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**How are i-deals negotiated in small and medium enterprises?
The perspective of the employer and the employee**

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How are i-deals negotiated in small and medium enterprises? The perspective of the employer and the employee





SMEs are a favorable context for the negotiation of i-deals



- No Formal Human Resource (HR) policies
- Employees themselves negotiate their own work arrangements

(Dex & Sheibl, 2002)



- Close relationship (employee-employer)
- Share information and be aware of each other's needs

(Atkinson & Sandiford, 2016)



- Employees' tasks are more flexible
- Many unforeseen events that require new tasks can be negotiated

(Atkinson & Sandiford, 2016)



- Few employees
- More aware of their value - experience and skills

(Bal, 2017)

Research objective: How are i-deals negotiated in SMEs?

1. Identify which **types of i-deals** are negotiated in SMEs.
2. Explore the **influence tactics** used in i-deal negotiation.
3. Understand how different negotiating parties perceive their **power** in the negotiation of i-deals.
4. Observe **gender differences** in the type of i-deals being negotiated, the use of influence tactics, and perceived power.

How are i-deals negotiated in SMEs?

Influence tactics: set of strategies used by one person to induce a change in another person's behavior, attitude, or values (Yukl & Falbe, 1991)

- Size → use of influence (Li et al., 2020)

Influence tactics

Soft tactics

Inspirational appeals, collaboration, consultation

Rational tactics

Exchange, rational persuasion, information

Hard tactics

Pressure, coalition and legitimizing



(Yukl et al., 1991, 2005; Persuasion Theory, 1986)

Power: dual perspective

Control that a person has over certain resources (their own and others')

- Reward
- Coercive
- Legitimate
- Expert
- Referent
- Informational

(French & Raven, 1959)



Personal sense of power

Self-perceived ability to influence others

- Personal sense of power → proactive behaviors → i-deals (Anderson et al., 2012)

Gender differences



- ♀ fewer senior positions
- The inhibition of negotiation derived from women's lower relative power (Small et al., 2007)
- The difficulty male employers may have in understanding women's interests and concerns

♂ employers → tactics characterised by greater aggressiveness, directness, dominance, and assertiveness towards their employees

♀ employers → tactics characterised by interpersonal sensitivity, modesty, and involvement towards their employees

(Mazei et al., 2015)

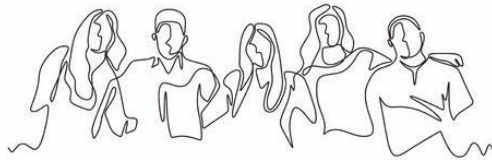
♂ employees → rational persuasion

♀ employees → inspirational appeals

(Chaturve et al., 2019)

Gender differences

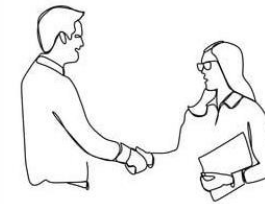
Instrumentality



Person's beliefs about whether initiating a negotiation is a useful tool to achieve their goals or not

(Reif & Brodbeck, 2014)

Expectations



Perceived likelihood of initiating a successful negotiation

Participants:

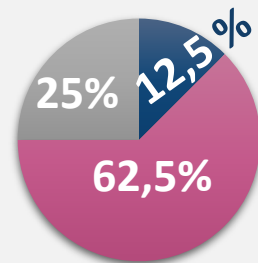
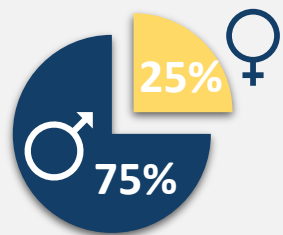


- 16 Andalusian SMEs

- Service sector (65.0%)
- Industrial sector (10.0%)
- Agricultural sector (10.0%)
- Other sectors (15.0%)



