction (Ma, 2007). Its multi-product, mixed-motive payoff structure incorporates two defining features of commercial negotiation: distributive tension over individual value capture and integrative opportunities for mutually beneficial trade-offs across issues. By assigning buyers and sellers partially conflicting but potentially compatible interests, the task requires participants to balance value claiming with value creation, thereby providing a meaningful setting in which different negotiation styles and bargaining behaviors can emerge. Moreover, standardized roles, payoff information, and negotiation procedures reduce extraneous variation and strengthen internal validity while preserving the strategic interdependence characteristic of buyer–seller bargaining. Nevertheless, the simulation necessarily simplifies real commercial negotiations; factors such as organizational accountability, repeated interactions, richer information, and higher financial stakes are not fully represented. We therefore view the task as providing a controlled and theoretically relevant test of the proposed behavioral mechanisms rather than a literal replication of professional commercial negotiation.

3.3. Manipulation Check

Several manipulation checks were conducted to ensure that participants understood their assigned roles and the negotiation task. Before the negotiation began, participants answered four questions assessing: (1) their assigned negotiation role, (2) their profit objective, (3) their planned opening offer, and (4) the profit associated with that opening offer.

Only a small number of participants initially answered these questions incorrectly, with most errors resulting from profit calculation mistakes. These errors were reviewed and corrected before the negotiation commenced to ensure that all participants fully understood the experimental materials and payoff structure. Following completion of the negotiation, participants were fully debriefed regarding the purpose of the study, and questions were addressed during the debriefing session.

3.4. Measures

Negotiation Styles. A 28-item scale based on Rahim and Magner's (1995) study on negotiation styles was used in this study. Student participants were asked to indicate on a 5-point scale their preferred approaches when facing buyer–seller exchange situations, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The scales used in the analysis included 7 items for collaborating style (reliability $\alpha = .78$), with sample items including "I try to integrate my ideas with those of the other person to come up with a decision jointly"; 6 items for accommodating style (reliability $\alpha = .74$), with sample items including "I usually accommodate the wishes of the other person"; 5 items for competing style (reliability $\alpha = .78$), with sample items including "I use my influence to get my ideas accepted"; 6 items for avoiding style (reliability $\alpha = .77$), with sample items including "I usually avoid open discussion of my differences with the other"; and 4 items for compromising style (reliability $\alpha = .71$), with sample items including "I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks".

Bargaining Behaviors. To measure bargaining behaviors, including competitive behavior, collaborative behavior, and compromising behavior, three sets of items adapted from existing measures of similar behaviors (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974) were used. Participants were asked to assess how each statement described his or her behaviors in the negotiation. Respondents were to assess the response on a 5-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The scales used for analysis included: 6 items for competitive behavior (reliability $\alpha = .82$), with sample items including "I tried hard to win my

position”; 7 items for collaborative behavior (reliability $\alpha = .82$), with sample items including “I attempted to work through our difference in order to solve the problem”; 5 items for compromising behavior (reliability $\alpha = .72$), with sample items including “I tried hard to find a compromising solution”.

Negotiation Outcomes. The economic negotiation outcome, i.e., individual profit, was the actual dollar amount of profits calculated based on the settled price in business negotiations. Negotiators’ satisfaction with negotiation was measured on a 5-point Likert scale with 3 items (reliability $\alpha = .87$), where 1 = very dissatisfied and 5 = very satisfied. Relationship building was also measured on a 5-point Likert scale with 4 items, where 1 = the relationship has improved to the least extent and 5 = to the greatest extent (reliability $\alpha = .87$).

