

# Bankers closing idiosyncratic deals: Implications for organisational cynicism

Manuela Morf<sup>1</sup>  | Arnold B. Bakker<sup>2</sup>  | Anja Feierabend<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Center for Human Resource Management (CEHRM), University of Lucerne, Switzerland

<sup>2</sup>Center of Excellence for Positive Organizational Psychology, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands

## Correspondence

Manuela Morf, Center for Human Resource Management (CEHRM), University of Lucerne, Frohburgstrasse 3, Postfach 4466, 6002 Luzern, Switzerland.  
Email: manuela.morf@unilu.ch

## Funding information

Swiss National Science Foundation, Grant/Award Number: 168566

## Abstract

To better meet flexibility demands and increase person–job fit, organisations might offer their employees the opportunity to negotiate task-related arrangements, namely, idiosyncratic deals, referred to as “i-deals.” However, not every employee who requests an i-deal is successful in their negotiations. Thus, this study aims to further the knowledge of potential shortcomings of task-related i-deals and the role of supervisors in determining them. Drawing on social exchange theory, we hypothesise that low-quality supervisor–employee relationships (i.e., leader–member exchange) are more likely to result in unsuccessful task-related i-deal negotiations, which consequently might provoke increased organisational cynicism. We analysed three waves of data from 202 Swiss bankers who had requested task-related i-deals within the investigated business cycle. The results supported our hypothesis. Our findings highlight the role of supervisors in reducing the potential costs of using task-related i-deals as employee-initiated job design practices.

## KEYWORDS

employee voice, individualised HRM practices, job design, leadership, negotiation

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

To meet the flexibility demands of markets and account for the different needs of employees, organisations are increasingly seeking human resource (HR) practices that allow individualisation. In line with this trend is the broader use of idiosyncratic deals (abbreviated to i-deals), which are personalised work arrangements, negotiated between

individual employees and their organisations (Bal & Dorenbosch, 2015; Liu, Lee, Hui, Kwan, & Wu, 2013; Rousseau, Ho, & Greenberg, 2006). In fast-paced environments, offering task-related i-deals can be an effective alternative to formal and often rigid top-down job design measures that aim to increase the fit between jobs and the skills and interests of employees (Hornung, Rousseau, Glaser, Angerer, & Weigl, 2010). Task-related i-deals include, for example, assignment of more challenging tasks or receiving more responsibility (Hornung et al., 2010).

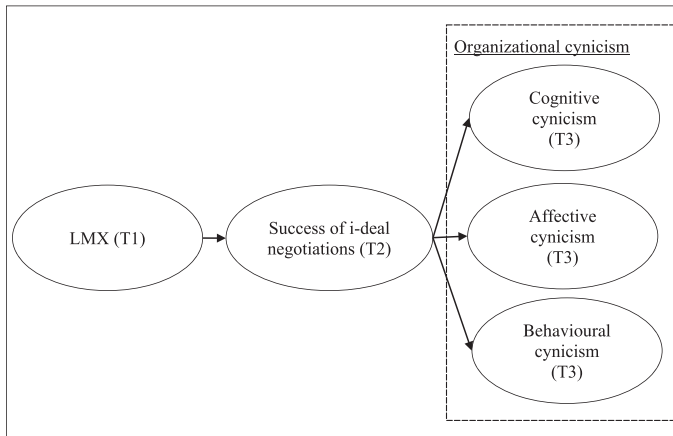
Findings on task-related i-deals are encouraging: Employees who have a higher number of task-related i-deals were found to display higher levels of well-being, motivation, commitment, and performance (Hornung, Rousseau, Weigl, Müller, & Glaser, 2014; Rosen, Slater, Chang, & Johnson, 2011). Therefore, organisations may encourage task-related i-deals as part of their HR strategy (Kroon, Freese, & Schalk, 2015). Indeed, scholars agree on the need for and benefits of customised jobs. However, advantages and disadvantages of implementation practices (such as task-related i-deals) are understudied (Oldham & Fried, 2016). Therefore, the present study focuses on task-related i-deals. Although employees may also use flexibility i-deals (such as special arrangements regarding work time and place) and financial i-deals (such as special arrangements regarding compensation) to customise their work (Rosen et al., 2011), these types of i-deals contribute less to person–job fit (Rofcanin, Las Heras, Bal, Van der Heijden, & Erdogan, 2018) and do not truly qualify as “bottom-up” job design activities (Hornung et al., 2010).