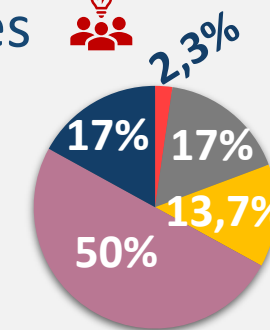
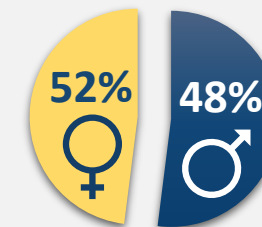
16 employers 



- Further Education
- Higher Education
- Postgraduate

- \bar{X} = 43,37 years (DT = 6,63)
- *Tenure* = 11,9 years (DT = 8,00)
- 100% Full-time contract

44 employees 



- Primary Education
- Secondary Education
- Further Education
- Higher Education
- Postgraduate

- \bar{X} = 39,18 years (DT = 7,28)
- *Tenure* = 6,79 years (DT = 5,33)
- 88% Full-time/ 12% Part-time

Procedure:

 | Semi-structured interviews = 45 – 60 minutes



- Face-to-face
- In the organization site
- Confidentiality and Informed consent
- Recorded & transcribed (Atlas.ti)



Thematic analysis

(Braun and Clarke, 2006)

- Type of i-deals
- Influence tactics
- Power
- Gender differences

Results:

1. Types of i-deals negotiated in SMEs. →

- ✓ Development
- ✓ Task
- ✓ Financial
- ✓ Flexibility
- ✓ Reduced-workload

(Rousseau et al., 2006)



Task i-deal

Changing environment → Multitask

"In this company we have to do everything ourselves. One day I made a proposal to (name of employer) to take advantage of social media. I knew it was something that could be good for business. And now I am also in charge of it (...) We are always changing (...) Either we adapt, or we are left behind".

♀ Schedule flexibility i-deals
 ♂ Holidays i-deals



Location flexibility i-deal

Presenteeism culture

"I don't have a problem with them being able to start working a little later, they have children, and they might get sick, but I'm not in favour of people working from home, because I'm sure that even if they start working at the right time, they will have three breakfasts with their families, and they will not be doing as they should".

Instrumentality
 Expectations

(Reif & Brodbeck, 2014)



Holiday i-deal

Company activity

"If I had to negotiate holidays with each and every worker, they would all come in and want their holidays at the same time, and that cannot be because the company cannot afford it [...]".

Work-life balance

"My wife works in a shopping center. Her working hours are worse. I take my holidays to be with our children because she cannot".

Results:

2. Influence tactics used in i-deal negotiation.

Rational tactics

I-deals related with **work performance**

- ✓ Task
- ✓ Reduced-workload

- Multi-task environment



"In this company we all do a bit of everything, from working in the darkroom to reception. I knew they wanted to use new technologies to improve our visibility, so I met with the manager and explained that I could also devote an hour each day to social media. [...]"

 Schedule flexibility i-deals

Soft tactics



I-deals related with **employment conditions**

- ✓ Financial
- ✓ Development

- Tenure
- Trust



"I need to ask you (the employer) if I can sign up for this automatism course, this is a must, with this we are sure to move forward [...] Obviously, I would not have said this to him before, I have been here for 10 years"

 Development I i-deals
 Financial i-deals

Hard tactics



I-deals related with **flexibility**

- ✓ Schedule
- ✓ Location
- ✓ Holidays

- Anticipated resistance
- Scarce previous positive results



"I had a new center, and I needed someone to go there. I told this girl about the situation. I tried to make her understand my point of view [...] So in the end I told her; I need you to come in an hour earlier, otherwise you know that when the contract ends in June, that's it"

 Location + Holidays I i-deals
 Schedule flexibility i-deals

Results:

3. Power in the negotiation of i-deals.

Expert

Referent



- Control that a person has over certain resources

"He was the right person. He has a lot of technical skills, and he is also able to sell the product to anyone." (Expert power).

"I admire him, he is my top employee and, to be honest, rather than offer the course to someone else, I would offer it to him [...] We have a lot of trust, and he knows what I want." (Referent power).

