# The association of subordinates' perception of the manager's ambiguous behaviors with the likelihood of conflict occurrence: A Cross-Cultural study

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**Abstract**

The research aims to provide evidence to explain the contradictive findings in the literature on the organizational conflict phenomenon and the relationship between conflict and culture, by focusing on the relationship between ambiguous behaviors and conflict. To achieve this goal, in the context of low-status compensation theory, the relationship between incivility, humor as ambiguous behaviors, and the likelihood of manager-subordinate conflict occurrence was investigated. To test the culture's effect on this relationship, survey data were collected from 478 white-collar subordinates working in SMEs in Turkey and the UK. According to the results, the subordinate's perception of the manager's ambiguous behaviors affects the likelihood of relationship conflict and task conflict occurrence. In addition, the study reveals that culture is associated with the likelihood of relationship conflict occurrence but not task conflict. The study contributes to the literature by providing evidence for the relationship between humor, incivility, conflict, and culture.

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## Introduction

While conflict is often thought to be a dysfunctional phenomenon for organizations (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003), studies have shown that it can provide benefits for organizations (Parayitam & Dooley, 2009; Pelled et al., 1999; Jehn, 1995). According to some studies, conflict improves team performance (Pelled et al., 1999; Jehn, 1995), job satisfaction (Zhongjun et al., 2019), innovation, and decision-making (Parayitam & Dooley, 2009). In contrast, some other studies have shown that conflict has a negative effect on job satisfaction, turnover intentions, general well-being, organizational commitment, depression, stress, and physical well-being (De Dreu, 2007; Dijkstra et al., 2005; Kammerhoff et al., 2019). Thus, the findings obtained over the years have resulted in an ongoing debate about conflict and its organizational outcomes (Weingart et al., 2015; Kammerhoff et al., 2019). Consequently, recent studies are insufficient to comprehend the conflict phenomena and its relationship with organizational phenomena (Weingart et al., 2015; Sanchez-Burks et al., 2008).

One reason why the conflict is not sufficiently clear in the organizational literature may be the approach of researchers to the phenomenon in general. In the literature, conflict researchers often focus on how the types and processes of conflict affect organizational outcomes (Dijkstra et al., 2005; Kammerhoff et al., 2019; Parayitam & Dooley, 2009; Zhongjun et al., 2019). This approach focuses on understanding how individuals perceive task-related conflict and relationship problems and how the conflict affects organizational processes and outcomes (Jehn, 1995, 1997). All those studies have made significant contributions to the understanding of conflict. However, The findings of most studies based on this approach are contradictive (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003a; de Wit et al., 2012; O'Neill et al., 2013; Weingart et al., 2015). Therefore, understanding the cause of conflict-related contradictive findings will make an important contribution to improving the understanding of organizational conflict.

Weingart and colleagues (2015) suggested that the way the conflict is expressed may be affected by perceptions, which will affect the reactions, therefore conflict process and conflict outcomes would be affected consequently. Indeed, some researchers argue that the key to understanding conflict is to focus on directness and the oppositional intensity of the expressions, perceptions, and reactions of the parties (Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Tjosvold et al., 2006). Thus, understanding the contingencies that may affect the parties' expressions and perceptions of other parties' intentions may provide an alternate framework for understanding conflict phenemenon and revealing the reason of contradictive findings (Ren & Gray, 2009; Weingart et al., 2015).

In this context, focusing on the relationship between the likelihood of conflict occurrence and ambiguous behaviors which include indirect expressions and behaviours with ambiguous intention will make an important contribution to understanding the conflict phenomenon and providing insight to researchers (Weingart et al., 2015). One reason for that is the directness and ambiguity of expressions and intention of the actors (who exhibit ambiguous behavior), leaving more room for targets' (who are exposed to ambiguous behaviors) perceptions and interpretations than direct conflict expressions (Brett, 2000). Thus, this research focuses on investigating the effect of targets' ambiguous behaviors and perception of actors on conflict occurrence and factors that influence targets' interpretation and perception.

Humor is an intentional or unintentional behavior that, due to its ambiguous nature, cannot convey a message in direct, formal, or explicit ways, and is loaded with meaning by the target, largely depending on the target's perception and interpretation (Bitterly et al., 2017). Thus, the effect of the actor's humor on the relationship between the parties largely reflects the target's interpretation and perception of humor (Bitterly, 2022; Kahn, 1989; Romero & Pescosolido, 2008). As a phenomenon that

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significantly shapes perception and behavior by reflecting social relations, power distributions, and changes in both, humor has both potentially functional and dysfunctional outcomes in organizations (Bitterly, 2022; Duncan et al., 1990). While negatively perceived humor (aggressive humor) is associated with stress and aggression (Bitterly et al., 2017; Mcgraw & Warren, 2010), positively perceived humor (affiliative humor) is associated with functional communication behaviors (Bitterly, 2022; Kahn, 1989). Thus, in the research, humor behavior in organizations was considered as ambiguous behavior and the effect of this behavior on the likelihood of conflict occurrence was investigated.

One factor that affects the perceptions of the parties in the relationship is the status of them in the organization. According to the Low-Status Compensation Theory (LSCT), low-status individuals are vigilant to the ambiguous behaviors of high-status individuals to maintain their psychological worth in their interactions with high-status individuals, and low-status individuals react violently to higher-status individuals' worth-threatening behaviors (Davis & Reyna, 2015; Henry, 2009). In addition, high-status individuals' pro-social behaviors support low-status individuals in coping with problems more successfully (Norrick & Spitz, 2008) and encourage them to communicate openly and freely (Romero & Pescosolido, 2008). If it is assumed that status is prestige, respect, and esteem that a party has in the eyes of others (Chen et al. 2012), honor culture members who are more rely on psychological worthiness and esteem provided by others will be more vigilant to the ambiguous behaviors of their managers (Davis & Reyna, 2015). Thus, in the study, the perceptions of subordinates about their managers were investigated.

Another factor that affects the individuals' perceptions is culture. Nevertheless, researchers have presented contradictory evidence and expressed different opinions (Moon and Sanchez-Rodrigues, 2021) about whether culture affects conflict (Hammer, 2005; Gunsoy et al., 2015; Ulu and Lalonde, 2007) or not (de Wit et al., 2012). Although culture influences how relationships and communication are understood and perceived by moderating and directing individuals' behavior towards one another through the values and norms it provides (Fu et al., 2007; Ulu & Lalonde, 2007), it is surprising that culture's relationship with conflict is not clarified yet. However, if it is supposed to assume that actors' ambiguous behaviors leave more room for interpretations of targets, and cultural norms affect individuals' perceptions of ambiguous behaviors, the cultural context shall influence how conflict is expressed and perceived. Indeed, Weingart et al. (2015) stated that ambiguous behavior perception is more influenced by culture than by direct expression perception because ambiguous behavior is highly dependent on the targets' perception and interpretation. Thus, it is plausible to expect that the effects of humor on conflict will differ in different cultures (Wasti & Erdaş, 2019).

According to Low-Status Compensations Theory (LSCT), individuals behave vigilantly against behaviors that affect their status, depending on their perceived status in society, and try to compensate for the difference in status by exhibiting pro-social or anti-social reactions according to their perception of support or threat to their self-worth (Brown, 2020; Kraus et al., 2011). When status is considered at the social level, in communities where status inequalities are high, individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and reactions regarding their social values are reflected in collectively shared cultural perception styles and behavioral patterns by affecting their values, beliefs, and norms (Henry, 2009). The honor and dignity cultural framework, which proposes that cultures differ in terms of how individuals perceive their worth resources (social or self), evaluation of the factors that affect their worth, and how they react to those factors, is a useful approach for investigating this possibility (Wasti & Erdaş, 2019). Henry (2009) states that individuals belonging to honor culture, where status inequalities are high, are more vigilant to the ambiguous messages of actors who affect their status, interpret ambiguous messages more easily, and respond more violently or benignly to these messages to protect or leverage their worth (Aslani et al., 2013; Erdaş, 2016; Henry, 2009; Wasti &

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Erdaş, 2019). Instead of dignity culture members, the worth of individuals belonging to honor cultures is related to the respect shown by others and their assessment of what others think (Aslani et al., 2016; Ijzerman et al., 2007). In contrast, dignity culture members' worthiness is based on their self-evaluations rather than others' opinions (Uskul, & Cross, 2019; Wasti, & Erdaş, 2019). Thus, participants from Turkey, which reflects honor culture characteristics (Uskul et al., 2015), and the United Kingdom, which reflects dignity culture characteristics (Gunsoy et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2017) were selected to reveal the effect of culture.

The duality of positive behavior and negative behavior in a group may seem counter-intuitive, however, individuals' worry about being perceived negatively and being judged in the social group leads them to behave more positively towards the other party (Erdaş, 2016). This duality emerges especially clearly within honor culture members. Compared to dignity culture members, honor culture members are more vigilant toward the other party's negative and positive behaviors, and their reactions can be violent or benign. On the other hand, dignity culture members tend to be more insensitive to the other party's behavior and to be stable and limited in their reactions (Erdaş, 2016, Krys et al., 2017). Therefore, it can be expected that the reactions of the members of the two cultures to the negative behaviors accompanying positive behaviors will differ in this context and the culture will more clearly reveal the effect of ambiguous behaviors on conflict. Because even if the target perceives the actor's humorous behavior positively, this positive perception may shift when it is accompanied by rude behavior (Mcgraw & Warren, 2010). One reason for this might be that when targets perceive rude behavior, they may respond with anti-social behaviors to protect their identity (Meier & Gross, 2015) but it is plausible to expect the level of reactions towards other parties would differ depending on culture. Therefore, it will be possible to more clearly capture the relationship between ambiguous affiliative and rude behaviors and conflict in the cultural context. For this reason, the phenomenon of incivility, which is also known as ambiguous rude behavior, is a mildly negative appraisal of at target (Wasti & Erdaş, 2019; Weingart et al., 2015), was included in the research as a mediating variable in the relationship between affiliative humor and conflict.

Assuming that culture influences the perception of ambiguous behaviors between managers and subordinates (Hammer, 2005), researching the relationship between humor, incivility, and manager-subordinate conflict under the effect of culture will contribute to the literature in three ways (Tsai & Bendersky, 2016; Wasti & Erdaş, 2019; Weingart et al., 2015). The results obtained from the research, firstly, provide insight into the conditions in which culture influences conflict. Second, the results encourage researchers to investigate ambiguous phenomena that potentially affect the likelihood of conflict occurrence. Finally, the research contributes to theory by providing evidence for LSCT at individual and cultural levels.

