

A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master's degree in
Management from the Nova School of Business and Economics.

HOW DOES SUPERVISOR HUMOUR (AFFILIATIVE AND AGGRESSIVE) INFLUENCE
INTENDED NEGOTIATION TACTICS OF EMPLOYEES?

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17-12-2021

Abstract

Supervisor humour has increased recently, paying more attention to benefits than downsides and little attention to negotiation, although it seems to matter. Building upon Social Exchange Theory, our study examines supervisor humour's impact on negotiation tactics via LMX. Using a time-lagged design and a sample of 181 participants, we found partial support for our hypotheses. Affiliative supervisor humour decreased deception directly and distributive tactics indirectly through LMX. In contrast, aggressive supervisor humour increased distributive tactics indirectly through LMX. These findings underscore the importance of using supervisor humour as a ubiquitous, if often concealed, leadership tool and even negotiation tactic.

Keywords: (Human Resources Management, Leadership and Change Management, affiliative and aggressive supervisor humour, negotiation tactics, intentions to use integrative/distributive tactics, intentions to use deception, supervisor(s), employee(s), negotiation, Leader-member exchange (LMX), management sciences, organisational behaviour, negotiation, psychology)

I would hereby first like to thank Pedro Neves for his formidable supervision of my WP during the last months, and for the opportunity to write a Direct Research with him. Then, I would like to thank the WP team at Nova for all their efforts throughout this whole time. Also, thank you to Filipa Castanheira, Miguel Duarte, and Pedro Neves (again) for their time, efforts dedicated to my WPs Defense. Especially, I want to thank my roommate Pietro and my parents for their support, love, and time. I wish everybody a great Christmas time and a Happy New Year!

This work used infrastructure and resources funded by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (UID/ECO/00124/2013, UID/ECO/00124/2019 and Social Sciences DataLab, Project 22209), POR Lisboa (LISBOA-01-0145-FEDER-007722 and Social Sciences DataLab, Project 22209) and POR Norte (Social Sciences DataLab, Project 22209).

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Humour in general and in business

Researchers have studied humour for quite some time. In the 1950s, it was demonstrated that humour could be used to express frustration and solidarity with other employees, as a coping strategy for difficult situations imposed by management (Bradney 1957, 179) and a boredom reduction technique, fooling around with co-workers (Argyle 1989; Linstead 1985, 741). Before the 2000s, there was relatively little academic research in the area, but it fortunately received increasing attention and consideration (Blythe and Hassenzahl 2003; Collinson 2002, 269).

In the early 2000s, humour research was directed towards the workplace, as it was associated with improved creativity and collegiality (Burns et al. 2001, 83; Holmes 2000, 159; Holmes and Marra 2002, 65; Romero and Cruthirds 2006, 58). Through the expression of solidarity, humour can help build and maintain harmonious workplace relationships (Holmes

and Marra 2002, 65). Fun workplaces support jocund, gratifying activities (Ford et al. 2003, 26) and may include humorous events that inspire laughter and/or bring pleasure (Plester 2009, 584). It can thus be said that humour in the context of work is still a relatively new concept.

Indeed, Martin et al. (2003, 48) were the first to develop a scale specific for work contexts, not focussing on the verbal use of humour, as Holmes and Marra (2002) did. The workplace is an environment in which people spend their wakeful hours (Rawlings and Findlay 2016, 49) and thus share in or are confronted with humour (Martin et al. 2003, 48). Worker humour relationships may matter because humour is positively associated with bonding of employees, morale, and increased team creativity (Holmes 2007, 518; Holmes and Marra 2002, 65; Romero and Cruthirds 2006, 58).

The Humour Styles Questionnaire (HSQ), a new multidimensional measure introduced by Martin et al. (2003), assesses four everyday life humour uses or functions. Two of these dimensions (affiliative & self-enhancing) benefit psychosocial well-being (Lefcourt 2001; Vanderheiden and Mayer 2021). The other two (aggressive & self-defeating) are said to be less propitious and even deleterious for well-being, potentially (Martin et al. 2003, 48). *Affiliative humour* enhances one's relationships with others, tells jokes, and says funny things, and *self-enhancing humour* is to elevate oneself while being tolerant and not hurtful to others (Hayes 2021). On the contrary, *aggressive humour* enhances the self at the expense of others (Martin et al. 2003, 48); *self-defeating humour* is at expense of oneself (Potipiroon and Ford 2021, 415).

Positive (affiliative & self-enhancing) supervisor humour helps workers deal with stress (Cann et al. 2014; Doosje et al. 2010, 275). It also helps build and support supervisor-employee relationships (Cann et al. 2014; Cooper 2008, 1087). Additionally, it enhances problem-solving creativity (Holmes 2007, 518). Indeed, increasing evidence demonstrates the benefits of positive humour, particularly by supervisors (Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2018, 697), providing many potential benefits (Cann et al. 2014).

We know, for example, that affiliative supervisor humour is positively correlated with employee attitudes, e.g., job satisfaction, organisational pride, organisational commitment, and self-esteem (Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2018, 697; Nahrgang 2009, 108; Stringer 2006, 125). As such, humour may be a valuable supervisor tool when used appropriately, creating, and increasing cohesion, strengthening solidarity, and emphasising collegiality (Scheel and Gockel 2017). For instance, a supervisor may use humour in a hierarchical relationship for various relational goals (Lynch 2009, 444). Better liked leaders use humour more (Holmes and Marra 2002, 65; Hughes and Avey 2009, 540). The function of affiliative humour is to enhance sympathy and non-threatening perceptions (Martineau 1972, 101), meaning a reduction in interpersonal tensions, which creates a positive work environment (Scheel and Gockel 2017), benefitting communication and even the whole organisational culture. Affiliative humour creates an environment of shared interpersonal relationships and identifies similarities between leaders and subordinates, thus catalysing employees to perceive their supervisors as their group members (Scheel and Gockel 2017). Affiliative supervisor humour benefits low core self-evaluating employees, supporting them in developing trust and, consequently, improving their performance (Neves and Karagonlar 2020, 115).

Most studies focus exclusively on the positive effects of executive humour, although the potentially harmful consequences of leadership humour have also been documented and have gained increasing prominence in recent years e.g., (Huo et al. 2012, 859; Pundt and Herrmann, 2014, 108; Robert et al. 2016, 375; Tremblay 2017, 363; Wisse and Rietzschel 2014, 249).

The HSQ by Martin et al. (2003) comes into play here, as it assesses both positive and negative humour styles at work in one study (Martin et al. 2003, 48). In our research, we study the effects of affiliative and aggressive supervisor humour on intended negotiation tactics.