Thus far, the majority of studies on task-related i-deals have focused on the extent to having i-deals, namely, if granted i-deals led to small or large changes in job tasks (Bal & Rousseau, 2015). However, to gain i-deals, employees need first to ask for them and then negotiate with their employer (Rofcanin et al., 2018). Not every employee who makes a request is successful. Usually, the direct supervisor is responsible for implementing i-deals and has the power to decide whether or not to grant them (Hornung, Rousseau, & Glaser, 2009; Liao, Wayne, & Rousseau, 2016). Moreover, a supervisor's decision may be largely influenced by the quality of the relationship they maintain with their subordinate, referred to as a leader–member exchange or LMX hereafter (Hornung et al., 2010). As employees vary in their LMX relationships, i-deals as individualised HR practice may be perceived as inconsistent and may influence how employees perceive HR management and, thus, the organisation as a whole (Gilbert, De Winne, & Sels, 2011). Particularly, a denial of a desired i-deal may be frustrating (Kroon et al., 2015). Consequently, employees who were not successful in i-deal negotiations may show negative attitudes, and this may offset some of the benefits that organisations aim to offer by making task-related i-deals available to a broader employee segment.

We therefore explore the role of LMX in predicting the success of task-related i-deal negotiations and thus organisational attitudes. Specifically, we focus on organisational cynicism as a negative attitude that might be presented by employees who are unsuccessful in i-deal negotiations. Organisational cynicism refers to a negative attitude towards organisations and their management practices, such as when they are perceived as inefficient or unfair (Dean, Brandes, & Dharwadkar, 1998). Organisational cynicism can, for example, manifest in negative behaviours, such as talking negatively about the organisation. This has been found to relate to performance and intention to quit (Chiaburu, Peng, Oh, Banks, & Lomeli, 2013).

To develop our hypothesis, we draw on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) to argue that employees who have a low-quality LMX relationship with their supervisors are less likely to negotiate task-related i-deals successfully. Unsuccessful i-deal negotiations can be understood as negative, frustrating experiences that trigger a sense-making process, whereby the social exchange partner is re-evaluated (Louis & Sutton, 1991; Morrison & Robinson, 1997). We therefore hypothesise that unsuccessful task-related i-deal negotiations may serve as a signal to employees that the organisation as a whole does not value employees and therefore be more likely to relate to higher organisational cynicism. To test our mediation hypothesis (see Figure 1), we used data from 202 bankers who worked for a Swiss bank, gathered at three time points. Each had asked for task-related i-deals within the investigated business cycle.

Our research contributes in three ways. First, we explore the success of task-related i-deal negotiations as a potential mediator to explain how LMX translates into attitudes towards the organisation (i.e., organisational cynicism). Because findings of previous studies on the relationship between LMX and attitudes towards the organisation are mixed, more insights about factors that explain why and how LMX influences employees' organisational attitudes are needed (Eisenberger et al., 2010; Wayne et al., 2009). Second, by assessing the effects of successful task-related