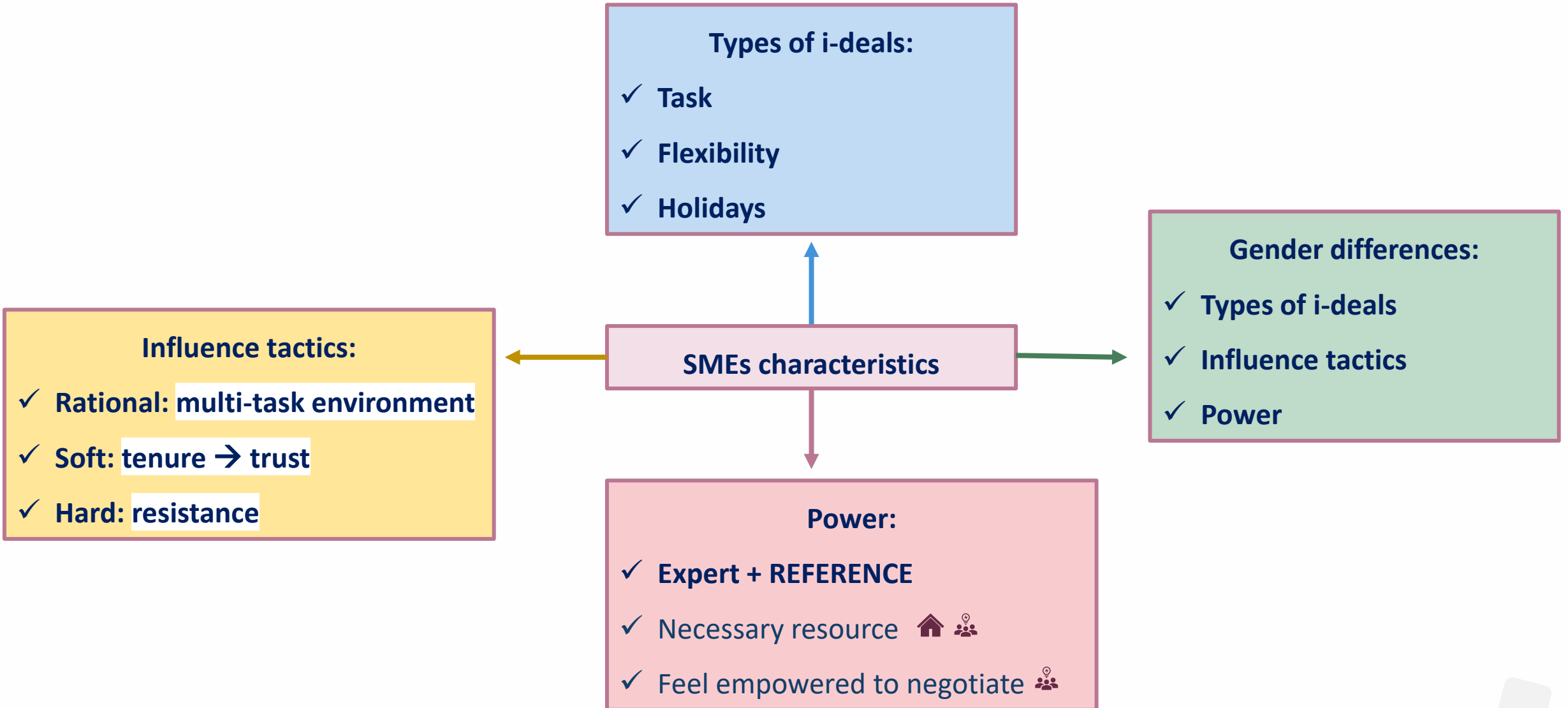


- Control that a person has over certain resources
- Personal sense of power

"I knew that French would be useful for us to be able to expand abroad, so I proposed this course to (name of employer) [...] The course didn't last long, and I didn't need to go to class for so long because I more or less knew some French."

- ♂ Expert + referent power
- ♀ Expert + informational power

Conclusions:



Limitations and future lines of research:

Target's gender



Female employers

Heterogeneous group



Specific groups, such as people in transition to retirement or people with disabilities negotiate in SMEs

Successful negotiations



Failed negotiations by identifying the influence tactics and power relations of such negotiations from a gender perspective

Note: Employer ; Employee 





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