There are some conflicting viewpoints. Aggressive supervisor humour causes employees' strain and addictive behaviours (Huo et al. 2012, 859). Thus, avoiding such humour improves

leader-follower relationships (Neves and Karagonlar 2020, 115). Aggressive humour can detrimentally impact employees' job perceptions (Robert et al. 2016, 375). Aggressive supervisor humour contrasts one's view with an opponent's or differentiates one's group from another group (Scheel and Gockel 2017), potentially to bullying, belittling, and denigrating others. (Ferguson and Ford 2008, 283; Romero and Cruthirds 2006, 58; Scheel and Gockel 2017). Leaders applying aggressive humour intend to enhance their status and feel better at the expense of their employees (Martin et al. 2003, 48). Still, it may help clarify power relations and may increase the employee behavioural compliance (Dwyer 1991, 1; Holmes 2007, 518). Nonetheless, when misused, and in most cases, this form of humour is counterproductive to relationships and organisational culture as a whole (Martin et al. 2003, 48; Romero and Cruthirds 2006, 58). Indeed, the costs of aggressive humour can be exceptionally high as employees may feel offended (Scheel and Gockel 2017).

In general, the diversity of research interests speaks to the enormous capacity and potential of humour in the workplace, in business and possibly also in negotiations (Scheel and Gockel 2017). However, there is little research on how supervisor humour influences negotiation. This thesis focuses on affiliative and aggressive supervisor humour as humour applied from leaders to their employees, an interpersonal focus rather than intrapsychic (self-enhancing & defeating humour). By examining how both affiliative and aggressive supervisor humour affects negotiation, we contribute to the literature in several ways:

First, we consider both the potential advantages (affiliative) and disadvantages (aggressive) of supervisor humour in negotiation, simultaneously, which is important as many studies have focused on positive humour (Pundt and Herrmann 2014, 108).

Second, we examine the role of supervisor humour in the context of negotiation, linking the two for the first time in the literature and filling a research gap. We examine how supervisor humour affects employees' intended negotiation tactics when negotiating with their supervisors.

We expand the potential outcomes discussion of this phenomenon by investigating its impact on negotiation, which has been more commonly associated with other management tools and tactics, such as strategic planning, customer relationship management and employee engagement (Bain 2017). Connecting supervisor humour and intended negotiation tactics is important because the style of humour used by a supervisor has a significant impact on the type of negotiation tactics (integrative or distributive) used by a worker, and negotiation is one of the most common business activities.

Third, we put forth a potential mechanism that is important for humour and negotiation studies, assessing how the relationship between supervisor humour and negotiation is influenced by LMX (Social Exchange Theory) since relationships seem to matter both for supervisor humour and negotiation success.

1.2. Negotiation and humour

Negotiation is one of the most common business activities and transactions (Engle et al. 2013; 83). Both supervisors and employees negotiate daily to further tasks and build and change relationships (Gockel 2017, 65), allocating resources in decision-making, including nonidentical preferences (Weingart et al. 1987, 285). Two goals are said to be prevalent for negotiators: (1) examine the issue at hand and (2) maintain the relationship with the other party (Adelswärd and Öberg 1998, 411). Given the latter goal, humour use should influence negotiations. Negotiation tactics can be competitive, or collaborative (Lewicki and Saunders 2006) and humour can simultaneously be used both competitively and cooperatively, helping negotiators in the trade-off between being tough on the issue and soft on the people (Engle et al. 2013, 83; Scheel and Gockel 2017). Humour could also improve negotiation processes as humour styles have functional and structural potential; they may indeed relieve tension, as humour in negotiations can influence their structure, content, or process (Maemura and Horita 2012; 821).

Integrative negotiation tactics include intentions to (1) establish rapport, (2) find trade-offs, (3) exchange concessions, and (4) maximise both parties' interests (Sullivan et al. 2006, 567). Through trade-offs, both the supervisor and her/his employee can increase each other's gains (Okhuysen et al. 2003, 269). Effective information exchange promotes reasonable integrative solutions (Butler, 1999, 217; Carnevale and Pruitt 1993; Thompson et al. 2001, 139). In fact, "negotiators should create an environment that enables free and open discussion of all related issues and concerns at stake" (Lewicki and Saunders 2015, 74). Integrative negotiation and its tactics are about emphasising commonalities between parties and minimising differences (Lewicki and Saunders 2015, 74), finding solutions that meet both parties' needs and goals (Lewicki and Saunders 2015, 75). Success depends largely on meeting these acute factors (Carnevale and Pruitt 1993). The goal is to discover the other party's underlying real needs, as in "let us find a better deal for both of us" (Karrass 1999, 28), raising the level and content of the relationship between negotiators, reducing inherent tensions, and creating a win-win environment for the involved parties (Gockel 2017, 65).

In contrast, distributive negotiation tactics include: (1) convincing others to agree with you, (2) preventing others from exploiting weaknesses, (3) gaining the upper hand, and (4) persuading others to make more concessions (Sullivan et al. 2006, 567). Distributive negotiations involve multiple issues valued differently by the involved parties (Carnevale and Pruitt 1993). Distributive negotiation tactics include direct interest conflict between the supervisor and her/his employee and limited and fixed resources (Lewicki and Saunders 2006, 15). In distributive bargaining, negotiators do not try to understand the other party's needs and goals, or if so only to challenge, undermine, or even prevent the other side from meeting their needs and objectives (Lewicki and Saunders 2015, 76). Each party tries only to maximise their own gain (Barry and Friedmann 1998, 345) and applies tactics that maximise their outcome share. For instance, only providing information to the opposing side if it brings a competitive

benefit to themselves (Lewicki and Saunders 2015, 33), and gaining information from the opposing party to improve negotiation power (Lewicki and Saunders 2015, 33). However, parties that use distributive tactics in an integrative negotiation, may be likely to miss low-cost gains (Barry and Friedmann 1998, 345; Pinkley 1990, 117).

Negotiations also offer opportunities for deception. Indeed, any situation with competitive elements, including negotiation, is likely to involve deception (Aquino and Becker 2005, 661; Robinson et al. 2000, 649; Tenbrunsel 1998, 330) by which negotiating parties can profit (Bazerman et al. 2000, 279; Gaspar and Schweitzer 2021, 139; O'Connor and Carnevale 1997; 504). *Deception* is intentionally misleading a counterparty, entailing an advantage to the deceiver, which could also be self-protection "against" aggressive humour using supervisors, giving employees a feeling of not belonging and "enhancing their own status and feeling better at the expense of their own employees" (Martin et al. 2003, 48). However, little is known about the triggers of deception in negotiation. Nonetheless, it is not a desirable negotiation tactic one wants her/his counterpart to apply, as it involves: not disclosing information, knowingly misinterpreting information for their own advantage or using false statements on purpose (Lewicki and Saunders 2006). The information dilemma is part of many negotiations, as on the one hand, revealing information facilitates value creation, on the other, by being honest, a negotiator makes her/himself vulnerable to the counterparty (Lewicki and Saunders 2006). This is what makes relationships so crucial for negotiations. In summary, honesty is excellent in creating value, but it exposes a negotiator to increased risk. Negotiators may even intend to use deception as a self-protective strategy (Dees and Cramton 1991, 135; Dulebohn et al. 2012, 1715).