This complex and multi-level study aims to investigate how subordinates' perceptions of their managers' incivility, affiliative humor, and aggressive humor behaviors affect the likelihood of task and relationship conflict occurrence, as well as the influence of culture in these relationships. To achieve this aim, LSCT, which provides a basis for explaining both the perceptions and reactions of individuals in their relationships at the individual and social level, was used. Data from the UK and Turkey were collected via a survey of white-collar SME subordinates operating in seven service industries, and the results were evaluated using two distinct models. The first model investigated the impact of culture in moderating the influence of aggressive and affiliative humor on relationship conflict and task conflict. In the second model, the mediating role of incivility on the relationship between affiliative humor and conflict types and the moderating role of culture was examined.

## Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

**Low-Status Compensation Theory**

Holding a low-status position is inherently threatening. Low-status employees are frequently exposed to various types of abuse and are at increased risk of suffering negative psychological and physiological health consequences (Cundiff & Smith, 2017). Thus, low-status individuals engage in various behaviors to increase their social status (Brown et al., 2020). LSCT proposes that social interpersonal relationships place many individuals in a lower social status and that individuals inherently want to see themselves as meaningful and valuable, and threats to this self-view must be effectively managed and controlled. When a low-status individual's self-worth is threatened, the individual is motivated to adopt compensatory strategies for self-protection to prevent or reduce the loss resulting from the threat (Henry, 2008; 2009). LSCT specifically emphasizes that "compensation" refers to actions or attempts taken to compensate for an individual's lack of status (Bäckman and Dixon, 1992), and emphasizes that for those who threaten the individual's sense of self-worth, violence will be one of the tools they use to regain control over their self-worth (Henry, 2009). However, low-status individuals may exhibit more prosocial behavior and act generosity or benignly to increase their status (Brown et al., 2020). Individuals can thus receive support from a high-status individual to increase their worth. As a result, it is reasonable to expect subordinates to be vigilant against their managers' ambiguous behaviors, and that their anti-social reactions to behaviors that threaten or support their worth will affect the likelihood of conflict occurrence. Thus, ambiguously intentional behaviors which are dependent on the target's positive or negative perception, can affect the likelihood of conflict occurrence by generating pro-social or anti-social reactions in the perceiver (Bitterly, 2022; Kahn, 1989; Romero & Pescosolido, 2008).

**Humor**

Humor is defined as an event or behavior in which at least one of two or more interacting individuals experiences amusement that at least one of the parties evaluates it funny (Bitterly et al., 2017). It is related to interpersonal communication and relationships, having social functions such as "alienating, fostering social stability, encouraging social change, promoting superiority, and testing limits" (Duncan et al., 1990; Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012). Unlike other types of communication, humor allows parties to implicitly send and receive signals (Kahn, 1989). Thus, humor is ambiguous because it requires the target to interpret the words spoken and nonverbal expressions that are not direct and open (Weingart et al., 2015). However, the target may perceive humor as relatively benign, benevolent, and/or positive, as well as possibly detrimental, injurious, and/or negative (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012). Martin et al. (2003) defined positively and negatively perceived interpersonal humor types as affiliative humor and aggressive humor, respectively.

Affiliative humor is defined as the use of pleasantries and jokes to improve interpersonal relationships (Veselka et al., 2010). Affiliative humor is self-defeating, affirming, non-threatening, non-hostile, and well-intentioned (Lehmann-Willenbrock & Allen, 2014), and it facilitates relationships and reduces interpersonal tensions (Martin et al., 2003). Thus, affiliative humor acts as a social lubricant and tool for relationship maintenance in organizations (Kahn, 1989; Lehmann-Willenbrock & Allen, 2014). On the other hand, aggressive humor involves the use of sarcasm, teasing, ridicule, derision, disparagement, and put-downs to hurt or manipulate people (Veselka et al., 2010). It is positively related to hostility, anger, and (Martin et al., 2003). As a result, individuals face negative outcomes

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such as repression, humiliation, degradation, and intentional or unintended distress due to aggressive humor (Romero & Cruthirds, 2006).

**Conflict**

Conflict is a dynamic process involving the perceptions of interacting parties who disagree or are incompatible (Jehn, 1995). It is related to views of incompatibilities or conflicts about interdependent individuals' or groups' perspectives, beliefs, values, interests, or reality (Dijkstra et al., 2005). Perceived substantive disagreements, their views of the parties interfering behavior toward one other, and emotional reactions based on their perceptions are all essential elements of a conflict process (Barki & Hartwick, 2004; Hammer, 2005). Conflict arises when individuals feel excluded, when interacting parties engage in behaviors such as hurting, hindering, controlling each other, competing for control, political maneuvering, aggression, and hostility; or when their behavior causes negative emotions in the other party such as fear, jealousy, anger, anxiety, and disappointment (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). A broad spectrum of situations, from a simple disagreement of opinion about the cause of an event or way of overcoming a task (Murray et al., 2019) to open war or aggressive behavior between the interacting individuals, are covered by the definition of conflict (Spector & Jex, 1998).

Conflict is often classified into two dimensions; Task conflict and relationship conflict (Jehn, 2008; Jehn, 1995; Priem & Price, 1991). Task conflict arises from differences and disagreements in the parties' perspectives and opinions about task distribution money or property, and the content and results of the task performed, whereas relationship conflict arises from personality differences or differences in norms, values, and attacks on personality which may cause negative emotions, as well as personal dissatisfactions of the parties (Barki & Hartwick, 2004; de Wit et al., 2012; Jehn, Mannix, 2001). While task conflict arises from differences in the opinions and viewpoints of the parties, about the work, relationship conflict arises from the parties' disapprobation or dissatisfaction (Jehn & Mannix, 2001).

Treating individuals with anything less than respect and dignity can lead to aggressive responses that may affect the likelihood of conflict occurrence (Pearson & Porath, 2005). On the other hand, non-aggressive, constructive behaviors that do not harm the other party, minimize the level of conflict or the likelihood of conflict occurrence (Gelfand et al., 2006). Thus, humor, which may be defined as a violation of interpersonal respect rules, relationship strengthening, ambiguous intention, and low intensity, has the potential to affect conflict both positively and negatively (Bitterly, 2022; Cooper et al., 2018; Cortina & Magley, 2009; Yam et al., 2018). Indeed, Eisenhardt et al. (1997) showed that affiliative humor is common in teams with low levels of relationship conflict, whereas it is lacking in teams with high levels of relationship conflict. As a result, the use of humor can have a significant impact on the diffusion or reduction of conflict in organizations (Duncan et al., 1990; Martin et al., 2003; Meier & Gross, 2015).

While affiliative humor promotes positive outcomes in organizations such as trust, commitment, stress reduction, and creativity, it also protects individuals from harmful situations, reduces stress and anxiety, and triggers positive emotions (Bitterly, 2022; Kahn, 1989; Romero & Cruthirds, 2006; Romero & Pescosolido 2008), reducing the likelihood and severity of stressful or awkward relationships, such as conflict (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012; Norrick & Spitz, 2008). Affiliative humor also improves communication between individuals and makes the targets more open to the actors' messages (Romero & Pescosolido, 2008). According to LSCT, given the high social anxiety of low-status individuals, subordinates may respond to a manager who acts positively towards them with more prosocial behavior to increase their status by getting closer to their manager, therefore they may expect more supportive behaviors from their managers that will increase their worth (Brown et

al., 2020). Thus, higher-status individuals affiliative humor usage support low-status individuals' worth (Norrick & Spitz, 2008) and a subordinate who is exposed to a manager's affiliative humor is more likely to tolerate negative events and situations (Cooper et al., 2018). As a result, it is reasonable to predict that the likelihood of conflict occurrence between managers and subordinates will decrease because of the subordinate's positive perception, which facilitates the positive emotions felt by the subordinate (Cooper et al., 2018; Kira et al., 2013; Martin et al., 2003; Norrick & Spitz, 2008). Based on the information provided, the following hypothesis is proposed.

*H1a.*: Perceived affiliative humor is negatively related to perceived relationship conflict.

Humor is especially noticeable in problem-solving and task-oriented meetings (Consalvo, 1989). Affiliative humor can start a chain reaction of agreement between participants, making it easier to persuade and urge them to come up with new ideas (Lehmann-Willenbrock & Allen, 2014; Kauffeld & Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012). Positive use of humor raises favorable evaluations and diverts attention from negative information (Bitterly, 2022; Bitterly et al., 2017). During communication, affiliative humor reduces reactions to misunderstandings and softens the impact of criticism on the other party, reducing the severity of disagreements between individuals with opposing viewpoints and facilitating communication between parties to identify and configure their business roles (Decker & Rotondo, 2001; Duncan et al., 1990; Mcgraw & Warren, 2010).

In organizations, affiliative humor can create a communication model that enables the development of a creative, entertaining, and problem-solving climate and provides solutions to disagreements (Consalvo, 1989; Decker & Rotondo, 2001). Thus, thanks to affiliative humor, by facilitating collaborative work between the managers and subordinates (Cooper, 2008), misunderstandings and disagreements are reduced between managers and subordinates (Blatt, 2009). In addition, according to LSCT, low status individuals tend to be more understanding and cooperative towards those who support their worth (Brown et al., 2020). In this way, humor can make it easier for a manager to define, teach, and clarify tasks, and can also reduce the level of task conflict by making bilateral exchange between manager and subordinate with less disagreement. Thus, it is plausible to consider that affiliative humor will reduce the level of task conflict between the manager and the subordinate. Therefore, the hypothesis below is proposed;

*H1b.*: Perceived affiliative humor is negatively related to perceived task conflict.

Aggressive humor has the potential to escalate relationship problems in organizations (Consalvo, 1989) and may lead to dissatisfaction at the workplace according to the perception of the target (Sobral & Islam, 2015). For instance, Yam et al. (2018) showed in their research that managers' aggressive humor behavior harmed subordinate commitment. Therefore, it can be said that aggressive humor is potentially hurtful due to its nature, which can be perceived as a hostile attack and triggers negative emotions (Lehmann-Willenbrock & Allen, 2014; Norrick & Spitz, 2008). Aggressive humor threatens the worth of subordinates reveals negative emotions by giving signals of disapproval, contempt, and humiliation, and encourages subordinates to display reactions to protect their self-esteem (Decker & Rotondo, 2001; Yam et al., 2018).

According to LSCT low-status individuals become vigilant against how they are evaluated in their environment and against behaviors that threaten their worth (Brown et al., 2020). Thus, individuals with low social status exhibit more hostile reactions (Kraus et al., 2011) and aggression (Henry, 2009) in response to perceived anti-social behavior. Therefore, the aggressive humor of managers triggers the deviant behaviors of subordinates directed at themselves (Davis & Reyna, 2015; Yam et al., 2018).