**FIGURE 1** Proposed theoretical model. LMX, leader–member exchange; i-deal, idiosyncratic deal

i-deal negotiations (in contrast to simply having an i-deal), we answer the call of Rofcanin et al. (2018) to delineate the process of obtaining i-deals further into individual steps. Importantly, when asking individuals about how many i-deals they have, as usually done in previous research (Bal & Rousseau, 2015), it cannot be distinguished whether employees report not having i-deals because they have not asked for them or because they were not successful in their negotiations. In contrast, our measure allows us to compare the outcomes of employees who were successful, unsuccessful, and non-negotiators of task-related i-deals. Third, we contribute to the job design literature by investigating organisational cynicism of employees who are unsuccessful in task-related i-deal negotiations as a potential shortcoming of making task-related i-deals available to a broader segment of employees. Negotiations about task-related i-deals make employees' desires to alter their job content explicit, allowing for more customised job design and thereby potentially contributing to employee well-being (Hornung et al., 2010). However, encouraging employees to negotiate task-related i-deals also comes with the implicit promise that employee requests are heard (Harlos, 2001). Thus, implications of successful and unsuccessful i-deal negotiations can go beyond well-being and influence the employee–organisation relationship in unintended ways.

## 2 | THEORY

From an employee's viewpoint, the success of task-related i-deal negotiations is reflected in the degree to which the negotiated i-deals correspond with the desired changes in job design. This success is determined by supervisors, as they usually have the discretionary power to grant or deny i-deals on behalf of the organisation (Hornung et al., 2009; Liao et al., 2016). Particularly, the quality of the LMX that employees maintain with their supervisor might influence the supervisor's decision. Social exchange theory proposes that employees form social exchange relationships with their supervisors, in which they exchange their own resources (such as loyalty or work effort) for valuable resources (such as support or incentives) from their supervisors (Blau, 1964). The quality of this social exchange relationship (i.e., LMX) can differ (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). High-quality LMX is characterised by trust and shared beliefs in achieving a balanced exchange and mutually beneficial outcomes in the long term (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Conversely, in low-quality LMX relationships, the employees have more distrust for the exchange partner. Therefore, they are more likely to be motivated by self-interest rather than caring about mutual benefits (Buch, Thompson, & Kuvaas, 2016). Supervisors are likely to consider this when deciding about granting i-deals.

Indeed, task-related i-deal negotiations are role-making processes, in that supervisors and employees negotiate adjustments to job contents and altering roles (Hornung et al., 2014). The readjustment of role comes with uncertainty and often requires further investments from both parties. For instance, supervisors may give employees time and other resources to fulfil new job tasks, and employees may need to learn new skills (Fried, Laurence, & Levi,

2007). Thus, supervisors maintaining a low-quality LMX with their subordinates may fear that employees are less likely to respond favourably to granted i-deals, instead using them to serve self-interests. Therefore, employees who report low-quality LMX may be less likely to negotiate i-deals successfully. A similar argument was supported by previous studies investigating the relationship between LMX and the extent to which employees obtain i-deals (e.g., Hornung et al., 2014; Rosen et al., 2011).

However, social exchange does take place not only between employees and their supervisors but also between employees and their employing organisations (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Employees can form exchange relationships of varying quality with supervisors and organisations. Nevertheless, the supervisor can play a role in influencing the employee–organisation exchange (Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2011). When negotiating i-deals, the supervisor's role is to act as an organisational representative; therefore, employees are likely to identify them with the organisation (Eisenberger et al., 2010). Similarly, employees may perceive benefits offered by the supervisor as originating from the organisation (Loi, Mao, & Ngo, 2009). Because employees with low-quality LMX are less likely to get access to organisational benefits, such as i-deals (compared with high-quality LMX), employees with low-quality LMX are likely to re-evaluate their perceptions and attitudes towards the organisations (Loi et al., 2009).

Particularly, the denial of i-deals can trigger a sense-making process that may lead to a re-evaluation of the organisation (Chaudhry, Wayne, & Schalk, 2009). According to the framework of Louis and Sutton (1991), sense-making is likely when events are characterised by novelty and discrepancy. Task-related i-deal negotiations occur with defining new roles and therefore include a novelty aspect. Moreover, being unsuccessful in i-deal negotiations includes discrepancy between what employees desire and what they obtain. Thus, being unsuccessful in i-deal negotiations qualifies as a trigger for sense-making. Importantly, employees are likely to attribute an unsuccessful i-deal negotiation to a bad or unjustified act by the organisation, rather than to personal shortcomings such as a lack of skills (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Similarly, Morrison (2014) suggests that employees do not ask for i-deals when they believe that their request is unrealistic or will not be considered.