3.5. Analysis

The hypotheses developed in this study were empirically tested with path analysis using the EQS program (version 6.1 for Windows) (Bentler, 1995). Path analysis is an appropriate approach for this study because it estimates the relative impact of multiple predictors on multiple outcomes that are linked by more than two causal steps, controlling for measurement errors. Moreover, it allows estimating multiple and interrelated relationships simultaneously. For instance, in contrast to multiple regression analysis, path analysis can assess several equations at once and these equations can be interrelated, implying that the dependent variable in one equation can simultaneously be an independent variable in one or more other equations. This allows modeling of complex relationships, which is not possible with any other multivariate technique available. In this study, testing the research hypotheses implies investigating the relationship between variables that can act both as dependent variables and independent variables simultaneously. Therefore, path analysis, compared to the regular regression analysis, is a more appropriate technique for assessing the proposed hypotheses.

In addition, while we employed procedural remedies recommended by Podsakoff and Organ (1986) to reduce common method variance, including temporal separation of measurements, different data collection stages, and reverse-coded items, the use of self-reported measures may still introduce common method bias. We thus conducted Harman’s single-factor test (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). The results indicate that no single factor accounted for more than 35% of the variance. Therefore, the common method variance is unlikely to be a major concern. In addition, we have avoided treating the single factor test as definitive proof that CMV is absent.

4. Results

Table 1 reports the means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and correlations among the study variables. The reliability coefficients indicate satisfactory internal consistency for all constructs, and the correlation pattern is generally consistent with the proposed conceptual framework, providing preliminary support for the hypothesized relationships (see Table 1).

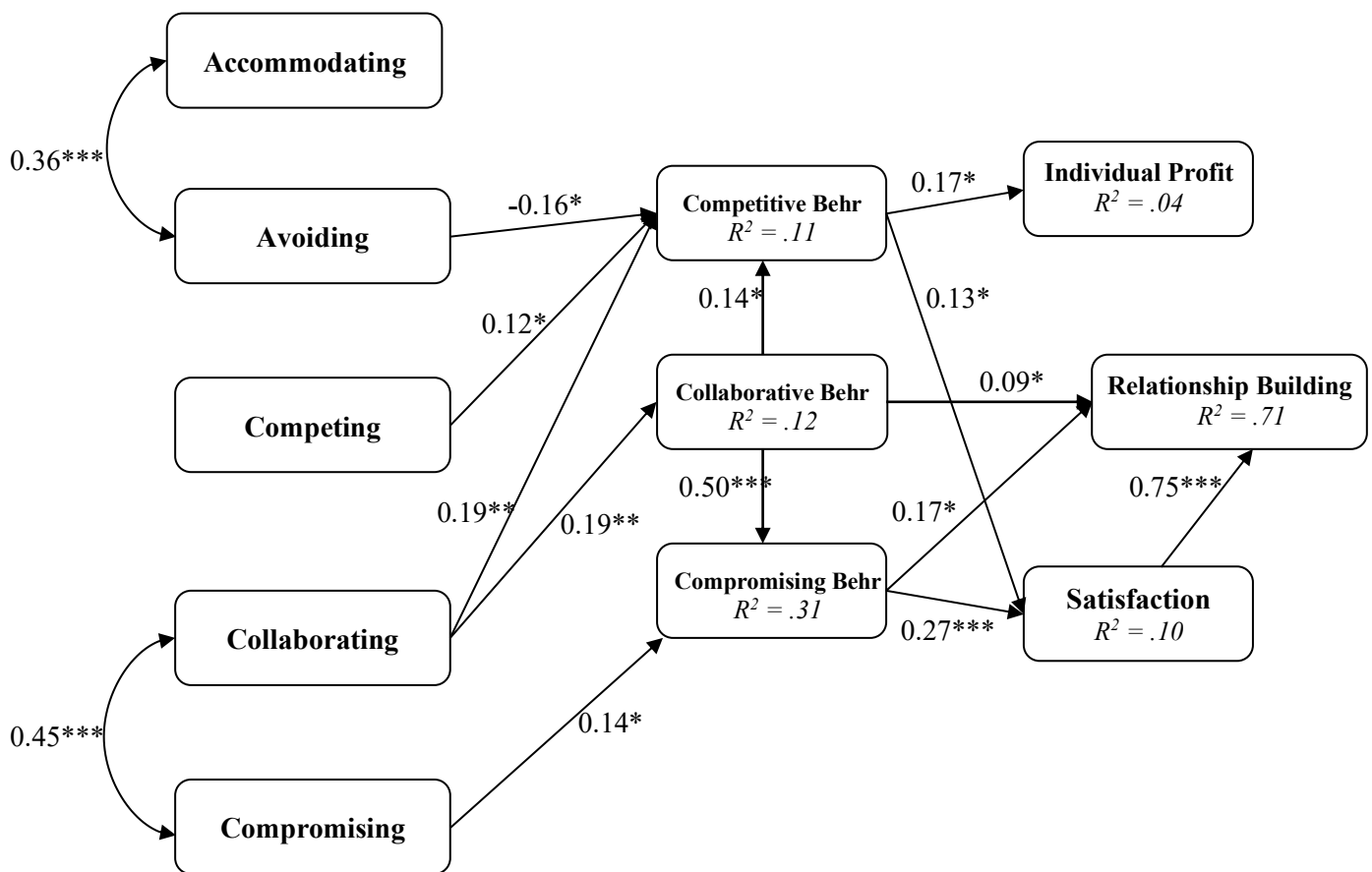
TABLE 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variable	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Role	0.50	0.50	-												
2. Working experience	1.10	2.20	-.04	-											
3. Collaborating style	3.87	.44	-.01	.01	(.78)										
4. Accommodating style	3.20	.52	-.00	.03	.20**	(.74)									
5. Competing style	3.28	.70	.04	.14	.02	-.14*	(.78)								
6. Avoiding style	3.10	.72	-.06	-.00	.17*	.36***	-.04	(.77)							