Humour comes into play. When used correctly, it can be a powerful tool for supervisors to create cohesion, strengthen solidarity and emphasise collegiality (Scheel and Gockel 2017),

including finding innovative solutions to complex problems, a hallmark of negotiation, benefits from positive humour.

Affiliative supervisor humour helps to clarify problems and enforce social norms (Robert et al, 2016, 375; Scheel and Gockel 2017). In addition, affiliative humour improves relationships with others, for example, by telling jokes and saying funny things (Martin et al. 2003, 48) granting employees a sense of belonging. Supervisor affiliative humour may convey a stronger affective bond with employees built on values of loyalty, commitment, support, and trust (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005, 874; Dulebohn et al. 2012, 1715; Uhl-Bien and Maslyn 2003, 697) so that employees see them as “group members”, which creates a positive work environment (Scheel and Gockel 2017).

In contrast, negative (aggressive) humour enhances the self at the expense of others (Martin et al. 2003, 48), which does not make employees feel that their relationship is improved or strengthened, nor does it convey a sense of belonging. In contrast, a supervisor uses it to contrast their view with an employee or differentiate their group from the employee's group (Scheel and Gockel 2017). A supervisor may use it to bully, belittle and denigrate others (Ferguson and Ford 2008, 283; Romero and Cruthirds 2006, 58; Scheel and Gockel 2017).

Affiliative humour conveying a message of belonging, trust, loyalty group member and a generally positive work environment should increase employees' intention to use integrative tactics and decrease their intention to use distributive and deceptive tactics when negotiating with their supervisor.

In contrast, we argue that supervisors who use humour intended to enhance their own status and feel better about themselves at the expense of their employees demotivate their employees, using integrative tactics, as in capturing value, and instead increase their intentions to use distributive tactics or deception.

Hypothesis 1: The supervisor's affiliative humour is positively related to the intention to use integrative tactics; b) negatively related to the intention to use distributive tactics; and c) negatively related to the intention to use deceptive tactics.

Hypothesis 2: Aggressive supervisor humour is a) negatively related to the intention to use integrative tactics, b) positively related to the intention to use distributive tactics; and c) positively related to the intention to use deceptive tactics.

1.3. The mediating role of LMX

LMX is rooted initially in role theory (Dulebohn et al. 2012, 1715; Graen, 1976, Graen and Scandura 1987) and relies heavily on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Erdogan and Liden 2002, 65; Kamdar and Van Dyne, 2007, 1286; Liao et al. 2017, 1090; Wayne and Green 1993, 1431). Work relationships are built on social exchange rather than economic exchange; these are characterised by loyalty, commitment, support, and trust (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005, 874; Uhl-Bien and Maslyn 2003, 697), making them social relationships in nature. When first introduced, LMX was groundbreaking because of two differentiators LMX focused on the distinct dyadic relationships between leaders and each of their followers (Dulebohn et al. 2012, 1715). Furthermore, LMX asserts that leaders do not establish the same form of relationship with every subordinate (Dulebohn et al. 2012, 1715) and assumes that leaders differentiate between their employees (Graen and Uhl-Bien 1995, 219; Ilies et al. 2007, 269; Schriesheim et al. 1999, 63). It has been one of the most proliferate concepts (Dulebohn et al. 2012, 1715). Also, negotiations that result in a win-win for the involved parties, where integrative negotiation tactics are applied, mean an environment of trust, support, and loyalty (Lewicki and Saunders 2006). Efficient negotiations are characterised by parties using integrative negotiation tactics, such as efficient working relationships through continuous interaction between supervisors and their employees (Ferris et al. 2009, 1379). These mutual dependencies in social exchange relationships have been referred to as "reciprocal interdependence" (Cropanzano and Mitchell

2005, 874; Molm 1994, 163). Nonetheless, followers' dependency tends to be greater than leaders because of the inherent power differential. Employees are more outcome dependent on their supervisors than the other way round, which motivates them to be strongly attuned to their supervisor's characteristics and evaluate them closely (Dépret and Fiske 1993). High-LMX relationships result in increased affective attachment in leader-follower relationships (Ferris et al. 2009, 1379; Gerstner and Day 1997, 827; Liden and Maslyn 1998, 43; Maslyn and Uhl-Bien 2001, 697; Uhl-Bien et al. 2000, 137; Uhl-Bien and Maslyn 2003, 511). Moreover, leader variables explained the most variance in LMX-quality (Dulebohn et al. 2012, 1715). On the one hand, executives seek close quality working relationships with some employees (Martin 2005, 141), based on e.g., trust, sympathy and recognition, or more formal and distant relationships with other employees (Lapierre et al. 2006, 489), e.g., based on more contractual exchanges (Dulebohn et al. 2012, 1715; Martin 2005, 141), meaning that employees working with the same leader may vary significantly in LMX/relationship quality (Li and Liao 2014, 847; Henderson et al. 2009, 517).

Research until now has not yet connected LMX to intended negotiation tactics, a gap that this study fills. Humour becomes a theme, as it helps build and support work relationships (Cooper 2008, 1087) and facilitates group processes (Romero and Pescosolidio, 2008 395). In particular, leader humour also contributes to LMX quality (Pundt and Herrmann 2014, 108; Pundt and Venz 2017, 87). Indeed, humour can help managers in developing effective working relationships (Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2018, 697).

Affiliative supervisor humour is said to decrease interpersonal tensions and help to build relationships, bring people together and create a positive work environment (Scheel and Gockel 2017). Communication may benefit from affiliative leader humour as it creates an environment of sharing interpersonal relationships. Leaders and their subordinates can identify similarities

with each other, reducing social distance and making employees perceive their supervisors as their group members (Scheel and Gockel 2017), potentially bringing improved LMX.

Aggressive supervisor humour, on the contrary, may yield to the opposite, which is, for instance, used to bully, humiliate, and denigrate others. (Romero and Cruthirds 2006, 58; Scheel and Gockel, 2017). Aggressive humour applying leaders enhance their own status and feel better at the expense of their employees (Martin et al. 2003, 48), however, aggressive humour can help sharpen the balance of power between supervisors and their employees and improve employees' compliance behaviour. (Scheel and Gockel 2017), which damages relationships and the company in most cases. The cost can be exceptionally high as employees may feel offended (Scheel and Gockel 2017).

When supervisors use affiliative humour, the quality of the relationship may become better, and employees are more motivated to use integrative tactics and less motivated to apply distributive tactics or deception.

On the other hand, when a supervisor uses aggressive humour, it usually has a strong negative effect on the relationship, which means employees tend to apply harder tactics, as in distributive and deception, and less integrative tactics. We thus argue:

Hypothesis 3: LMX mediates a) the positive relationship between the leader's affiliative humour and the intention to use integrative tactics; b) the negative relationship between the leader's affiliative humour and the intention to use distributive tactics; c) the negative relationship between the leader's affiliative humour and the intention to use deceptive tactics.

Hypothesis 4: LMX mediates a) the negative relationship between the leader's aggressive humour and the intention to use integrative tactics; b) the positive relationship between the leader's aggressive humour and the intention to use distributive tactics; c) the positive relationship between the leader's aggressive humour and the intention to use deception.