When employees attribute unsuccessful i-deal negotiations to unfair treatment, "their trust in organizations becomes problematic" (Loi et al., 2009, p. 407), and employees become frustrated and disappointed (Kroon et al., 2015). Such an attribution may provoke organisational cynicism, of which distrust and disappointment with the organisation are key elements (Chiaburu et al., 2013). To be more precise, organisational cynicism has a cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimension (Dean et al., 1998). Cognitive cynicism refers to the degree an organisation is perceived to have bad intentions, pursue self-interested goals, and lack trustworthiness and credibility and therefore reflects mistrust in the organisation. Affective cynicism refers to negative emotions, such as frustration or anger towards the organisation, which might be a result of denied i-deal requests. Behavioural cynicism refers to the actual expression of criticism or pessimistic perception, because individuals tend to display behaviours that correspond with their feelings and beliefs. Behavioural cynicism is an outlet by which to express negative beliefs about and attitudes towards the organisation (Dean et al., 1998). In summation, we propose that low-quality LMX may translate in organisational cynicism through unsuccessful i-deal negotiations.

**Hypothesis 1.** *LMX has an indirect negative relationship with (a) cognitive, (b) affective, and (c) behavioural cynicism through the success of task-related i-deal negotiations.*

### 3 | METHOD

#### 3.1 | Data collection and sample

We collected data from bankers employed by a midsize, Swiss bank. The bank encourages task-related i-deal negotiations. Employees are offered opportunities to identify their desire for task-related i-deals in regularly held goal definition, development, and performance appraisal meetings and other informal meetings with their supervisors.

Examples of task-related i-deals in banking can include being allowed to delegate more administrative tasks to the team assistant, getting more involved in interdivisional initiatives, or serve other segments of clients.

Guided by the bank's HR department, we chose three time points representing the 2015 business cycle. According to HR, i-deal negotiations occur between spring and late fall, because yearly goals and possible new tasks for employees are usually communicated in the spring. Performance appraisals then take place in the fall when planning for the next year's goals commences in higher management. Specifically, we collected reports of LMX in fall 2015 (T1), and then reports on the success of task-related i-deal negotiations were collected a month later (T2). We asked respondents to take a retrospective view on the success of task-related i-deal negotiations, with regard to the 2015 business cycle. We separated the measure of LMX and the success of task-related i-deal negotiations to reduce a potential common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Four months later (early 2016), we measured organisational cynicism prior to potential new task-related i-deal negotiations before the 2016 business cycle started (T3).

We invited 1,018 bankers to take part in the study, with 585 respondents completing the survey at T1, 462 at T2, and 373 at T3. This represents an overall response rate of 36.64%. We excluded 15 respondents who were promoted between T1 and T3, because promotion is considered a change in job tasks and/or supervisors. From our final sample of 358 respondents, 202 indicated having asked for at least one task-related i-deal and 123 indicated not having asked for any task-related i-deal. There were 33 respondents who chose not to answer any questions related to i-deals. Consequently, we included only those 202 respondents in our analyses who had asked for at least one task-related i-deal and thus were able to report the success of i-deal negotiations. Table 1 provides an overview of the sample characteristics.

## 3.2 | Measures

We used forward and back translation to translate scales into German. Unless stated otherwise, respondents were asked to rate items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

### 3.2.1 | Leader-member exchange

We measured LMX at T1 by using three items of the German version (Schyns, 2002) of the 7-item scale developed by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). An example item was, "My supervisors understand my job problems and needs." Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .85. A previous study that surveyed a representative sample of employees in Switzerland (Grote & Staffelbach, 2014) revealed that the short scale had a correlation of .95 ( $p > .001$ ,  $N = 1,401$ ) with the full scale. Consequently, we had a clear indication that shortening the scale did not affect the validity of the LMX measure.