7. Compromising style	3.67	.59	-.04	-.09	.50***	.28***	-.05	.19**	(.71)						
8. Competitive behaviors	3.72	.61	-.05	.01	.22***	.05	.13	-.13	.07	(.82)					
9. Collaborative behaviors	3.66	.60	-.05	.16*	.30***	.14*	.06	.00	.30***	.20**	(.82)				
10. Compromising behaviors	3.86	.61	-.02	.20**	.20**	-.03	.04	.02	.27***	.08	.55***	(.72)			
11. Individual Profit	1277.6	166.2	.06	-.05	-.10	.14	-.07	-.03	-.02	.17*	-.02	-.11	-		
12. Satisfaction with negotiation	3.91	.89	.07	.21**	.08	.09	.01	.03	.12	.17*	.25***	.29**	.06	(.87)	
13. Relationship building	3.87	.87	.06	.13	.14	.09	.04	.05	.18*	.13	.38***	.43***	-.01	.82***	(.86)

$N = 227$. Variables were coded as follows: Role, 0 = buyer, 1 = seller; negotiation styles ranged from 0 to 5. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (2-tailed). The bold numbers in parentheses along the diagonal are reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alphas); individual profits are actual dollar amounts.

Figure 1 reports the robust maximum-likelihood parameter estimates for the main predictors, significance levels, and proportions of explained variance (R^2 s) for the hypothesized relationships. Because of the relatively large number of variables and the fact that data distribution was non-normalized, the Robust Maximum-Likelihood (ME = ML, ROBUST) method was used for analysis. The output of the robust maximum-likelihood provides a robust chi-square statistic and corrected model fit indices, which performed better when the normal distribution assumption was false (Bentler, 1995). The structural model demonstrated a good fit to the data ($\chi^2[88] = 103.9$; NNFI = 0.96; CFI = 0.97; IFI = 0.97; RMSEA $_{[.000, .051]} = .030$), indicating that the proposed process model adequately represents the observed relationships.



- Only statistically significant results are reported: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (2-tailed).
- The R^2 s presented in the model are equivalent to one minus the disturbance for each endogenous variable and reflect the proportion of variance explained.