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Subordinates' negative emotions and stressors because of threats to their personality are associated with relationship conflict (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; de Wit et al., 2012; Jen, 2013). In addition, because of disagreements about a task, or intervention of the manager to prevent a subordinate from doing what he/she thinks should be done in a task or how a task should be done or negative emotions such as anger and frustration directed to manager because of a task are associated with task conflict (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). Thus, depending on the topic (task or personnel) the aggressive humor used by managers may be perceived as disapproval of tasks done by subordinates, or personalities and may be perceived as interference on task or personal issue and/or triggers negative emotions.

Managers develop a sense of self-worth based on the reactions and evaluations of their subordinates (Chen et al., 2023). Subordinates' challenge to the manager not only violates the manager's management principles, but also weakens the leader's position in the organization (Bendersky and Shah, 2012), thus causing the manager to lack a sense of control and respect and feel threatened by himself and his status (Davis and Stephan, 2011). According to LSCT, managers who feel threatened try to find compensatory strategies to manage the threat (Henry, 2008), and antisocial behavior towards subordinates can be considered the most effective behavior to deter subordinates (Chen et al., 2023). Indeed, previous research has shown that when managers face threats from low-status individuals, they are motivated to control the threat, either directly or indirectly (Henry, 2008), and that managers who feel a sense of threat are more likely to maintain their authority and status by attacking, punishing, or hindering subordinates. (Reh et al., 2018; Tarık et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2017). In this case, the subordinate's perception of aggressive humor and his reaction to his manager will cause escalation of conflict spirals between the parties.

In light of the above statements, it is plausible to expect that depending on the issue aggressive humor in which is related to will lead to an increase in the likelihood of task and relationship conflict occurrence (Decker & Rotondo, 2001). Thus, the hypothesis below has been formulated;

*H2.*: Perceived aggressive humor is positively related to *(a)* perceived relationship conflict and *(b)* perceived task conflict.

**Culture and Interpersonel Relationships**

Culture can have a significant impact on how people of different socioeconomic statuses perceive and respond to their environment (Davis & Reyna, 2015). Members of different groups who are exposed to varying levels of status inequalities in their environment may perceive and respond differently to behaviors that influence their worth since their status is reflected in their assumptions and values (Henry, 2008). According to Henry (2009), some societies have greater status inequalities than others in several categories such as social class, financial level, education, race, ethnicity, and age. These status inequalities threaten individuals' sense of social worth in their communities. This situation causes a threat to individuals' social worth, prompting the development of self-esteem defense mechanisms that become embedded in society (Davis & Reyna, 2015; Henry, 2009). According to Henry (2009), based on LSCT, relationships between individuals in different societies are a cultural expression of the strategies evolved by individuals to defend their self-worth from status inequalities. Indeed, researchers have demonstrated that some cultures emerge in harsh circumstances with weak institutions the status has been shared unequally, and people must be attentive to protecting their worth (Davis & Reyna, 2015; Henry, 2009; Lin et al., 2022). The cultural framework of dignity, honor, and face, which is used to categorize an individual's perception of the effects on his worth and his reactions based on these perceptions in interpersonal relationships, was thus employed to clarify the research arguments.

Based on the explanations made above, this research focuses on the perceptions of subordinates in different cultures in the relationship between managers and subordinates with different statuses, the dignity, honor, and face approach, which explains the effects of cultural differences on perceptions based on status inequalities, will provide an explanatory context for the research. One reason for this is that the values and standards supplied by individuals with different statuses may cause managers from different cultures to be perceived differently by their subordinates, as well as divergence in subordinate reactions to these diverse perceptions (Vogel et al., 2015; Weingart et al., 2015). Thus, by affecting the resource of self-worth of individuals, culture can impact the perceptions of subordinates and their reactions, so the likelihood of conflict occurrence by influencing subordinates' perceptions of their managers' behavior and shaping the norms and standards of behavior within a given society (Vogel et al., 2015). In this research, UK, which is classified in the dignity cultural class, and Turkey, which is classified in the honor cultural class, are discussed. For this reason, the face cultural class is in need of research by other researchers.

The honor-dignity cultural approach, which focuses on social order and an individual's source of self-worth, provides a useful context for explaining individuals' perceptions and reactions (Leung, & Cohen, 2011). Dignity is self-worth based on an individual's achievements in pursuing his/her goals and values rather than on others' esteem or evaluations of whether role obligations have been fulfilled. On the other hand, honor is self-worth based on an individual's reputation and also his/her assessment of what others think (Aslani et al., 2016; Ijzerman et al., 2007). If honor culture members do not perceive an attack on their worth or esteem, they try to gain a reputation by being respectful, friendly, hospitable, and polite toward others (Cohen et al. 1999; Maitner et al., 2022). In comparison with honor culture members, dignity culture members are insensitive to external threats and others' positive opinions about their selves (Cohen et al. 1999; Krys et al., 2017). In addition, individuals belonging to a dignity culture construct the self to be autonomous and independent, and a person's worthiness is based on internal evaluations rather than the opinions of other people (Uskul, & Cross, 2019; Wasti, & Erdaş, 2019).

Individuals from honor culture behavior can be explained by the values of doing the right thing and reciprocity rather than rationality based on benefit-cost analysis (Gunsoy, 2020). Because of these values, members of this culture act consciously or unconsciously with a desire to support their worth, gain trustworthiness, and show themselves as a person not to be messed up (Leung, & Cohen, 2011). If an individual does not respond aggressively to an attack on his/her honor, he/she believes that society regards them as weak and dishonorable (Uskul & Cross, 2019). These values lead members of an honor culture to be more vigilant toward the ambiguous behaviors of the individuals with whom they come into contact, to focus on ambiguous behaviors, and to make greater efforts to interpret them (Uskul, & Cross, 2020). On the other hand, members of dignity culture since their self is defined by reference to self-standards, individuals are relatively not vigilant with the other's behaviors about themselves, and they are more invulnerable to affronts (Erdaş, 2016). Indeed, Krys and colleagues (2017) showed that individuals belonging to the honor culture respond with aggression to behaviors that provoke them, whereas individuals belonging to the dignity culture give constructive reactions to provocations to reduce tension.

According to the LSCT, low-status individuals are vigilant to the behaviors of high-status individuals to maintain their psychological worth (Henry, 2008). Honor culture members are more vigilant against hostile social cues due to deep inequalities between statuses in their community (Kraus etal., 2011). If it is assumed that individuals belonging to the honor culture associate their worth with the opinions of others (Henry, 2009), it can be expected that subordinates belonging to the honor culture will be more vigilant against the ambiguous behavior of their managers and will make more effort to interpret their behaviors (Gunsoy, 2020; Henry, 2009; Kraus etal., 2011; Lin et al., 2022). On

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the other hand, individuals belonging to the dignity culture will be less vigilant to the ambiguous behavior of their managers than members of the honor culture because their managers' opinions regarding their self-worth are less important to them.

Affiliative humor entertains others while facilitating relationships and reducing interpersonal tensions. Positive emotions and trust in the manager are generated by the manager's affiliative humor (Cooper et al., 2018; Kong et al.,2019). Thus, affiliative humor evokes subordinates' evaluative judgments of their managers' supportiveness and friendliness (Blau, 1964), providing a perception of managers' support for esteem needs (Cooper et al., 2018). Subordinates who are exposed to affiliative humor have stronger general tendencies toward sociability and benevolence toward their managers and perceive their managers' behaviors favorably and react positively and more respectfully (Cooper et al., 2018; Staw et al., 1994; Steckler & Tracy, 2014: 201).

Subordinates exposed to the pro-social behaviors of their managers are likely to react differently to these behaviors following their cultural norms (Lin et al., 2013; Vogel et al., 2015). According to LSCT, one reason for this could be that subordinates belonging to honor and dignity cultures differ in their perception of positive ambiguous behaviors of higher-status managers and their responses to them (Bock & Brown, 2021). When low-status individuals show that they accept and respect the status of higher-status individuals, it enables both parties to avoid conflict and enables them to continue their social interactions as normal (Steckler & Tracy, 2014: 202). However, in dignity cultures, individuals are constructed as relatively equal, with each having a stable and internal sense of worth. Honor cultures give greater emphasis to the need to establish and defend the virtue and honor or improve the esteem of oneself and one's group (Smith et al., 2017). Dignity culture could be related to independence where the self is separate from others and should be preserved at all costs from the influence of others (Güngör et al., 2017). For this reason, we can expect that British subordinates' vigilance towards pro-social behavior from their managers will be low and their responses will be similar to their ordinary behavior.

In contrast, while Turks are vigilant against threats to their psychological worth, they are also vigilant against the pro-social behavior of the other party because their behavior is based on the principle of reciprocity (Bock, & Brown, 2021; Henry, 2009). In addition, in response to the pro-social behavior of the other party, they tend to behave with great hospitality, politeness, and genuine concern for behaving in a virtuous and moral manner (Uskul, & Cross, 2019). In addition, Turks perceive people who are significant to them as a part of themselves and tend to establish closer relationships with them than with dignity culture members (Imamoğlu and Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2007; Uskul et al., 2012). As a result, the likelihood of relationship and task conflict occurrence decreases more for Turks who receive positive signals from their managers for their personalities or tasks than for their UK counterparts.

**H3.**: Culture moderates **(a)** the effect of perceived affliative humor on relationship conflict and **(b)** the effect of perceived affliative humor on task conflict, such that the effect of perceived affliative humor on perceived relationship conflict and perceived task conflict is stronger for Turkish subordinates than for UK subordinates.

In honor culture, standing up to rude behavior signals the employee's strength, courage, and competence (Maitner et al., 2022; Tedeschi, 2001).  Low status compensation strategies developed collectively by honor culture members who are exposed to status inequalities, subordinates belonging to this culture may attempt to retaliate against their managers to protect their lost reputation and honor, especially in the eyes of others (Bies & Tripp 1998; Henry, 2009). Thus, in honor cultures, people are more assertive and courageous in dealing with competition or conflicts even with their managers

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(Erdaş, 2016; Lin et al., 2022). Thus it is plausible to expect that subordinates from an honor culture will be more vigilant to their managers' ambiguous behaviors and respond to perceived attacks on their personalities more violently and aggressively than individuals from a dignity culture, without conducting a cost-benefit analysis. As a result, Turks will be more vigilant of their managers' aggressive humor and will respond more aggressively than their British counterparts, thus the likelihood of relationship conflict occurrence will be increased.

**H4a.**: Culture moderates the effect of perceived aggressive humor on perceived relationship conflict such that the effect of perceived aggressive humor on relationship conflict is stronger for subordinates from Turkish culture than for the subordinates from the UK culture.