2. METHOD

2.1. Sample and Procedure

We surveyed participants utilising three surveys (made available online through Qualtrics). We collected data in three different time moments, separated by a one-week interval each (time₁, time₂ and time₃). To match the data from the three collection moments, we asked participants to provide their email confidentially at the end of each questionnaire. After we reached out to the first survey's participants through my approximately 1,300 LinkedIn contacts, we contacted the second and third data collection point participants via the email they provided in the first survey. We used participants' emails only to distribute surveys 2 and 3 and to match the data of the three collection points for analysis. In time₁, a total of 362 participants responded. In time₂, 270 answered, and in time₃, 209 replied. In total, 181 filled out all three surveys (50% response rate). No differences occurred between the participant group who answered all three questionnaires and the group of those who quit after completing the first one, neither from affiliative supervisor humour ($F_{(1,248)} = 0.467$, $p = .495$) nor aggressive supervisor humour ($F_{(1,249)} = 1.024$, $p = .312$). Regarding the demographics, there were also no differences for neither gender ($F_{(1,260)} = 0.758$, $p = .385$), nor organizational tenure ($F_{(1,259)} = 1.826$, $p = .178$), though there were considerable differences for age ($F_{(1,256)} = 5.696$, $p = .018^*$) and level of education ($F_{(1,259)} = 5.052$, $p = .025^*$).

Regarding our final sample's characterisation, the respondents worked in the following industries: consultancy (17%), banking (10.5%), education (10.5%), retail/sales (8.3%), technology (6.6%), healthcare (6.1%), manufacturing (5.5%), IT services (5%), food & beverages (2.8%), (1.1%) pharmaceutical, (1.1%) tourism/hospitality, (0.6%) insurance and (24.3%) other. 45% worked full-time, 24% were students, 14% worked part-time, 9% conducted an internship, and 8% responded other. 40% were employed less than one year in their current employment, (26%) one to three years, 7% three to five years, 6% five to ten years,

20% more than ten years. The mean age was 33.55 (SD = 14.62), and 50% of the sample was male. Regarding the participants' level of education, 44.8% hold a master's degree, 30.4% a bachelor's degree, 7.2% an MBA/PhD, 5% a high-school diploma, 0.6% high-school diploma incomplete, 11.6% responded other. Regarding participants' nationalities, 58.6% of respondents were German, 7.7% Dutch, 6.1% Portuguese, 5% Italian, 11.4% from other European countries and the remaining 11.2% from the rest of the world (e.g., Vietnam, The United States of America, Russia, and China).

2.2. Measures

The first survey included supervisor affiliative and supervisor aggressive humour and demographics. The second survey covered our mediator LMX. The third survey incorporated items concerning negotiation tactics such as intentions to use integrative, distributive tactics, deception, and a hypothetical negotiation scenario with the supervisor. Apart from demographics, we used a 7-point Likert scale for all measures. Either ranging from 1 "totally disagree" to 7 "totally agree" (supervisor affiliative humour, supervisor aggressive humour, LMX, intentions to use integrative tactics and intentions to use distributive tactics, or 1 "not at all likely" to 7 "very likely to" for intentions to use deception. We included three control variables in our models and analyses: gender, age, and organisational tenure since each was significantly statistically associated with at least one of the outcome variables, following (Becker et al.'s, 2016) recommendation.

Affiliative supervisor humour (time₁). To measure affiliative supervisor humour, we used the 8-item scale of the "Humour Styles Questionnaire" (HSQ), dimension: affiliative, developed by Martin et al. (2003). Employees answered to statements such as, e.g., "My supervisor doesn't have to work very hard at making other people laugh — he/she seems to be a naturally humorous person". The construct includes five reverse coded items. Cronbach's alpha was 0.89.

Aggressive supervisor humour (time₁). We measured aggressive supervisor humour with the 8-item scale used by Martin et al. (2003) for their (HSQ). A sample item is "If someone makes a mistake, my supervisor will often tease them about it." The construct contains four reverse coded items. Cronbach's alpha was 0.73.

Leader-member exchange (LMX) (time₂). We measured LMX with the 7-item scale developed by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), including one reverse coded item. The scale included items such as, e.g., "My work relationship with my supervisor is effective." Cronbach's alpha was 0.82.

Negotiation situation (time₃). To introduce a potential negotiation situation, we provided participants with the following introductory text: "We would like you to imagine that a new project is about to be implemented in your current organisation and that your supervisor wants you to participate in it. You are about to meet with your supervisor to discuss your potential role and the tasks you would assume in the upcoming project. You know a final decision has not been made yet and that this conversation will be an important negotiation moment between yourself and your supervisor."

Intentions to use negotiation tactics (time₃). Intentions to use the three negotiation tactics were measured by adding "I would try to" to each original statement.

Intentions to use integrative tactics (time₃). Intentions to use integrative tactics were measured incorporating Sullivan et al.'s (2006) 4-item integrative scale. A sample item, e.g., is "I would try to find trade-offs that benefit both my supervisor and me." Cronbach's alpha was 0.76.

Intentions to use distributive tactics (time₃). To measure intentions to use distributive tactics, we used Sullivan et al.'s (2006) developed 4-item scale in the distributive dimension. Employees answered to items such as e.g., "I would try to persuade my supervisor to make most concessions." Cronbach's alpha was 0.67.

Intentions to use deception (time₃). We used the 8-item SINS scale from Moran and Schweitzer (2008) to measure employee deception. A sample item is "I would try to intentionally misrepresent information to my supervisor in order to strengthen my negotiation arguments or positions." Cronbach's alpha was 0.86. Figure 1 illustrates our theoretical model (see Appendix 1).

3. RESULTS

We present descriptive statistics, correlation, and reliabilities (Cronbach's alphas) in Table 1 (see Appendix 2). We tested our hypotheses using the final sample ($N = 181$). We conducted linear regression (see Appendix 3) to investigate hypotheses 1 (a-c) and 2 (a-c), as they hypothesise direct relationships between supervisor humour (affiliative & aggressive) and intentions to use negotiation tactics (integrative, distributive & deception). We performed bootstrapping analysis to examine hypotheses 3 (a-c) and 4 (a-c) (indirect relationships) (see Appendices 4 & 5) as it is the most recommended to evaluate indirect effects (Hayes 2017). Significance is provided if the confidence intervals do not include zero (Mathieu and Taylor 2006, 1031; MacKinnon et al. 2004, 99). The bootstrap analysis uses a resampling process that generates "an empirically derived representation of the sampling distribution of the indirect effect" (Hayes 2017, 98), generating higher statistical power tests (Hayes 2017). We used Hayes' (2017) the SPSS macro-PROCESS (model 4) to test for indirect effects (mediation) confidence.