FIGURE 1. Path Coefficients for the Research Model

4.1. Negotiation Styles and Bargaining Behaviors

Consistent with the proposed framework, negotiation styles significantly predicted bargaining behaviors during the negotiation process. Specifically, competing and collaborating styles were positively associated with competitive bargaining behaviors, collaborating style was positively associated with collaborative bargaining behaviors, compromising style was positively associated with compromising bargaining behaviors, and avoiding style was negatively associated with competitive bargaining behaviors. Overall, these findings provide substantial support for H1 and H2 and confirm that negotiation styles are important predictors of actual bargaining behaviors.

One noteworthy finding concerns accommodating style which did not significantly predict any bargaining behavior. Although negotiators may regard accommodation as an appropriate conflict-management strategy in certain situations, this preference did not translate into observable bargaining behaviors in the present study. The non-significant effects of accommodating style may reflect a distinction between accommodating orientation and its behavioral enactment. Although accommodating negotiators place greater weight on their counterparts' interests, such other-concern does not prescribe a single behavioral response. Such heterogeneity is consistent with evidence that other-regarding motives do not uniformly translate into problem-solving behavior unless accompanied by sufficient resistance to yielding (De Dreu et al., 2000), and that relational accommodation can involve trade-offs between relational capital and economic efficiency (Curhan et al., 2008). In mixed-motive negotiations, accommodating motives may therefore conflict with negotiators' simultaneous responsibility to protect their own economic interests, producing heterogeneous responses such as restraint, concession readiness, responsiveness, or reduced assertiveness. This heterogeneity can weaken systematic associations with any single category of bargaining behavior. Accordingly, the null paths should not be interpreted as evidence that accommodating style is behaviorally irrelevant; rather, they indicate that the translation of an accommodating orientation into observable bargaining behavior is contingent on motivational and situational conditions, warranting further investigation. (see Figure 1).

Finally, collaborative bargaining behavior was positively associated with both competitive and compromising behaviors, which further directly and indirectly affect individual profits and satisfaction, respectively. This finding suggests that collaborative bargaining is not purely cooperative but instead integrates both value-claiming and value-creating activities. Negotiators with collaborating style appear to defend their own interests while simultaneously engaging in information sharing, creative problem solving, and reciprocal concessions, consistent with the view that effective collaboration requires balancing competitive and cooperative motives (Elfenbein, 2021; Liu & Siddiqui, 2025; Thompson, 1990).

4.2. Bargaining Behaviors and Negotiation Outcomes

The relationships between bargaining behaviors and negotiation outcomes generally support the proposed hypotheses. As predicted, bargaining behaviors significantly influenced objective economic outcomes as well as affective and relational outcomes, including negotiator satisfaction and relationship building. In particular, competitive bargaining behaviors are positively associated with individual profits and negotiator satisfaction, in support of H3. Two findings, however, deserve particular attention. First, contrary to H5, collaborative behavior was positively associated with relationship building but was not directly related to either individual profits or negotiator satisfaction. This finding suggests that collaborative bargaining primarily contributes to long-term relational value rather than immediate individual economic gains. Although collaboration facilitates value creation through integrative problem solving and mutually beneficial trade-offs, it does not necessarily ensure that individual negotiators capture a larger share of the value created (Thompson, 1990). Instead, its principal benefit lies in strengthening buyer–seller relationships and establishing a foundation for future cooperation. It is also

worth noting that collaborative bargaining behavior positively affects competitive behavior and compromising behavior, which further affect individual profit and satisfaction, respectively. As a result, collaborating style is the only one that consistently generates economically and relationally sustainable outcomes by producing higher joint profits, strengthening long-term relationships, and enhancing post-negotiation satisfaction, indicating that collaborating is a strong candidate for sustainable business relationships in today's turbulent environment.

Second, compromising behavior was not negatively associated with individual profits as predicted in H4. Rather than reducing economic performance, reciprocal concession making may enable negotiators to reach mutually acceptable agreements without significantly sacrificing financial outcomes. This finding indicates that compromising should not necessarily be viewed as an economically inferior bargaining strategy, particularly in buyer–seller relationships where maintaining future cooperation is important.