Gunsoy et al. (2020) discovered that Turks have demonstrated that when they perceive a direct threat to their personality, they prioritize protecting themselves over completing a task and can exhibit excessive reactions that endanger their interests. In contrast, Gunsoy and colleagues (2020) discovered that when Turks perceive a threat to their competence or receive neutral feedback about their task, they discriminate against threats rather than reacting to all of them as anti-social. Indeed, Uskul and Cross (2019) found a significant difference in the aggression of these dignity and honor culture members who were given feedback that they were dishonest. However, when these two groups were given neutral feedback about their tasks that did not threaten their personalities, there was no difference in their reactions. Gunsoy et al. (2018) and Uskul et al. (2015), in their studies, provided evidence supporting these findings (As cited in Uskul, & Cross, 2019). According to this information, when Turkish subordinates perceive their managers' aggressive humor as an attack on their personalities, the likelihood of relationship conflict occurrence between them is higher than that between British subordinates and their managers. It is plausible to expect that when a manager's aggressive humor about a task is interpreted as neutral feedback or competence-testing criticism, there is no significant difference in the likelihood of task conflict occurrence.

**H4b.**: There is no moderation effect of culture on the relationship between perceived aggressive humor and perceived task conflict.

**Incivility**

Incivility is defined as low-intensity interpersonal deviant behavior that breaches workplace reciprocative respect norms, such as ignoring, failing to give information, not saying what you genuinely mean, or mocking (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Weingart et al., 2015). Incivility differs from other negative interpersonal workplace behavioral concepts in its low intensity, ambiguous actor intention, and target's ambiguity about the actor's objective (Cortina, 2008; Schilpzand et al., 2016). Incivility is the most common form of rude behavior in organizations, with its low-intensity structure and being affected by individuals' dispositional characteristics such as culture (Pearson et al., 2001). Indeed, research has shown that in workplaces, 98% of subordinates are exposed to incivility behavior from their managers (Porath & Pearson 2013).

The distinction between potentially benign and violent uses of humor is one of degree, rather than a dichotomy. For example, affiliative humor may involve a person gently teasing or playfully mocking the target, so affiliative humor may contain aggressive elements. Thus, the level of humor affects how it is perceived, and humor dimensions have a close and complex relationship (Martin et al., 2003). However, considering the hostile usage of aggressive humor, in which the self is enhanced by denigrating, disparaging, excessively teasing, or ridiculing others (Zillman, 1983), the motivation for

incivility is ambiguous, even if the target is subjected to intentional incivility, the target may not understand why (e.g., the target may have been subjected to incivility due to the actor's unpleasant mood) (Weingart et al., 2015). The complex relationship and high correlation of aggressive humor with affiliative humor, as ambiguous deviant behaviors, and the fact that incivility is considered a separate phenomenon from humor due to its nature that does not have to include fun, have made it more appropriate to use incivility instead of aggressive humor in research. In addition, the fact that aggressive humor can be interpreted as hostile and aggressive rather than passive rude behavior caused incivility to be chosen for the mediating role in the relationship between affiliative humor and the likelihood of conflict occurrence.

While incivility may appear less harmful than violent behavior, studies indicate that it has a negative impact on target individuals (Gunsoy, 2020). When incivility is perceived as malicious, it generates unpleasant feelings such as anger, fear, sadness, and anti-social behavior (Mcgraw & Warren, 2010; Schilpzand et al., 2016). Furthermore, incivility implies that the target is not respected and accepted by the actor, and this behavior endangers the target's social position, psychological worth, and self-esteem, encouraging the target to engage in anti-social behavior (Gunsoy, 2020; Meier & Gross, 2015).

Perception of incivility threatens the individual's identity and self-esteem, resulting in a reciprocal "tit-for-tat" spiral (Andersson & Pearson 1999; Wu et al., 2014). When subordinates witness such behavior from their manager, which may be perceived as a threat to their psychological values, their response is more aggressive than their peers (Günsoy, 2020). In this case, the reciprocal anti-social behavior of the manager, who responds in a similar way to protect his or her status, increases the likelihood of conflict occurrence between the parties (Meier & Gross, 2015). Finally, incivility increases the likelihood of conflict occurrence in organizations by disturbing the relationship and cooperation between parties (Cortina, 2008; Gunsoy, 2020; Pearson & Porath, 2005).

**H5.**: Subordinates' perceptions of managers' incivility behaviors are positively related with **(a)** perceived relationship conflict and **(b)** perceived task conflict.

Affiliative humor may negatively affect the perception of incivility behavior, however, if a subordinate perceives incivility after an affiliative humor behavior, the negative effect of affiliative humor on the likelihood of conflict occurrence will disappear or decrease (Mcgraw & Warren, 2010). On the other hand, perceived mistreatment may be affected by the characteristics of a focal target (Pearson & Porath, 2004; Pearson et al., 2001).

LSCT tells us that low-status individuals engage in various behaviors to increase their status. Low-status individuals tend to show violence when they perceive explicit or ambiguous behavior from a high-status individual that will threaten their worth, whereas they tend to respond positively when they receive a sign that will support their worth. Henry (2009) states that in honor culture communities where status inequalities are high, these behavioral patterns manifest themselves in values and norms, and states that individuals belonging to these communities are vigilant against the behavior of the other party in their relationships. In this case, how do individuals belonging to honor culture behave when they are exposed to ambiguous behavior of high-status individuals that can be perceived positively and negatively? How does positively perceived behavior affect reactions to negatively perceived behavior? and do they differ from individuals from other cultures? questions await answers. The answers to these questions can provide insight into the differences in conflict involvement in different cultures for individuals who are exposed to behaviors that threaten and support their worth in their daily lives.

The duality of politeness and violence may seem counter-intuitive at first sight; however, it is the threat of violence that leads to politeness. In other words, politeness, hospitality, and violence go hand-in-hand in honor cultures because people of honor culture fear the respect of escalating violence if they offend others and politeness is a proper means of preventing long spirals of revenge (Cohen et al., 1999). Indeed, Cohen and his colleagues (1999) have provided supportive evidence with their study. One of their studies has provided a finding that honor culture members did not show anger to an annoying confederate at the beginning; after a certain threshold, they gave more violent reactions than dignity culture members. Thus the civility and politeness norms do not prevent honor culture members from engaging in violence when it is required.

Honor culture members are deeply committed to the values of loyalty and integrity, as well as the need to protect and maintain their reputation (Bock, & Brown, 2021). Because, interpersonal interactions honor culture making it normative to retaliate directly against insults and to repay personal favors in kind (Maitner et al., 2022). Thus Turks tend to avoid conflicts with the people they care about (Gunsoy et al., 2015). In particular, the effect of incivility, which can be interpreted as an indirect attack on personality, on the likelihood of conflict occurrence with someone emotionally close, decreases (Konuk, Ataman, 2023). On the other hand, members of the dignity culture, evaluate their situation rationally by looking at events (Gunsoy, 2020). Furthermore, members of the dignity culture are free to view each new event in their own right and are not required to adhere to the goals and obligations imposed by the social groups to which they belong (Schwartz, 1994). Individuals from a culture of dignity are more concerned with whether they meet their standards in their relationships and achieve their own goals than with their evaluation of relationships and the environment (Aslani et al., 2016). As a result, in individualistic dignity cultures such as the UK, relationships are less important for individuals, and previous behaviors and relationship levels of individuals with whom they are in a relationship do not affect their conflict with the person with whom they are in a relationship. Indeed, Gunsoy et al. (2015) demonstrated in their study that individuals from individualistic, dignity culture members avoid conflict less than Turks.

To summarize, managers' incivility toward Turkish subordinates does not completely eliminate the effect of affiliative humor, which reduces the likelihood of relationship conflict occurrence. One reason for this could be that affiliative humor's signals of getting closer and positive reciprocity norms prevent the Turkish subordinate from having destructive reactions to incivility, which is an ambiguous behavior that may be interpreted and perceived as not an attack on the subordinate's psychological worth. On the other hand, incivility may completely eliminate the direct effect of affiliative humor on the likelihood of relationship conflict for the British, who evaluate the situation rationally and feel more free to react.

*H6.*: The perceived incivility behaviors of manageres mediates the negative relationship between perceived affliative humor and *(a)* perceived relationship conflict and *(b)* perceived task conflict, and *(c)* The mediating role of incivility between affiliative humor and relationship conflict is moderated by culture. Turkish subordinates increases the mediation effect level of incivility more than English subordinates. *(d)* The mediating role of incivility between affiliative humor and task conflict is not moderated by culture.

## Methods

**Research Setting and Sample**

Although research has been focused on manager-subordinate conflict due to the difficulties of investigating both sides in one study (Liu, 2018), Obi et al. (2020) have been followed and the study has been applied only to subordinates.

Following Chua's (2013) method, a private digital consumer panel was used to contact 300 Turkish citizens and 300 UK citizens, white-collard subordinates from mid-size SMEs, and for-profit institutions using, the random selection method. The participants worked in organizations operating in seven different service industries. The industries are Banking and Finance (=76), Sales and Marketing (=82), Education (=90), Retail (=96), Public Services (=57), Health (=39); Tourism (=47). Fourteen participants from Turkey and nine participants from the UK were not included in the analysis due to missing answers. In addition, due to avoiding participants giving the same answer to all questions, including reverse questions the data of 48 participants from Turkey and 51 participants from the UK whose standard deviations value were below ($SD < .1$) were not included in the analysis (Final $N_{UK}$ = 240, $N_{Turkey}$ = 238).

Except for the working status condition, no quota was enforced throughout data collection. Because the research panel represents typical demographic distributions across the country, and the sample was chosen at random from among the panelists, the research findings can be said to be valid in this circumstance. The research results in this case can be projected to both countries because the research panels that are reached reflect representative demographic distributions of the country and the sample has been randomly selected among the panelists. Participants were asked to confirm their consent to participate in the study before answering the questionnaire, to comply with the research ethics regulations.