Concerning hypotheses 1 (a-c), the results revealed no significant direct relationship between affiliative supervisor humour and intentions to use integrative tactics ($B = .09$, $CI [-.02, .20]$), and intentions to use distributive tactics ($B = -.09$, $CI [-.23, .04]$). We found a significant direct relationship and to intentions to use deception ($B = -.11$, $CI [-.25, -.03]$) two weeks later (time₃). Thus, we found no support for hypothesis 1a and b. For hypotheses 1c, we found support.

Concerning hypotheses 2 (a-c), the results revealed no significant direct relationships between aggressive supervisor humour and intentions to use integrative tactics ($B = -.04$, $CI [-.17, .10]$), to intentions to use distributive tactics ($B = .10$, $CI [-.07, .27]$) and not for intentions to use deception either, as ($B = .04$, $CI [-.13, .21]$). We thus did not find support for hypotheses 2a-c according to linear regression. We present the regression analysis' findings in Table 2 (see Appendix 3). In our model, affiliative supervisor humour maintained a direct relationship on intention to use deceptive tactics ($B = -.15$, $CI [-.28, -.01]$) two weeks later, supporting hypothesis 1c and integrating the path to our final empirical model, according to bootstrap confidence intervals (see Appendix 6).

Hypotheses 3 and 4 (a-c) dealt with the mediation role of LMX in the relationship between supervisor humour (affiliative & aggressive) and intended negotiation tactics (intentions to use integrative, distributive tactics & deception). Tables 3 and 4 depict our findings (see Appendices 4 & 5), and with (Figure 2 – see Appendix 6), we provide a figure that reveals the significant paths in our model. Regarding hypotheses 3 and 4, we found that both supervisor humour were strongly associated with our mediator LMX.

There are highly significant associations between affiliative supervisor humour and LMX, as mediator for intentions to use integrative tactics ($B = .31$, $CI [.20, .42]$), as mediator for distributive tactics ($B = .30$, $CI [.19, .42]$), and deceptive tactics ($B = .31$, $CI [.20, .43]$).

We also found strong significant relationships between aggressive supervisor humour and LMX, as mediator for the same intended negotiation tactics; LMX (integrative tactics - mediator) ($B = -.36$, $CI [-.50, -.22]$), LMX (distributive tactics - mediator) ($B = -.39$, $CI [-.53, -.25]$), LMX (deceptive tactics - mediator) ($B = -.35$, $CI [-.49, -.22]$).

One (more) week later, further analyses revealed no further significant association between LMX and the intended negotiation tactics. Indeed, from LMX to intentions to use integrative tactics, there was no significant relationship ($B = -.03$, $CI [-.17, .12]$). The negative

association between LMX and the intentions to use distributive tactics was very close to significant ($B = -.19$, $CI [-.37, .002]$), $p = .053$. The bootstrap revealed it was not, though, as it includes zero. Also, LMX was not significantly related to intentions to use deception ($B = -.08$, $CI [-.26, .11]$).

Nonetheless, we found support for hypothesis 3b because of the significant negative indirect correlation between affiliative supervisor humour (via LMX) and intentions to use distributive tactics ($B = -.06$, $CI [-.12, -.003]$). We also found support for hypothesis 4b as aggressive supervisor humour had a significant indirect positive relationship with intentions to use distributive tactics (via LMX) ($B = .07$, $CI [.01, .16]$). We did not confirm the remaining hypotheses, which accounts for (hypotheses 3 & 4 a & c). This suggests that LMX only partially mediated the relationship between supervisor humour (affiliative and aggressive) and intended negotiation tactics.

Our model explains a significant amount of the variance of our mediator (LMX); for instance, supervisor humour predicts 31% of LMX. However, it only predicts 5% of integrative tactics, 11% of distributive tactics, and 16% of deceptive tactics. We see that the relationship between humour and LMX is solid and stable, predicting a third of LMX, with just two variables. It is the connection to the context of negotiation that is tenuous and borderline.

4. DISCUSSION

Our results revealed that both affiliative and aggressive humour influence the use of distributive tactics because they shape the nature of the relationship between supervisor and the employee, operationalised as LMX. We also found out that affiliative humour decreased the intentions to use deception directly, and we also figured out that neither affiliative and aggressive humour nor LMX predicted the intentions to use integrative tactics.

Despite their effects on intended negotiation tactics, supervisor humour has not yet been connected to negotiation tactics; even in general business psychology, this remains a relatively

young topic. Humour is often considered a subversive force rather than organisational resource (Barsoux 1996, 500) and supervisor humour predicts employee attitudes (Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2018, 697), a research topic that has gained increasing attention throughout the past two decades (Franke and Shah 2003, 157; Martin et al. 2003, 48). Affiliative humour improves rapport, teamwork, and creativity, creating a more enjoyable workplace. As differentiated, aggressive supervisor humour, through lower-quality LMX, increases employees' intentions to use distributive negotiation tactics, and affiliative humour decreases employees' intentions to use distributive and deceptive negotiation tactics. Scheel and Gockel (2017) covered humour in a negotiation context, focusing more on humour in a negotiation situation itself rather than the effects of generally applied supervisor humour on intended negotiation tactics by employees. Therefore, our aim was: (1) to understand the effect of supervisor humour (affiliative and aggressive) applied by supervisors in their general contact with their employees on negotiation tactics applied by their employees when negotiating with them. (2) to examine LMX as a potential mechanism in helping to build a connection between supervisor humour and intended negotiation tactics, as affiliative supervisor humour has a positive correlation and aggressive supervisor a negative one. We connect supervisor humour with intended negotiation tactics through LMX as also relationships seem to matter for the quality of negotiations (Lewicki and Saunders 2006).

4.1. Theoretical Implications

Our results contribute to the literature on supervisor humour (Pundt and Herrmann 2014, 108) and negotiation tactics (the context of work) (Pundt and Herrmann 2014, 108) in at least three ways.

First, we consider both the potential advantages (affiliative) and disadvantages (aggressive) of supervisor humour in negotiation and support. In line with Mesmer-Magnus et al. (2018), who realised that many studies had focused on positive/success humour, we stress

that affiliative supervisor humour directly decreases employees' intentions to use deception and distributive tactics indirectly through LMX. We find that aggressive supervisor humour, on the contrary, indirectly through LMX, increases employees' intentions to use distributive tactics. We thereby support the researchers (Martin et al. 2003, 48; Neves and Karagonlar 2020, 115; Pundt and Herrmann 2014, 108; Pundt and Venz 2017, 87; Robert et al. 2016, 375; Trembaly, 2017), who demonstrate both advantages and disadvantages of supervisor humour.