4.3. Mediating Role of Bargaining Behaviors

The results also provide strong support for the proposed mediating role of bargaining behaviors. Because path analysis simultaneously estimates relationships among variables serving as both antecedents and outcomes, support for the hypothesized structural model also provides evidence for the proposed mediation mechanism. As shown in Figure 1, bargaining behaviors fully mediate the relationships between negotiation styles and negotiation outcomes. Thus, negotiation styles do not directly determine negotiation success. Instead, they influence the bargaining behaviors negotiators adopt, which subsequently shape both objective outcomes (individual profits) and subjective outcomes (negotiator satisfaction and relationship building), in support of H6.

Overall, the findings provide strong empirical support for the proposed process model. Stable negotiation styles are translated into distinct bargaining behaviors, and these behaviors subsequently determine sustainable negotiation outcomes. This evidence supports the micro-foundational perspective advanced in this study by demonstrating that negotiation effectiveness is achieved through dynamic bargaining interactions rather than through negotiation styles alone.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined how negotiation styles influence bargaining behaviors and, subsequently, sustainable negotiation outcomes in buyer–seller supply chain negotiations. Consistent with the proposed conceptual framework, the findings demonstrate that negotiation styles shape the behavioral strategies negotiators adopt during bargaining, and these behaviors subsequently determine both objective economic outcomes and subjective relational outcomes. By integrating individual negotiation styles, bargaining behaviors, and negotiation outcomes within a single process model, this study provides new insights into the behavioral mechanisms through which sustainable buyer–seller supply chains are developed.

5.1. Theoretical Contributions

This study makes three important contributions to negotiation and marketing literature. Firstly, this research advances the micro-foundations of negotiation by demonstrating that stable individual negotiation styles systematically shape bargaining behaviors, which subsequently influence negotiation outcomes. Earlier research on individual differences produced mixed and sometimes contradictory findings, leading many scholars to question the predictive value of individual characteristics in negotiation (Barry & Friedman, 1998; Liu et al., 2005; Rubin & Brown, 1975). Rather than treating these inconsistencies as evidence against the importance of individual differences, our findings support the view that their effects become meaningful only when examined through the behavioral processes

enacted during negotiation. Specifically, competing, collaborating, compromising, and avoiding styles each exhibit distinct behavioral consequences, whereas accommodating style does not significantly translate into observable bargaining behaviors. These findings provide empirical support for the argument that negotiation styles constitute important micro-foundations of negotiation processes, thereby responding to longstanding calls for more integrative investigations of individual differences in negotiation (Barry & Friedman, 1998; Liu & Elfenbein, 2025; Thompson, 1990).

Secondly, this study contributes to the emerging relational perspective on supply chain negotiation by demonstrating that bargaining behaviors serve as the behavioral mechanism linking negotiation styles to negotiation outcomes. Although previous studies have separately examined the relationships between individual characteristics and bargaining behaviors or between bargaining behaviors and negotiation outcomes, few have integrated these relationships into a unified process framework within an integrative buyer–seller context. The present findings show that bargaining behaviors fully mediate the influence of negotiation styles on negotiation outcomes, suggesting that negotiation styles do not directly determine negotiation success. Instead, they influence how negotiators interact with one another throughout the bargaining process, and these interactions ultimately shape negotiation performance. This behavioral process perspective is consistent with recent conceptualizations of negotiation as a dynamic relational process rather than a discrete economic event (Choi & Yang, 2024; Elfenbein, 2021). By explicitly identifying bargaining behaviors as the missing behavioral mechanism, this study extends existing supply chain negotiation research beyond static individual differences toward a more process-oriented understanding of negotiation effectiveness.