To demonstrate the statistical power of the sample size obtained in this study, using the 3.1.9.7 version of the G*Power software, the "Two tails, t-tests - Means: Difference between two independent means (two groups)" test was selected, and "Sensitivity power analysis" was applied for collected total data. For both data seperately "Two tails, t-tests - Means: Difference from constant" was applied. The error probability was set to "0.05," and a 95% power was targeted. These values were based on the recommendations of previous researchers' (Faul et al. 2009; Lakens, 2013; Moon, Sanchez-Rodrigues, 2021; Thompson, 2002). For 95% power, the effect size d = 0.3304315 (Total), 0.2138519 (Turk), 0.2129538 (UK) (d = 0.2277833 (Total), 0.1616362 (Turk), 0.1609575 (UK) for 80% power) was calculated using sample sizes of 238 (Turkish participants) and 240 (English participants). Furthermore, the non-centrality parameter is calculated as = 3.6121148 (Total), 3.2991462 (Turk), 3.2990668 (UK) and critical t = 1.9649602 (Total), 1.6513084 (Turk), 1.6512542 (UK). The results showed that the sample size attained by the research achieved an effect size d value of 80%-95% power (.23-.33) for both groups, (.161 - .214) for Turkey, and (.161-.213) for UK. Given that many researchers believe that 80% power is acceptable, the sample size of the study is adequate (Lakens, 2022; Moon, Sanchez-Rodrigues, 2021). The power-effect size d for a total of 478 participants in the two groups, the power level is .999763 at 0.5 effect size d level of 478 (Total), .9999278 of 238 (Turk), .9999315 of 240 (UK). This graph demonstrates that the sample size was adequate (Lakens, 2022).

To apply the survey to Turkey, selected scales originally developed in English were translated into Turkish by three independent specialists. Specialists are brilliant in both languages (Chidlow et al., 2014). After the translation process was completed, the back translation process was initiated, and two other specialists translated the scale back into English. The original scale and back translation were compared by two academics who were fluent in both languages. After the translation process, the pilot survey was administrated to 47 participants, and after ensuring the test of a pilot study, the survey was sent to the sample group.

In the next stage, due to the use of two models in the research, factor analyses were first applied to the data collected from Turkey and the UK separately. Then, the data collected from Turkey and

the UK were combined and factor analysis tests were applied to the obtained data together. Factor analysis revealed the underlying factor structure of the statements representing the variables of the scales were examined (Ayaz et al., 2019; Yaslioglu, 2017). The Cronbach's alpha value (α = .70) was considered acceptable (Mahwah, 1998).

**Assessment of Common Method Bias**

Data collected from two different cultures should be investigated to determine whether they are affected by Common Method Bias (CMB), as it is obtained through the self-reporting technique. The CMB analysis in this study was conducted in two stages. In the first phase, the percentage of the described variance of each factor was checked using the Harman single-factor test method (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986). As a result of the analysis, single-factor variance from both cultures is below the 50% threshold (Turkey: 37.4%; UK: 34.5%) Thus, according to the Harman Single Factor Test analysis, the CMB threat is unlikely (Podsakoff et al. 2003).

In the second stage, The Unmeasured Latent Method (ULM) is applied (Podsakoff et. 2012). As Richardson et al. (2009) suggested, item loads were compared in samples with and without the addition of the Common Latent Factor (CLF) to the research model. The variance described by the method factor, regardless of the presence of CLF, was low and the differentiation of correlations did not exceed the threshold level. Thus, the variance between the items belongs to a single CLF. Two different findings from the two methodologies indicate that there was no CMB effect in the study.

**Measures**

Questionnaire items were arranged to measure the participants' evaluation of their formal first-degree managers. In the survey presented, the participants were asked to provide their answers by considering the managers they were directly affiliated with. Cronbach's alpha and KMO values of all scales are shown in Table 1. In addition, the McDonald's omega values presented by Hayes and Coutts (2020) as a strong alternative for reliability estimation are also presented in the same table. Participants in the survey were asked whether they agreed with the survey's questions. Six-point scales were preferred, with "strongly agree" on one end and "strongly disagree" on the opposite end. According to Cummins and Gullone (2000), six-point scales without a midpoint are preferred, particularly in studies where subjective opinions are obtained (Cummins & Gullone, 2000; 91). In addition, Peabody (1962; 66) states that this scaling method allows for the measurement of preference intensities at the two ends as well as the level of the participants' choices when selecting one end, thus increasing measurement precision.

**Conflict.** The conflict scale developed by Jehn et al. (2008) was adapted and used to measure manager-subordinate conflicts. Although research on conflict and its scale frequently focuses on teams, groups, or intergroup settings within organizations (e.g., Jehn, 1994, 1995; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Jehn et al., 2008; Parayitam & Dooley, 2009; Vahtera et al., 2017), conflicts are found everywhere in organizations where at least two people interact (Dijkstra et al., 2005; Ilies et al., 2011 (DeDreu, 2007). The original scale was modified by replacing the expressions for measuring intra-team conflict with those for measuring manager-subordinate conflict. Kiran et al.'s (2012) study was used in this adaptation process. " How different were you and your managers' viewpoints on decisions?" shows an example of the adaptation of the task conflict scale items. "How much fighting about personal issues was there with your manager?" is an example of the adaptation of the relationship conflict scale items.

**Humor.** The Humor scale developed by Martin et al. (2003) was adopted and used to measure subordinates' perceptions of their managers' aggressive and affiliative humor use. The two dimensions of the humor scale were adapted by replacing the items prepared for the participant's self-evaluation in the original scale with statements for the participant's evaluation of his/her manager in accordance with the focus of this research. For example, the item stated in the original scale as "I do not have to work very hard at making other people laugh—I seem to be a naturally humorous person", " My manager does not have to work very hard at making other people laugh. My manager seems to be a naturally humorous person".

**Incivility.** The Incivility scale developed by Cortina et al. (2001) was used to measure subordinates' perceptions of their managers' incivility. "My manager addressed me in unprofessional terms, either publicly or privately" is an example for the incivility behavior scale items.

Demograpgical Statistics of participants from Turkey and the UK are used as control variables in the research; (Age$_{UK}$ = 22-57 years, $M_{UK}$ = 34.73 years, $SD_{UK}$ = 8.31; Age$_{Turkey}$ = 21-52 years, $M_{Turkey}$ = 32.08 years, $SD_{Turkey}$ = 6.23; Age$_{Combined}$ = 21-57 years, $M_{Combined}$ = 33.38 years, $SD_{Combined}$ = 7.44). Of the participants, 212 worked in the management position and 131 were from the UK. 81 of the participants graduated from associate degree, 371 were under graduate degree (180 from the UK) and 15 were post-graduate degrees (15 from the UK), and 34 were associate degree graduates.

The absolute fit indices $\chi^2$, df, RMSEA, SRMR, GFI, CMIN/df recommended by McDonald and Ho (2002) were measured to show the fit of the models. According to the fitness values suggested by researchers for absolute fit indices, the results obtained from the CFA and presented in Table 3 show the acceptability of the models (Byrne, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Steiger, 2007).

**Data Analysis Strategy**

The analysis was conducted in two models. The technique used by Vogel and colleagues (2015) in their research was followedAt this point, data from both countries were combined, and the universality of the models were tested by examining the interactions of the combined data. For both models, culture was included as a categorical variable by coding a value of "1" for Turks and "2" for British.

In the first model, the moderating role of culture in the effect of aggressive and affiliative humor on relationship conflict and task conflict was explored. By using the moderation interaction method it is tried to prove whether the moderating variable can strengthen or weaken the direct influence of humor on conflict types.

In the second model, the mediating effect of incivility on the effect of affiliative humor on conflict types and the moderating role of culture in this interaction were investigated. The data from both countries were combined for the analysis of the model. Thus it is aimed to provide evidence for the differences between perception and/or reactions of subordinates from different cultures to the ambiguous behaviors of their managers. For the second model, by using the moderated mediation method it is tried to prove whether the culture strengthen or weakens the interaction of affiliative humor, incivility, and task and relationship conflict. Analysis and Results

SPSS software was used for Exploratory Factor Analysis and correlation analysis, AMOS software was used for model tests and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) tests, and regression analysis results were supported by bootstrap analysis results. For bootstrap analysis, the bias-corrected bootstrapping method was used by selecting the "Bias-Corrected Confidence Intervals" option in the AMOS software.

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients between the variables in the first model. In the first model, H1, H2, H3, and H4 were analyzed, and in the second model, H5 and H6

have been analyzed. In addition, before testing the models, Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) were applied to models, and the VIF values were less than 2; therefore, the possibility of multicollinearity was eliminated in the study (Howell, 1994).

Table 4 reports the regression analysis results for H1a and H1b. The results show that the perceptions of the subordinates about the managers' affiliative humor negatively affect (a) relationship conflict and (b) task conflict (H1a, $\beta$ =-.153, p=.000<.01; H1b, $\beta$ =-.224, p=.000<.01). Therefore, as proposed the H1a and H1b hypotheses were supported.

Table 4 reports the regression analysis results of Hypothesis 2. The results of the analyses indicate that in case the Turkish and English subordinates perceive the humor behavior of managers as aggressive humor the perception effects the likelihood of (a) relationship conflict an (b) task conflict occurrence. Thus, the results supports the H2a and H2b (H2a, $\beta$ = .486, p=.000<.01; H2b, $\beta$ = .243, p=.000<.01).

Table 5 reports the regression analysis results of Hypothesis 3. The results obtained from the H3a analysis firstly confirm that the "Aggressive Humor X Culture" interaction term has a significant effect on relationship conflict (H3a, $\beta$ =-.315, LLCI=-.656 – ULCI= -.004, p= .049 < .05, $\Delta R^2$ = .330). The results of the moderator analysis showed that the Turkish subordinates' perception of their managers' aggressive humor behavior is affecting the likelihood of relationship conflict occurrence stronger than the perceptions of the UK subordinates. The effect of "Aggressive Humor x Culture " the interaction term on Task Conflict, which was used to analyze the moderation role of culture in the effect of affiliative humor on Task Conflict, was not found to be significant (H3b, $\beta$ =-.026, LLCI=-.433 – ULCI= .355; p= .882, $\Delta R^2$ = .126). The results obtained show that culture does not have a moderating effect on the effect of aggressive humor on task conflict, as expected. To put it more clearly, the results showed that there was no significant difference in the effect of aggressive humor perceptions of Turkish and British subordinates on task conflict. In summary, H3b is supported.

Table 6 reports the regression analysis results of Hypothesis 4. The results of the H4a analysis firstly confirm that the "Affiliative Humor X Culture (AfH X C)" interaction term has a significant effect on relationship conflict (H4a, $\beta$ = .457, LLCI= .019 – ULCI= .54, p= .019 <.05, $\Delta R^2$=. 161).  The results of the moderator analysis showed that the Turkish subordinates' perception of their managers' affiliative humor behavior negatively affected the likelihood of relationship conflict occurrence stronger than the perceptions of the UK subordinates. As a result, hypothesis 4a of the study is supported.

The effect of "Affiliative Humor x Culture " the interaction term on Task Conflict, which was used to analyze the moderation role of culture in the effect of affiliative humor on Task Conflict, was not found to be significant (H4b, $\beta$ = .053, LLCI =-.472 – ULCI= .609, $\Delta R^2$=. 118). In summary, H4b was not supported.