Second, we examine the role of supervisor humour in the negotiation context, being one of the first researchers to link the two topics in literature and, thus, filling a research gap. With humour as one of the fundamental human interaction activities and negotiation as one of the most common business activities, their connection has been undermined by research until now. In line with Gockel (2017), we examine humour's effects on negotiation. We add to the discussion by examining how supervisors' humour affects employees' intended negotiation tactics when negotiating with their supervisors. We thus contribute to the discussion on the importance of supervisor humour as essential work management tools (Neves and Karagonlar 2020, 115) explicitly connecting the two concepts for the first time. In line with Gockel (2017), we support her finding that humour has power in/for negotiations. Indeed, we find that affiliative supervisor humour directly decreases employees' intentions to use deception when negotiating with their supervisor and that through LMX, affiliative supervisor humour decreases employees' intentions to use distributive tactics. On the other hand, aggressive supervisor humour decreases employees' intentions to use distributive tactics in these negotiations. We thus contribute to the literature on negotiation tactics: as we connect supervisor humour (affiliative & aggressive), a "potential" influencer, we indeed find affiliative supervisor humour to decrease undesired negotiation tactics (distributive tactics and deception) and aggressive supervisor humour to increase them (intentions to use distributive tactics).

Third, we assess how LMX (Social Exchange Theory) (Dulebohn et al. 2012, 1715) influences the relationship between supervisor humour and intended negotiation tactics and put it forth as a potential important mechanism for humour and negotiation studies as relationships seem to matter both for supervisor humour success and negotiation success (Bazerman et al., 297; Tremblay 2017, 363). In line with prior research on supervisor humour in connection with LMX (Pundt and Herrmann 2014, 108; Pundt and Venz 2017, 87), we show that both affiliative and aggressive supervisor humour are strongly connected to LMX (Dulebohn et al. 2012, 1715), respectively as a significant positive and as a significant negative predictor. Our results, in line with Pundt and Herrmann (2014), we contribute to the understanding of leader behaviours that add to a negative professional relationship between leaders and their employees, as aggressive supervisor humour via LMX increases employees' intentions to use undesired negotiation tactics, distributive tactics or non-negative relationships, as affiliative supervisor humour decreases employees' intentions to use distributive tactics via LMX. We demonstrate that aggressive supervisor style is detrimental to the intended negotiation tactics of employees. At the same time, we argue that affiliative supervisor humour decreases employees' distributive tactics intentions in negotiations.

4.2. Practical Implications

This study also carries practical implications. Our findings suggest and support researchers (Neves and Karagonlar 2020, 115) to train and teach supervisor humour, also providing implications about its benefits. This is important because humour is a fundamental element of human interaction and because many successful companies' cultures are connected to it (Romero and Cruthirds 2006, 58). Since it can be assumed that humour is applied in many supervisor-employee work relationships and that they negotiate to some extent on a frequent basis, the potential effects, and consequences of supervisor humour on negotiation tactics organisations should be taken into consideration. We recommend that organisations make their

supervisors aware of the multiple significant potential effects of supervisor humour on intended negotiation tactics.

Organisations should create a culture where affiliative supervisor humour is the "norm" to limit/decrease undesired negotiation tactics, such as deception directly and distributive tactics indirectly through improved LMX. Also, organisations should limit the use of aggressive supervisor humour as much as possible to prevent and avoid its detrimental effects on intended negotiation tactics by employees, as in increasing employees' intentions to use undesired negotiation tactics, distributive tactics because of decreased LMX-quality.

Our research suggests that companies make their leaders/supervisors aware of these potential effects of humour, which they might be ignoring or unaware of. Organisations could organise workshops to educate supervisors on the effects of the humour (affiliative or aggressive) they apply that their employees perceive and make them aware that it influences negotiation tactics applied by their direct employees. In these workshops, it would be crucial to make supervisors aware of the detrimental effects of aggressive humour and explain them. At the same time, this demonstrates that supervisors can use humour because affiliative humour has non-detrimental effects, as in reducing undesirable negotiation tactics (both deception and distributive tactics), which is already a benefit, as in decreased undesirable negotiation tactics usage.

Given that relationships are critical for both supervisor humour and negotiations, our research suggests paying attention to LMX as it mediates the relationship between affiliative and aggressive supervisor humour with intentions to use distributive tactics. HR could, regularly, e.g., quarterly, ask employees and supervisors about their perception of LMX-quality, enabling organisations to improve their LMX-quality, thereby (improve supervisors' humour use) and increase employees' intentions to apply less desired negotiation tactics. Our study highlights the importance of LMX as a linking mechanism (Tan and Lu 2021, 221) between

supervisor humour and undesired negotiation tactics, which can be harmful to an organisation's business success because negotiations are one of the most common business activities. Organisations should focus on multiple ways to stimulate humour and promote it.

4.3. Limitations, Strengths and Future Research

This study presents some limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting its findings. The final sample included 181 participants. We used a particularly robust analytical strategy (bootstrapping) for assessing indirect effects in rather smaller samples (Hayes 2017). However, the hypotheses of this study should be retested in future studies with larger samples, that especially allow researchers to assess our model separately for different sectors (Sousa and Neves 2021, 1018). Workplace humour usage varies across different occupational groups (Plester 2009, 584). The nature of work and the interplay between supervisor humour and negotiation tactics may also differ. Also, a potential overlap with other constructs might be the consequence. We tested all constructs with self-report measures by employees. In that line of argument, a limitation could be a lack of honesty, as subjects may make the more socially acceptable answer than being truthful (Paulhus and Vazire 2007, 224). Potential introspective inability is another potential limitation, where subjects may not assess themselves accurately (Paulhus and Vazire 2007, 224). Though some internal states, such as the intentions to use distributive behavioural tactics or engaging in deception in negotiation with one's supervisor, are challenging to assess by other means than self-report (Spector 2006, 221).

Also, it should be noted that means and standard deviations of aggressive supervisor humour and intentions to use deception, distributive tactics were considerably low. Although occurring relatively infrequently, they seem to be "low base rate phenomena" that can still have significant consequences. Indeed, employees may be less likely to admit negative experiences with their supervisors (raised by one of the final sample participants). Such result patterns are usually attributed to social desirability, another form of common method bias (Podsakoff et al.

2012, 539). We followed up on Podsakoff et al.'s (2012) recommendation to reduce common method variance to assess variables in three different time moments, with one week in between each. We have established preliminary arguments for a causal relationship between supervisor humour and intended negotiation tactics. A limitation is that such a set-up does not measure potential reverse causality nor eliminate all potentially disruptive elements. Therefore, future researchers should run longitudinal tests of this model. This should not only test our model with a cross-lagged panel design, which considers the possibility of reversed causality and examines long-term effects of the supervisor humour and negotiation tactic intentions process, adopting a broader period and controlling for parallel constructs is imperative.

Another limitation of our study is the Cronbach's alpha of distributive tactics, which was below 0.7. However, with 0.67 it was high enough (Neves 2021; Van Griethuijsen et al. 2015, 581). In addition, one might argue that supervisor humour should have been self-assessed by supervisors and not employees. We decided to do so because it is more important how employees perceive their supervisor's humour style rather than supervisors themselves.