Thirdly, and most importantly, this study contributes to the growing literature on sustainable buyer–seller supply chain relationships by demonstrating that sustainable negotiation success extends beyond immediate economic gains. Traditional negotiation research has predominantly evaluated success using objective economic outcomes such as negotiated price or individual profit. Our findings suggest that sustainable negotiation outcomes encompass multiple dimensions, including economic performance, negotiator satisfaction, and long-term relationship building. In particular, collaborative bargaining behaviors emerge as the primary driver of enduring buyer–seller relationships, even though they do not necessarily directly maximize individual short-term profits. This distinction provides empirical support for recent arguments that successful negotiations should be evaluated using both objective and subjective value (Elfenbein, 2021; Yan et al., 2025). More broadly, the findings highlight an important distinction between value creation and value claiming (Thompson, 1990). Collaborative bargaining expands the overall value available to negotiating parties and strengthens future cooperation, but creating additional value does not necessarily ensure that individual negotiators capture a greater share of that value. Consequently, collaborative negotiation should be viewed as a strategic capability for achieving sustainable supply chain relationships rather than simply a tactic for maximizing immediate returns.

5.2. Practical Implications

The findings also offer several important implications for managers and organizations in managing sustainable supply chains. First, organizations should recognize that supply chain negotiation effectiveness depends not only on technical bargaining skills but also on negotiators' underlying behavioral orientations. Because negotiation styles systematically influence bargaining behaviors, organizations can incorporate negotiation-style assessments into recruitment, selection, leadership development, and negotiation training. Such assessments enable organizations to identify negotiators' natural behavioral tendencies and provide more targeted developmental interventions.

Second, the findings suggest that negotiation training should move beyond teaching generic bargaining techniques toward developing adaptive behavioral capabilities. Traditional negotiation training often emphasizes distributive tactics for claiming value, while paying less attention to the behavioral processes

through which long-term relationships are established. Our results demonstrate that collaborative bargaining behaviors are particularly valuable because they promote enduring buyer–seller relationships without necessarily sacrificing economic performance. Accordingly, organizations should train negotiators to develop competencies in information sharing, joint problem solving, perspective taking, and integrative value creation. These capabilities are particularly important in contemporary business environments where repeated interactions, strategic partnerships, and supply-chain collaboration increasingly determine long-term organizational success.

More broadly, the results reinforce the principle that organizations negotiate through individuals (Felin & Foss, 2008). Sustainable interorganizational relationships therefore depend fundamentally on the behavioral capabilities of individual negotiators. By increasing negotiators' awareness of how their negotiation styles influence bargaining behaviors and subsequent outcomes, organizations can cultivate negotiation practices that simultaneously enhance economic performance, strengthen buyer–seller supply chain relationships, and create long-term value.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

This study has its limitations and the findings should be interpreted with caution. First, although the study employed procedural remedies recommended by Podsakoff and Organ (1986) to reduce common method variance, including temporal separation of measurements, different data collection stages, and reverse-coded items, the use of self-reported measures may still introduce common method bias. Future research could strengthen causal inference by combining self-report measures with behavioral coding of negotiation interactions or objective negotiation performance indicators.

Second, the study relied on a student sample participating in a simulated buyer–seller negotiation. Although student samples are appropriate for examining underlying behavioral mechanisms under controlled experimental conditions and provide strong internal validity, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings to experienced business negotiators. Student participants generally possess less accumulated negotiation experience, weaker organizational role identities, and lower real-world financial and career stakes than professional purchasing or sales negotiators. Our findings should be interpreted as evidence concerning the behavioral mechanisms operating among relatively novice negotiators in a controlled mixed-motive buyer–seller simulation, rather than as direct estimates of how senior corporate negotiators will behave. In particular, the magnitude of the style–behavior relationships, strategic adaptation to counterpart behavior, and long-term relational consequences may differ among experienced professionals. Future research should replicate the proposed process model using professional buyers and sellers, experienced sales managers, procurement specialists, or executives engaged in real organizational negotiations. Examining actual buyer–seller negotiations would substantially enhance the external validity of the findings and provide stronger evidence regarding the role of negotiation styles in organizational settings.