In the second model analysis, the effect of managers' incivility behaviors which are perceived by subordinates on conflict types; whether the negative effect of managers' affiliative humor behaviors which is perceived by subordinates on the likelihood of conflict occurrence is hindered by subordinates' perception of managers' incivility behavior; It has been investigated whether this relationship differs in different cultures based on the UK and Turkish cultures.

Table 7 reports the regression analysis results of H5a and H5b. The results show that subordinates' perception of incivility behaviors of managers has a significant and positive effect on (a) relationship conflict and (b) task conflict (H5a, ($\beta$ =.608; p=.000<.01, LLCI =.542 – ULCI =.658); H5b, ($\beta$ =.342; p=.000<.01, LLCI =.27 – ULCI =.417)). Thus, hypotheses H5a and H5b were supported.

The results obtained for hypotheses H6a and H6b hypotheses are presented in Table 7. According to Hayes (2015), when the mediating variable is included in the model to test the mediating role of a variable, a decrease in the level of the direct effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable indicates partial mediation and the fact that the indirect effect becomes

completely insignificant indicates a full mediation relationship. In light of this information, according to the findings obtained from the analysis of the H6a hypothesis, it was observed that Turkish subordinates' perceptions of their managers' incivility partially mediated the relationship between the manager and subordinate of their perceptions of affiliative humor behavior and relationship conflict (H6a, $\beta$ direct effect= -.606, p<.001 LLCI = -.793 – ULCI = -.406; $\beta$ indirect effect=.345, p<.001, LLCI = -.492 – ULCI = -.247). Therefore, according to the findings, the 6a hypothesis of the study is partially supported. Second, as a result of testing the 6b hypothesis, incivility mediated the relationship between affiliative humor and task conflict. While affiliative humor has an indirect effect on task conflict, but not a significant direct effect; (H6b, $\beta$ direct effect = -.182, p>.1, LLCI = -.434 – ULCI=.091; $\beta$ indirect effect=.207, p<.01, LLCI = -.303 – ULCI = -.135). In this case, H6b is supported.

For the moderated mediation analysis, the results indicate that the moderating role of culture on the association between affiliative humor and relationship conflict through incivility is significant. In the paranthesis, direct effect of the interaction term (Affiliative Humor × Culture) on incivility was shown ($\beta$ =.364, $p$ <.1, 90% CI = [.064; .700]). Thus, the results support Hypothesis 6c for combined data. For the moderated mediation analysis, the results indicate that the moderating role of culture on the association between affiliative humor and task conflict through incivility is significant. In the parentheses, direct effect of the interaction term (Affiliative Humor × Culture) on incivility was shown ($\beta$ =-.021, $p$> .1, 90% CI = [-.46; .416]). Thus, the result obtained does not support Hypothesis 6d for combined data.

## Discussion

The study aimed to evaluate the impact of subordinates' perceptions of their managers' ambiguous behaviors on the likelihood of subordinate-manager conflict occurring under the moderation effect of culture. This research provides essential contributions to the conflict literature by revealing that culture moderates the relationship between ambiguous behavior (humor, incivility) perceptions and the likelihood of manager-subordinate relationship conflict. In addition, the findings provide insight to the researchers that ambiguous behaviors deserve more attention in conflict literature. One reason for that is ambiguous behaviors leave more space for the perception and interpretation of counterparts in a relationship. Thus, researching under which conditions perceptions and interpretations of individuals are affected may provide evidence to understand the conflict process. In addition, evidence suggests that LSCT provides an explanatory context in conflict research. Thus, the research provides evidence for both the conflict literature and the LSCT literature.

First, the research revealed that, as expected (H1, H2), while affiliative humor increases, the likelihood of conflict occurrence decreases, and while aggressive humor increases, the likelihood of conflict occurrence increases. These findings indicate that humor behavior, which is not direct and does not provide clear signals about the manager's intention toward the target triggers subordinates' reactions in both ways positively and negatively. As a result, the manager's use of humor can cause either an increase or decrease in the likelihood of conflict occurrence, depending on the subordinate's perception of the manager's intention. The negative effect of the manager's affiliative humor on the likelihood of conflict occurrence between him and his subordinate can be considered a good tool to eliminate the possible destructive effects of conflict. However, in order not to leave the perception of this ambiguous behavior to the employee, managers need to act carefully and clearly state their intentions. However, considering that employees' perceptions are affected by their characteristics, the manager should be selective regarding which subordinates such behaviors will be applied to.

The findings support H3a by showing that culture has a moderating role in the effect of affiliative humor on relationship conflict. The analysis revealed that subordinates' perceptions of managers'

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affiliative humor in Turkey have a greater impact on the decrease in the likelihood of conflict occurrence than subordinates in the UK. This finding confirms the idea that Turkish subordinates value relationships more and approach business relationships more emotionally than British subordinates (Ulu & Lalonde, 2007). In addition, the study provides evidence that culture does not have a moderating role in the effect of affiliative humor on task conflict. Thus, it has revealed that subordinates' perceptions of the managers' affiliative humor usage have similar effects on task conflict in both cultures.

The H4a analysis revealed that Turkish subordinates' perceptions of aggressive humor predicted relationship conflict more strongly than the UK subordinates' perceptions. This finding is also compatible with the honor-dignity cultural approach and LSCT. Therefore, managers who are in relationships with subordinates, especially those who are members of Turkish culture, should be aware that the humor they make is carefully monitored and interpreted by the subordinate, and if interpreted negatively, it may cause conflict. Depending on the results of Hypothesis H4b analysis culture does not have a moderating role in the aggressive humor-task conflict relationship. Therefore, in both cultures, subordinates' perceptions of managers' aggressive humor have similar effects on task conflict. This result may provide insight that the effect of aggressive humor on conflict will cause similar results, especially for managers working with subordinates from various cultures internationally. Considering that aggressive humor can be interpreted as deviant and aggressive behavior, managers may need to avoid humor behavior that can be interpreted as aggressive.

The significant results obtained from H3 and H4 provided evidence that culture has a moderating effect on the relationship between humor and relationship conflict while providing evidence that culture has no effect on the relationship between humor and task conflict. This finding supports other researchers who found that task conflict is not affected by culture (Jen, 2013; Zhongjun et al., 2019). However, it should be taken into consideration that the results obtained focus on the relationship between the manager and the subordinate. Task conflict between a subordinate and a manager has different dynamics than between co-workers (Kasl, 1998). Thus, applying the research among co-workers may lead to different results, so researchers can contribute to the conflict literature by repeating the research at the intra-group or co-worker analysis level.

On the other hand, the findings indicate that the effect of ambiguous behaviors on relationship conflict varies across cultures. This result contradicts the finding of de Wit and colleagues (2012) in their meta-analysis that the findings regarding conflict and its outcomes can be generalized across cultures. In their meta-analysis study based on 116 empirical studies on intragroup conflict, de Wit and colleagues did not find the effects of cultural context on the interaction between organizational conflict and its outcomes. Although the meta-analysis study was at the intragroup analysis level, the findings obtained in this study which is applied to the analysis level of manager-subordinate, provide insights to other researchers (Gelfand et al., 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Tjosvold et al., 2006). Therefore, based on the results obtained, it can be said that investigating the ambiguous behaviors affecting the perception of managers and subordinates will make an important contribution to the understanding of conflict and its relationship with culture.

The results obtained from the analysis of Hypotheses 6a and 6b show that incivility has a full mediating role in the effect of managers' affiliative humor on task conflict. On the other hand, managers' affiliative humor has a partial mediating role of incivility in relationship conflict. This result shows us that the effect of affiliative humor on reducing the likelihood of relationship conflict occurrence continues despite the manager's incivility behavior, while it eliminates the negative effect of affiliative humor on the likelihood of task conflict occurrence. LSCT tells us that individuals tend to exhibit anti-social behavior towards behaviors that threaten their worth, and pro-social behavior towards behaviors that support their worth. The results obtained support these findings. However,

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employees who receive support from their managers may tend to ignore ambiguous behaviors that may threaten their worth, or their reactions to these behaviors may be softer rather than violent. When the conflict is task-related rather than personal, incivility behavior perception, affiliative humor plays a more effective role in the conflict relationship.

The results obtained from the analysis of Hypothesis 6c, as expected, provided evidence that Turks who are members of the honor culture may be more vigilant against behaviors that affect their self-worth than UK citizens who are members of the dignity culture. According to these results, the negative effect of affiliative humor perception of Turkish subordinates on the likelihood of relationship conflict occurrence increases through incivility. Thus, when Turks receive signals supporting their worth from their managers, the mediating role of incivility behavior between affiliative humor and relationship conflict is less compared to UK citizens. Furthermore, in this relationship, managers' incivility had a stronger mediation impact on subordinates from the UK than on subordinates from Turkey. While Turkish subordinates see the manager's affiliative humor as an opportunity to become closer to the manager, they are more tolerant of rude behavior because of values supplied by honor culture norms (Gusoy, 2020; Morris et al., 1998). Therefore, this result can be interpreted as Turkish subordinates responding to the affiliative humor of their managers, this behavior brings the subordinates closer to the manager, and therefore they ignore or tolerate incivility behavior. On the other hand, the behaviors of the UK participants can be interpreted as differently and clear for each behavior.

**Theoretical Implications**

Pearson and colleagues (2001) defined incivility as "acting rudely, or acting rudely without one's intention, as a reflection of a desire to undermine the organization, harm the target, or benefit oneself". However, the findings indicate that, in addition to this classification, managers may use incivility against subordinates as an implicit warning to achieve common goals. For example, a manager's incivility toward a subordinate who fails to complete a task benefits both parties because the subordinate's failure to complete the task has negative consequences for both. A manager's incivility caused by the subordinate's lack of task completion may cause shame; in this scenario, the subordinates' withdrawal reaction may not lead to conflict occurrence (Konuk et al., 2022; Maitner et al., 2022). Indeed, the fact that studies reveal that the mediation effect of incivility on the effect of affiliative humor on task conflict is lower than the effect on the affiliative humor-relationship conflict relation may reflect this circumstance.

Individuals evaluate events that affect their emotions, cognition, and behaviors (Bell-Dolan & Anderson, 1999). Attribution theory provides a framework for explaining the relationship between people's evaluations of the cause of a negative event and their feelings and behavior (Eberly et al., 2011). This context can help to understand and explain subordinates' attribution about the source of the managers' incivility behavior and reacts to these attributions. The study's findings strongly suggest that subordinates' attribution of managers' incivility intentions can result in a variety of outcomes. As noted by Cortina and Magley (2009), this proposition requires analyzing incivility from the target's perspective, and future research may contribute to filling this gap by considering incivility from the target's attributions to the cause of the manager's incivility behavior.