Finally, LMX only partially mediated the relationship between supervisor humour and intended negotiation tactics (only distributive tactics, not integrative nor deception). Consequently, future researchers should find other potential mediators for this important relationship. For instance, we suggest concentrating on behavioural sequences, such as negotiator characteristics, cognitions, and motives (Weingart and Oleklans 2004, 143). In line with Thompson et al. (2001), we, e.g., suggest integrating communication processes as possible mediators. This argument is reinforced by the indirect effects' small effect size, LMX predicts only (5%, 11%, and 16%) of integrative, distributive and deceptive tactics, respectively. The relationship between LMX and distributive tactics is tenuous because the indirect relationship (bootstrap) is significant, though it only predicts 11%. The direct relationship between LMX and intentions to use distributive tactics according to the bootstrap is not significant, according

to the p value it is. Though when we consider the indirect (bootstrap) relationship, which prevails, it is thus (borderline) significant.

Demographics are interesting to consider for future research as they can provide avenues for future research. We found that deception is predicted by gender; men engage in more deception, women less, so we should pay more attention to how men and women approach negotiations. This might create a further avenue for research. We also discovered that older people tend to engage in more integrative tactics, which is curious. Future researchers could try to find out why that is the case. Also, in contrast, employees with longer tenure tend to apply less integrative tactics. It would be interesting why age and employment duration have opposing effects.

5. CONCLUSION

In sum, the present study highlights the importance of regarding/considering supervisor humour as a "real" management tool and even negotiation tactic. It should not be undermined among other more traditional ones, given its relatively significant influence. It should not be neglected, as humour is part of the culture of many successful organisations and a fundamental part of human interaction. The association between supervisor humour and negotiation tactics should not be trivialised because negotiation, which supervisor humour seems to have a significant effect on, form part of practically any business activity.

Besides showing that affiliative supervisor humour leads to decreased undesirable negotiation tactics (both distributive & deception), and aggressive supervisor humour leads to increased distributive tactics, the research has also demonstrated that LMX mediates the relationship between both supervisor humour (affiliative & aggressive) and distributive negotiation tactics. We hope that our study incentivises researchers to pay more attention to supervisor humour because it may influence business and negotiation more than expected, its effects might be undermined, and lack awareness in organisations.

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7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: FIGURE 1. Theoretical Model

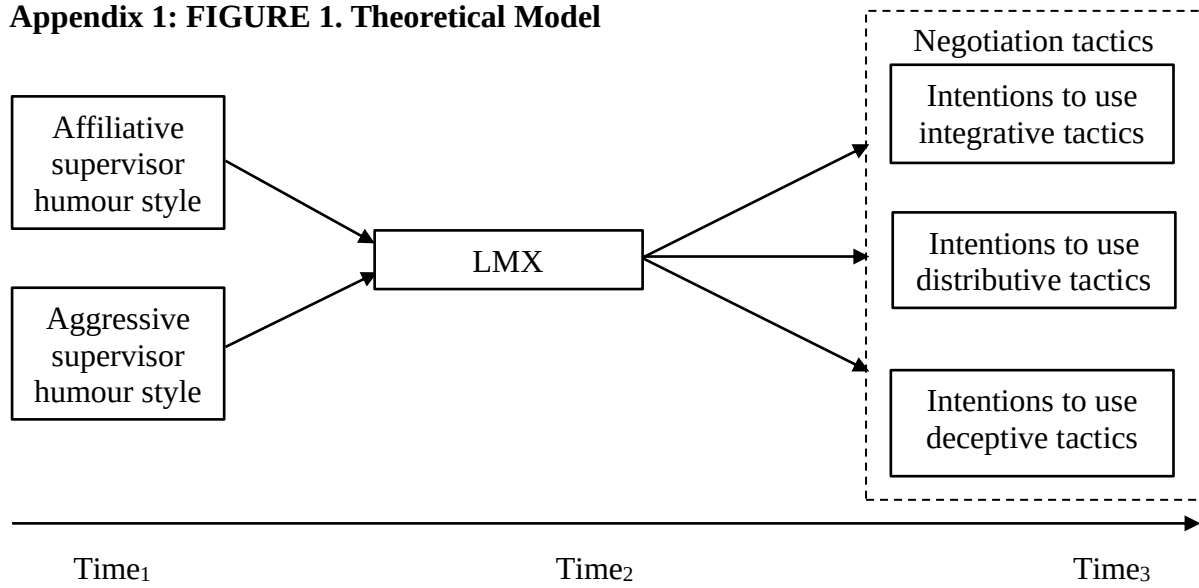


FIGURE 1. Theoretical model

**Appendix 2: TABLE 1 Descriptive Statistics, Correlation, and Reliabilities
(Cronbach's alphas) a, b**

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics, Correlation, and Reliabilities (Cronbach's alphas) a, b

	Mean (a)	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Control variables:								
Gender	1.50	.50	-.01	-.11	-.05	-.07	-.08	-.18*
Age	33.7	14.56	-.18	.11	.10	.09	-.09	-.20*
Time in current employment	2.39	1.54	-.09	.25**	.06	-.02	-.01	-.20*
1 Affiliative supervisor humour	4.86	1.24	(.89)					
2 Aggressive supervisor humour	3.34	1.01	-.12	(.73)				
3 LMX	5.31	1.01	.39**	-.39**	(.82)			
4 Intentions to use integrative tactics	5.82	.89	.08*	-.03	.02	(.76)		
5 Intentions to use distributive tactics	4.33	1.07	-.17*	.20**	-.28**	.28**	(.67)	
6 Intentions to use deception	2.21	1.02	-.19	.10	-.20*	-.08*	.28**	(.86)

a 7-point scales, b Cronbach's alpha is reported on the diagonal in (parentheses);

*p < .05; **p < .01. Gender coding 1 = male, 2 = female.

Time in current employment was coded as follows: 1 = less than 1 year; 2 = 1-3 years; 3 = 3-5 years; 4 = 5-10 years; 5 = more than 10 years.

Appendix 3: TABLE 2 Regression Analysis

TABLE 2
Regression Analysis

	Intentions to use integrative tactics					Intentions to use distributive tactics					Intentions to use deception (2c)				
<u>Control</u> <u>variables:</u>	B	SE	t	LL	ULCI	B	SE	t	LL	UL	B	SE	t	LL	UL
				CI					CI	CI				CI	CI
<i>Gender</i>	-.14	.12	-1.11	-.38	.11	-.01	.16	-.08	-.32	.30	-.39	.96	4.07	2.01	5.81
													**		
<i>Age</i>	.02	.01	2.93	.01	.04	-.02	.01	-2.10	-.04	-.001	-.001	.01	-.15	-.02	.02
			**					*							
<i>Employ- ment duration</i>	-.17	.07	-2.49	-.30	-.04	.15	.09	1.76	-.02	.33	-.15	.09	-1.73	-.33	.02
			*												
<u>Predictors:</u>	B	SE	t	LL	ULCI	B	SE	t	LL	UL	B	SE	t	LL	UL
				CI					CI	CI				CI	CI
Affiliative supervisor humour	.09	.05	1.70	-.02	.20	-.09	.07	-1.34	-.23	.04	-.11	.07	-1.62	-.25	-.03
													*		
Aggressive supervisor humour	-.04	.07	-.52	-.17	.10	.10	.09	1.15	-.07	.27	.04	.09	.46	-.13	.21

Notes: LLCI = Lower-level confidence interval; ULCI = Upper limit confidence interval.