Third, this study examines individual negotiators as independent observation units and did not consider dyadic interaction effects between buyers and sellers. Considering that negotiation is an interactive two-party process, we propose future studies to examine configurations of counterpart styles and behaviors using dyadic methods such as the actor–partner interdependence model, which would separate actor effects from partner and interaction effects. This extension could reveal, for example, whether collaboration produces its strongest relational benefits when reciprocated and whether competitive counterpart behavior changes the behavioral expression or effectiveness of a focal negotiator's collaborative orientation.

Finally, future research should extend the present model by incorporating situational contingencies. While this study focused on stable individual negotiation styles, negotiation outcomes are likely to

emerge from the interaction between individual characteristics and contextual factors such as bargaining power, negotiation complexity, relationship history, cultural differences, and organizational incentives. Integrating individual differences with situational constraints represents a promising direction for advancing negotiation theory and developing a more comprehensive understanding of sustainable negotiation processes. In particular, the proposed style–behavior–outcome relationships should be interpreted within several important boundary conditions rather than as universally applicable. First, prior relationship history may shape how negotiation styles are behaviorally enacted: collaborative and accommodating orientations may generate stronger relational benefits when parties anticipate repeated exchanges, whereas their advantages may diminish in one-shot encounters where future relationship value is limited. Second, power asymmetry can alter both behavioral expression and effectiveness. When one party possesses substantially greater bargaining power, collaborative information sharing or accommodation may expose the weaker party to value appropriation rather than reciprocal cooperation, while competitive behavior may be more consequential for the powerful party. Third, negotiation task and product characteristics determine the opportunity for integrative bargaining. Collaborative styles should be particularly effective when negotiations involve multiple issues with differently weighted preferences that permit value-creating trade-offs, but may offer fewer advantages in predominantly distributive, single-issue negotiations. Finally, cultural context can influence how concern for self and others is interpreted and translated into bargaining behavior because norms concerning assertiveness, harmony, reciprocity, and relationship preservation vary across cultures. These contingencies suggest that negotiation styles are not deterministic prescriptions for behavior or performance; rather, their effects depend on the relational, structural, task, and cultural context in which negotiation occurs. Future research should therefore explicitly test these factors as moderators of the relationships between negotiation styles, bargaining behaviors, and economic and relational outcomes.

Moreover, future research can extend the present framework along several complementary directions. First, cross-cultural studies could examine whether cultural norms concerning self-interest, harmony, reciprocity, and relationship preservation alter how negotiation styles are translated into bargaining behaviors. Second, research could investigate digital and online negotiations, where reduced social cues and technology-mediated communication may change the behavioral expression and effectiveness of different negotiation styles. Third, longitudinal and repeated-negotiation designs could capture how negotiators adapt their styles and behaviors in response to previous interactions and how these dynamics accumulate to shape trust and long-term relationships. Finally, future studies should examine organizational incentive systems, such as individual versus joint performance rewards, as moderators of the style–behavior–outcome process because such incentives may strengthen value-claiming or value-creating motivations. Together, these extensions would clarify the contextual and temporal boundaries of the proposed framework and enhance its applicability to contemporary interorganizational negotiations.

5.4. Conclusion

Negotiation represents far more than a mechanism for determining prices or allocating economic value; it is a relational process through which organizations create, claim, and sustain value in supply chains. By integrating negotiation styles, bargaining behaviors, and negotiation outcomes into a unified process model to examine sustainable supply chains, this study demonstrates that sustainable supply chain success originates from the behavioral strategies negotiators employ rather than from their negotiation preferences alone. The findings reveal that collaborative bargaining plays a distinctive role in fostering enduring buyer–seller relationships, highlighting that the most successful negotiations are not necessarily those that maximize immediate individual gains, but those that simultaneously create economic value, strengthen relationships, and establish the foundation for future cooperation. In doing so, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of negotiation as a micro-foundational process through which sustainable supply chain relationships are built and maintained.

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