Researchers have investigated the conditions that lead to functional outcomes of conflict. The results revealed that when task conflict is accompanied by high-level relationship conflict, task conflict outcomes are dysfunctional (Choi & Cho, 2011; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; de Wit et al., 2012). A second line of research indicates that when relationship conflict is minimal, moderate task conflict is best for functional organizational outcomes (De Dreu, 2006; Jehn, 1995). These findings, in particular,

suggest that affiliative humor can be employed to control conflict levels to achieve functional objectives. Future studies can provide more evidence on this topic by considering culture.

Investigation of the factors affecting the perception of affiliative humor as aggressive humor in organizations can provide important contributions to both the literature and the preparation of in-house training and the training of managers with different cultures on affiliative humor. In addition, Yang and Mossholder (2004) state that interaction norms related to conflict are an important research area. Investigating the effect of defining affiliative humor in an organization as an interaction norm on conflict levels can also make an important contribution to the literature and practical applications.

The results from this study provide insight into the contingent nature of the low-status compensation strategies recommended by LSCT. Therefore, which of the compensation strategies low-status individuals will engage in may be a function of contingency factors. In this case, subsequent studies can investigate what behaviors individuals use to compensate for their low status and how the levels of these behaviors change, depending on their personal characteristics or the conditions they are in.

**Managerial and Practical Implications**

Incivility and aggressive humor may easily become more common in organizations because of the lack of sufficient attention by decision-makers regarding these two phenomena (Pearson & Porath, 2005). However, the findings obtained from this study indicate that these two phenomena may have similar negative or positive effects in different cultures and that more attention should be paid to organizations. In addition, the findings of the study provide insight into how culture can shape subordinates' perceptions and anti-social or pro-social affective responses. Therefore, these findings can help practitioners develop interventions to address communication problems or conflicts between subordinates from different backgrounds or subsidiaries of multinational companies located in different countries (Gunsoy, 2020). In the globalizing world, it is especially important for organizations that enter the international arena to take precautions for incivility and aggressive humor. To prevent organizations from being negatively affected by managerial incivility and aggressive humor, it is important to provide values that discourage those behaviors is important (Moon & Sanchez-Rodrigues, 2021).

Managing conflict requires a challenging effort to articulate competing viewpoints while also improving relationships. Direct, respectful open dialogue and warm interpersonal contact have been found to be useful for conflict management abilities, at least for task disagreements (Tjosvold & Sun, 2003). These findings suggest that affiliative humor can be used to facilitate an open-minded discussion of different viewpoints on the task. As a result, defining the framework of affliative humor clearly and educating both managers and subordinates to prevent affiliative humor from being misunderstood is vital for developing a culture regarding affiliative humor and may increase its effect in organizations.

Research provides evidence that ambiguous behaviors have the potential to be influenced by different levels of culture. Therefore, managers should avoid ambiguous behaviors that have the potential to be misunderstood, and behaviors that can be perceived as positive should be used with care, especially in the international arena. However, given the potential of positive behaviors to reduce negative organizational outcomes, training managers and subordinates on this issue is more critical.

**Limitations**

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A subordinate's conflict with their managers was evaluated solely based on the self-report of limited numbers of subordinates from limited countries, reflecting the research sample group. These ratings provide information on how subordinates perceive conflicts and how they affect them but do not reflect managers' conflicting perceptions and all the cultures. Thus, researchers can investigate a larger variety and number of participants and cultures with further research.

While examining the effect of ambiguous behaviors on the likelihood of conflict occurrence, the research focused on specific conditions, and this limits the generalization of the results obtained. First of all, the research focused on the relationship between subordinate-managers, which is relatively less researched, rather than the intra-group analysis level, which organizational conflict research generally focuses on. Previous research shows that manager-subordinate relationships may have different dynamics than intra-group or inter-co-worker relationships, so this should be taken into account when considering the results obtained in this research. Researchers can test the validity of the results obtained with samples at different levels of analysis.

In the study, culture which was expected to affect the perception was researched as a moderator but many theoretically relevant moderators, such as personality, trust, and conflict management style were not investigated. Thus, future research would contribute to the literature by further investigation of theoretically relevant moderators of the likelihood of conflict occurrence.

The psychological mechanism underlying the moderating effects of culture is notcompletely considered. In addition, it is important to model and test other individual-level mechanisms because other possible explanations could drive the results (Tsui et al., 2007). In addition, although the moderator effect of culture was investigated in this study, culture was not addressed in all dimensions and the effect of dimensions has not been investigated. For this reason, it cannot be ensured that only honor-dignity approaches are effective in moderating the effect of culture.

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# Appendix

**Table 1.** *Factor analysis results for the data from Turkey, UK and the combination of them*

| Items | Turkey (N=238) | | | UK (N=240) | | | Combined (N= 478) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Item Loading | Cronbach α/ McDonalds Ω (ω) | KMO | Item Loading | Cronbach α/ McDonalds Ω (ω) | KMO | Item Loading | Cronbach α/ McDonalds Ω (ω) | KMO |
| **Relationship Conflict** | | | | | | | | | |
| I and my manager fought about non-work things. | .895 | | | .87 | | | .75 | | |
| Sometimes, we fought over personal matters. | .891 | | | .818 | | | .776 | | |
| How much fighting about personal issues was there with your manager? | .823 | .880/.881 | .785 | .764 | .843/.845 | .786 | .725 | .863/.865 | .793 |
| I and my manager disagreed about non-work (social or personality things). | .601 | | | .679 | | | .728 | | |
| **Task Conflict** | | | | | | | | | |
| I and my manager fought about work matters. | .67 | | | .56 | | | .795 | | |
| I and my manager had task-related disagreements. | .732 | | | .767 | | | .802 | | |
| How much conflict of ideas was there with your manager? | .605 | | | .679 | | | .845 | | |
| How different were you and your manager's viewpoints on decisions? | .833 | .896/.898 | .888 | .796 | .883/.887 | .875 | .768 | .890/.892 | .89 |
| How much did you and your manager have to work through disagreements about varying opinions? | .82 | | | .856 | | | .538 | | |
| I and my manager often disagreed about work things. | .723 | | | .645 | | | .787 | | |
| **Affiliative Humor** | | | | | | | | | |
| My manager usually doesn't laugh or joke around much with other people. * | .719 | | | .733 | | | .726 | | |
| My manager doesn't have to work very hard at making other people laugh. My manager seems to be a naturally humorous person. | .657 | | | .626 | | | .638 | | |
| My manager rarely makes other people laugh by telling funny stories about his/herself. * | .183 | | | .139 | | | .806 | | |
| My manager laughs and joke a lot with my closest friends. | .682 | .850/.849 | .831 | .591 | .837/.814 | .834 | .635 | .843/.812 | .846 |
| My manager usually doesn't like to tell jokes or amuse people. * | .773 | | | .788 | | | .78 | | |
| My manager enjoys making people laugh. | .729 | | | .71 | | | .719 | | |
| My manager doesn't often joke around with my friends. * | .785 | | | .783 | | | .787 | | |
| My manager usually can't think of witty things to say when s/he is with other people. * | .728 | | | .732 | | | .734 | | |

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### Aggressive Humor

| Item | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| If someone makes a mistake, my manager will often tease them about it. | .789 | | | .748 | | | .769 | | |
| People are never offended or hurt by my manager's sense of humor. * | .5 | | | .495 | | | .496 | | |
| When telling jokes or saying funny things, my manager is usually not very concerned about how other people are taking it. | .716 | | | .541 | | | .64 | | |
| My manager does not like it when people use humor as a way of criticizing or putting someone down. * | .724 | | | .74 | | | .723 | | |
| Sometimes my manager thinks of something that is so funny that s/he can't stop his/herself from saying it, even if it is not appropriate for the situation. | .265 | .816/.841 | .754 | .196 | .796/.807 | .729 | .588 | .778/.800 | .766 |
| My manager never participates in laughing at others even if all his/her friends are doing it. * | .086 | | | .085 | | | .562 | | |
| If my manager doesn't like someone, s/he often use humor or teasing to put them down. | .872 | | | .876 | | | .871 | | |
| Even if something is really funny to my manager, s/he will not laugh or joke about it if someone will be offended. * | .807 | | | .792 | | | .8 | | |

### Incivility in the Workplace

| Item | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Put you down or was condescending to you? | .9 | | | .892 | | | .901 | | |
| Paid little attention to your statement or showed little interest in your opinion? | .814 | | | .863 | | | .837 | | |
| Made demeaning or derogatory remarks about you? | .921 | | | .916 | | | .917 | | |
| Addressed you in unprofessional terms, either publicly or privately? | .9 | .959/.960 | .916 | .876 | .948/.948 | .912 | .888 | .953/.954 | .921 |
| Ignored or excluded you from professional camaraderie? | .907 | | | .884 | | | .896 | | |
| Doubted your judgment on a matter over which you have responsibility? | .905 | | | .843 | | | .869 | | |
| Made unwanted attempts to draw you into a discussion of personal matters? | .921 | | | .852 | | | .888 | | |

* refers to reverse item in the scale

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**Table 2**. *Descriptive results and correlation coefficient matrix of the research variables*

| Variables | *M* | *SD* | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. RC | 2.947 | 1.235 | - | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. TC | 3.710 | 1.121 | .627** | - | | | | | | | | |
| 3. InC | 2.210 | 1.221 | .608** | .419** | - | | | | | | | |
| 4. AfH | 3.860 | .973 | -.358** | -.321** | -.398** | - | | | | | | |
| 5. AgH | 2.840 | .962 | .554** | .340** | .603** | -.423** | - | | | | | |
| 6. Culture | 1.490 | .500 | -.047 | -.040 | .008 | .044 | -.007 | - | | | | |
| 7. Gen | 1.297 | .457 | .053 | .023 | .133** | -.134** | .011 | .120** | - | | | |
| 8. Age | 33.38 | 7.436 | -.106* | -.097* | -.033 | -.049 | -.015 | .162** | .355** | - | | |
| 9. Edu | 1.858 | .431 | -.032 | -.024 | -.022 | -.017 | -.023 | .133** | .116* | .048 | - | |
| 10. Exp | 3.740 | 1.120 | -.049 | -.083 | -.008 | .054 | -.028 | .059 | .180** | .433** | .006 | - |
| 11. Tenure | 3.141 | 1.129 | -.069 | -.026 | -.005 | -.038 | .001 | .074 | .283** | .525** | .065 | .664** |

*Note:* N = 487; *p<.05, **p <.01 level (two-tailed). SD = standard deviation.
Relationship Conflict (RC), Task Conflict (TC), Gender (Gen), Education (Edu), Incivility (InC), Affiliative Humor (AfH), Aggressive Humor (AgH), Experience (Exp). Model results showing standardized coefficients

**Table 3**. *Fit indices for the models*

| | | N | χ² | df | RMSEA | SRMR | GFI | CMIN/df |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model 1 | Combined | 478 | 280.741*** | 92 | .066 | .0779 | .925 | 3.052 |
| | Turkey | 238 | 350.477*** | 137 | .058 | .0837 | .921 | 2.558 |
| | UK | 240 | 172.899*** | 121 | .045 | .0880 | .916 | 1.429 |
| Model 2 | Combined | 478 | 280.363*** | 120 | .077 | .0735 | .881 | 2.336 |
| | Turkey | 238 | 215.673*** | 140 | .048 | .0718 | .904 | 1.541 |
| | UK | 240 | 203.054*** | 119 | .056 | .0820 | .901 | 1.706 |

*Note.* *p<.05, **p <.01, ***p <.001 level (two-tailed).