*p < .05; **p < .01.

Appendix 4: TABLE 3 Bootstrapping Analysis - LMX (Mediator)

TABLE 3
Bootstrapping Analysis – LMX (Mediator)

	<i>LMX (Intentions to use integrative tactics)</i>					<i>LMX (Intentions to use distributive tactics)</i>					<i>LMX (Intentions to use deceptive tactics)</i>				
<u>Control variables:</u>	B	SE	t	LL CI	UL CI	B	SE	t	LL CI	ULCI	B	SE	t	LL CI	ULCI
Gender	-.13	.14	-.93	-.40	.15	-.11	.14	-.78	-.38	.16	-.16	.14	-1.15	-.44	.12
Age	.01	.01	1.20	-.01	.02	.01	.01	1.07	-.01	.02	.01	.01	1.67	-.003	.03
Employment duration	.05	.07	.68	-.09	.19	.07	.07	.93	-.08	.21	.01	.08	.07	-.15	.16
<u>Predictors:</u>	B	SE	t	LL CI	UL CI	B	SE	t	LL CI	ULCI	B	SE	t	LL CI	ULCI
Affiliative supervisor humour	.31	.06	5.45	.20	.42	.30	.06	5.38	.19	.42	.31	.06	5.52	.20	.43
Aggressive supervisor humour	-.36	.07	-5.09	-.50	-.22	-.39	.07	5.37	-.53	-.25	-.35	.07	-5.04	-.49	-.22

Notes: LLCI = Lower-level confidence interval; ULCI = Upper limit confidence interval.

*p < .05; **p < .01.

Appendix 5: TABLE 4 Bootstrapping Analysis intentions to use integrative, distributive, and deceptive tactics (Outcomes)

TABLE 4
Bootstrapping Analysis intentions to use integrative, distributive, and deceptive tactics
(Outcomes)

	<i>Intentions to use integrative tactics</i>					<i>Intentions to use distributive tactics</i>					<i>Intentions to use deceptive tactics (2c)</i>				
<u>Control variables:</u>	B	SE	t	LL CI	UL CI	B	SE	t	LL CI	ULCI CI	B	SE	t	LL CI	UL CI
<i>Gender</i>	-.12	.12	.98	-.37	.12	-.17	.16	-1.07	-.49	.15	-.42	.16	-2.65 **	-.74	-.11
<i>Age</i>	.02	.01	2.43 *	.003	.03	-.01	.01	-1.41	-.03	.01	-.01	.01	-.77	-.03	.01
<i>Employment duration</i>	-.13	.07	-1.96 (*)	-.26	.001	.06	.09	.72	-.11	.23	-.13	.09	-1.48	-.31	.04
<u>Predictors:</u>	B	SE	t	LL CI	UL CI	B	SE	t	LL CI	UL CI	B	SE	t	LL CI	UL CI
Affiliative supervisor humour	.08	.06	1.49	-.03	.19	-.09	.07	-1.30	-.24	.05	-.15	.07	-2.06 *	-.28	-.01
Aggressive supervisor humour	.01	.07	.18	-.12	.15	.12	.09	1.34	-.06	.31	.11	.09	1.33	-.06	.28
<u>Mediator:</u>															
LMX	-.03	.07	-.38	-.17	.12	-.19	.09	-1.95	-.37	.002	-.08	.09	-.83	-.26	.11

Notes: LLCI = Lower-level confidence interval; ULCI = Upper limit confidence interval.

*p < .05; **p < .01.

Appendix 6: FIGURE 2. Final empirical model

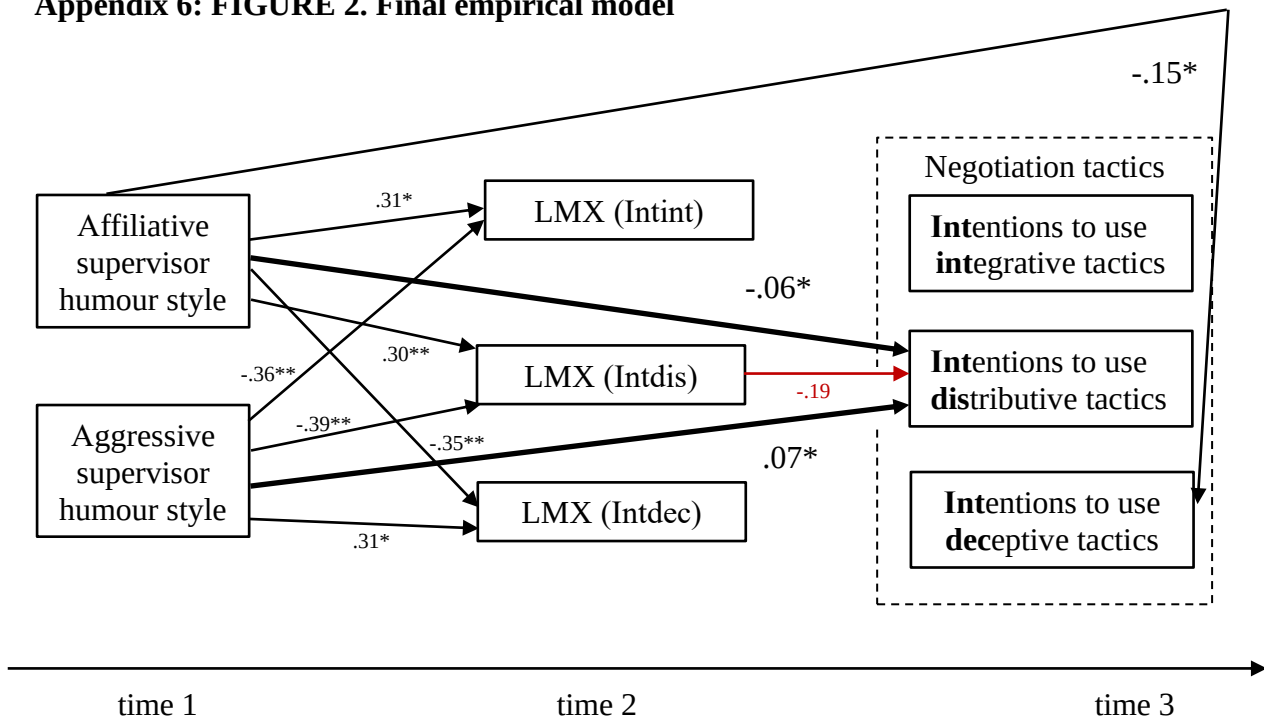


FIGURE 2. Final empirical model with direct and indirect effects. Notes: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; significant indirect effects (bootstrap) in **bold**; analysis performed separately for each outcome. LMX (Intint) = LMX as predictor/mediator for Intentions to use integrative tactics; LMX (Intdis) = LMX as predictor/mediator for Intentions to use distributive tactics; LMX (Intdec) = LMX as predictor/mediator for Intentions to use deception.