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**Table 4.** *The interaction between aggressive humor and conflict types (Relationship, Task)*

| | DV*: Relationship Conflict | | | | DV*: Task Conflict | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | Effect | SE | t | p | Effect | SE | t | p |
| Age | -,130 | ,007 | -3.180 | .002** | -,115 | .007 | -2.500 | .013* |
| Gen | ,079 | ,111 | 1.912 | .056 | ,035 | .114 | .759 | .448 |
| Edu | -,025 | ,109 | -.645 | .519 | -,019 | .111 | -.438 | .661 |
| AgH | ,486 | ,054 | 11.633 | .000*** | ,243 | .055 | 5.155 | .000*** |
| AfH | -,153 | ,054 | -3.624 | .000*** | -,224 | .055 | -4.705 | .000*** |
| | $R^2$= .342; F= 47.868; P<.001 | | | | $R^2$= .165; F= 18.283; P<.001 | | | |

*Note.* *p < .05, **p <.01, ***p < .001, *DV: Dependent Variable. Relationship Conflict (RC), Task Conflict (TC), Gender (Gen), Education (Edu), Incivility (InC), Affiliative Humor (AfH), Aggressive Humor (AgH). Model results showing standardized coefficients. Results showing standardized coefficients.

**Table 5.** *The moderator role of culture on the effect of aggressive humor on conflict types*

| DV* | | Effect | SE | T | P | LL | UL | $R^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Relational Conflict | Age | -.127 | .007 | -3,102 | .002 | -.224 | -.055 | |
| | Gen | .085 | .111 | 2,067 | .039 | .007 | .163 | |
| | Edu | -.023 | .109 | -.594 | .553 | -.096 | .047 | |
| | AgH | .704 | .151 | 5,98 | *** | .458 | .93 | .348 |
| | AfH | -.148 | .053 | -3,526 | *** | -.236 | -.053 | |
| | Culture (C) | .198 | .29 | 1,684 | .092 | -.024 | .397 | |
| | AgH x C | -.315 | .097 | -1,97 | .049 | -.656 | -.004 | |
| Task Conflict | Age | -.113 | .007 | -2,453 | .014 | -.214 | -.019 | |
| | Gen | .036 | .114 | .782 | .435 | -.053 | .131 | |
| | Edu | -.018 | .112 | -.411 | .681 | -.106 | .064 | |
| | AgH | .261 | .155 | 1,958 | .048 | .025 | .533 | .166 |
| | AfH | -.222 | .055 | -4,691 | *** | -.323 | -.125 | |
| | Culture (C) | .008 | .298 | .06 | .952 | -.302 | .315 | |
| | AgH x C | -.026 | .099 | -.142 | .887 | -.433 | .355 | |

*Note:* *p <.05, **p <.01, ***p <.001, Bootstrapped CI 95%, *DV: Dependent Variable. Relationship Conflict (RC), Task Conflict (TC), Gender (Gen), Education (Edu), Incivility (InC), Affiliative Humor (AfH), Aggressive Humor (AgH). Model results showing standardized coefficients.

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**Table 6.** *The moderator role of culture on the interaction of affiliative humor and conflict types*

| DV* | | Effect | SE | T | P | LL | UL | R² |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Relational Conflict** | Age | -.124 | .007 | -3.046 | .002 | -.218 | -.053 | |
| | Gen | .087 | .11 | 2.118 | .034 | .011 | .17 | |
| | Edu | -.02 | .109 | -.522 | .602 | -.097 | .047 | |
| | AgH | .482 | .053 | 11.648 | *** | .399 | .558 | .350 |
| | AfH | -.414 | .151 | -3.471 | *** | -.634 | -.143 | |
| | Culture (C) | -.375 | .383 | -2.413 | .016 | -.703 | -.019 | |
| | AfH x C | .457 | .096 | 2.352 | .019 | .054 | .866 | |
| **Task Conflict** | Age | -.113 | .007 | -2,446 | .014 | -.213 | -.020 | |
| | Gen | .037 | .114 | .789 | .43 | -.052 | .132 | |
| | Edu | -.017 | .112 | -.404 | .686 | -.106 | .063 | |
| | AgH | .242 | .055 | 5,17 | *** | .146 | .342 | .166 |
| | AfH | -.253 | .156 | -1,873 | .061 | -.568 | .045 | |
| | Culture (C) | -.051 | .394 | -.289 | .773 | -.476 | .324 | |
| | AfH x C | .053 | .098 | .240 | .810 | -.472 | .609 | |

*Note:* *$p$ <.05, **$p$ <.01, ***$p$ <.001, Bootstrapped CI 95%, *DV: Dependent Variable. Relationship Conflict (RC), Task Conflict (TC), Gender (Gen), Education (Edu), Incivility (InC), Affiliative Humor (AfH), Aggressive Humor (AgH). Model results showing standardized coefficients. Model results showing standardized coefficients.

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**Table 7.** *The moderator role of culture on the interaction of affiliative humor and conflict types through incivility*

| DV | Variables | | | Direct Effect | | | | | Indirect Effect | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Estimate (β) | CI (90%) | | S.E. (Std(γ)) | C.R. (t) | Estimate (β) | CI (90%) | | R² |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper | | | | Lower | Upper | |
| Relationship Conflict | Gen | → | RC | .008 | -.055 | .073 | .107 | .19 | | | | |
| | Age | → | RC | -.078† | -.148 | -.018 | .007 | -1,956 | | | | |
| | Edu | → | RC | -.01 | -.071 | .042 | .106 | -.269 | | | | |
| | InC | → | RC | .608*** | .542 | .658 | .037 | 16,557 | | | | .374 |
| | AfH | → | RC | -.606** | -.793 | -.406 | .146 | -3.102 | -.345** | -.492 | -.247 | |
| | Culture (C) | → | RC | -.037† | -.095 | .029 | .092 | -.996 | | | | |
| | AfH x C | → | RC | .364† | .064 | .700 | .092 | 1.942 | | | | |
| | AfH | → | InC | -.606*** | -.793 | -.406 | .166 | -4,576 | | | | |
| | Culture (C) | → | InC | -.253 | -.551 | .031 | .425 | -1,453 | | | | .164 |
| | AfH x C | → | InC | .361† | .021 | .726 | .106 | 1,649 | | | | |
| Task Conflict | Gen | → | TC | -.013 | -.084 | .065 | .11 | -.289 | | | | |
| | Age | → | TC | -.088* | -.168 | -.006 | .007 | -1,965 | | | | |
| | Edu | → | TC | -.011 | -.084 | .051 | .108 | -.255 | | | | |
| | InC | → | TC | .342*** | .27 | .417 | .041 | 7,605 | | | | .211 |
| | AfH | → | TC | -.182 | -.434 | .091 | .152 | -1,381 | -.207** | -.303 | -.135 | |
| | Culture (C) | → | TC | .001 | -.339 | .301 | .383 | .006 | | | | |
| | AfH x C | → | TC | -.021 | -.46 | .416 | .096 | -.098 | | | | |
| | AfH | → | InC | -.606*** | -.793 | -.406 | .166 | -4,576 | | | | |
| | Culture (C) | → | InC | -.253 | -.551 | .031 | .425 | -1,453 | | | | .164 |
| | AfH x C | → | InC | .361† | .021 | .726 | .106 | 1,649 | | | | |

*Note:* †*p*<.1, *\*p*<.05, *\*\*p*<.01, *\*\*\* p*<.001, *DV: Dependent Variable. Relationship Conflict (RC), Task Conflict (TC), Gender (Gen), Education (Edu), Incivility (InC), Affiliative Humor (AfH), Aggressive Humor (AgH). Model results showing standardized coefficients.

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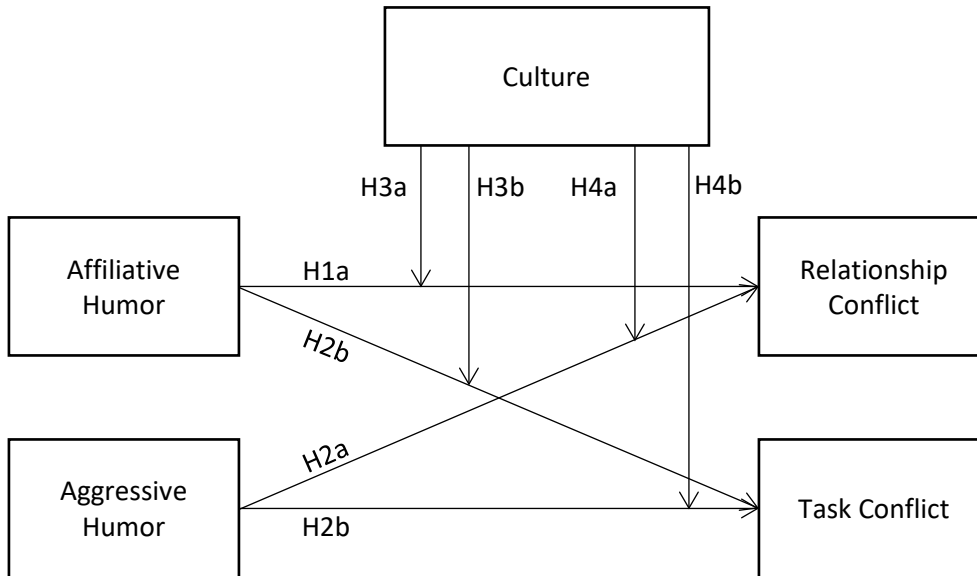
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**Figure 1**. *Research model 1.*



**Figure 2.** *Research model 2 (The model was analyzed for two data collected from two countries separately and the results were compared to each other, H6c is hypothesized for the differences between the two analysis results)*

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