### 3.2.2 | Success of task-related i-deal negotiations

We assessed the success of task-related i-deal negotiations at T2 by using the 4-item measurement of Hornung et al. (2010). Hornung et al. (2010) asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they have both "asked for and successfully negotiated" (p. 195) i-deals. In contrast, we asked respondents to indicate whether they had asked for the i-deal, proposed by an item (1 = *asked for*, 0 = *not asked for*) and, if so, to what extent they had been successful in negotiating the i-deal (1 = *very unsuccessful*, 5 = *very successful*). This method allowed us to distinguish whether employees had no task-related i-deal because they were unsuccessful in negotiating or because they had not asked for any i-deal (Bal & Rousseau, 2015). Example items included, "Have you asked for special job duties or assignments?", and if so, "How successful have you been in negotiating special job duties or assignments?" The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of the scale measuring the success of task-related i-deal negotiations was .93.

**TABLE 1** Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Male								
2. Age	.15*							
3. Work percentages	.48***	-.04						
4. Organisational tenure	.15*	.66***	.04					
5. Rank 1	-.45***	-.32***	-.36***	-.27***				
6. Rank 2	.04	-.15*	.01	-.06	-.33***			
7. Rank 3	.26**	.17*	.19*	.10	-.47***	-.31***		
8. Rank 4	.21**	.34***	.21**	.28***	-.34***	-.22**	-.31***	
9. Qualitative overload	.00	-.14*	.06	-.06	.03	.07	-.04	-.06
10. Working hours	.48***	.07	.80***	.09	-.47***	-.03	.20**	.36***
11. Performance-based salary	.38***	.35***	.34***	.29***	-.55***	-.19*	-.22**	.67***
12. Previous promotions	.33***	.42***	.23**	.58***	-.62**	-.03	.34***	.37***
13. Promotion probability	.20**	-.20**	.12	-.12	-.15	.25**	-.04	-.02
14. LMX	.12	-.04	.17*	-.05	-.06	-.16*	.08	.13
15. Success of i-deal negotiations	.02	-.08	.07	-.08	.05	-.07	-.06	.08
16. Cognitive cynicism	.03	-.07	.05	-.15*	.05	-.06	.08	-.09
17. Affective cynicism	.01	-.10	-.01	-.08	.08	.09	-.03	-.15*
18. Behavioural cynicism	.05	-.13	-.02	-.11	.01	.01	.06	-.09
M	0.63	41.49	92.38	14.25	0.34	0.18	0.30	0.18
SD	0.48	10.21	16.27	9.97	0.47	0.38	0.46	0.39

Note. N = 202. Male, Rank 1, Rank 2, Rank 3, and Rank 4 are dummy variables. Their means refer to percentages. Performance-based salary is measured in 1,000 CHF. Mean scale scores were used to calculate correlations.

Abbreviation: i-deal, idiosyncratic deal; LMX, leader-member exchange; M, mean; SD, standard deviation.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

TABLE 1 Continued

Variables	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Male										
2. Age										
3. Work percentages										
4. Organisational tenure										
5. Rank 1										
6. Rank 2										
7. Rank 3										
8. Rank 4										
9. Qualitative overload										
10. Working hours	.05									
11. Performance-based salary	-.15	.47***								
12. Previous promotions	-.06	.37***	.64***							
13. Promotion probability	-.10	.13	.05	.02						
14. LMX	-.05	.19*	.20**	.03	.25**					
15. Success of i-deal negotiations	.00	.13	-.04	.01	.19*	.36***				
16. Cognitive cynicism	.12	-.05	.02	-.15*	-.05	-.19**	-.29***			
17. Affective cynicism	.25***	-.06	-.14	-.18*	-.12	-.19**	-.25***	.46***		
18. Behavioural cynicism	.12	-.03	.05	.00	-.03	-.19**	-.21**	.46***	.44***	
M	1.95	42.47	12.73	1.02	15.71	3.95	3.20	2.53	1.47	2.38
SD	0.65	9.63	12.61	1.12	24.10	0.82	1.07	0.68	0.61	0.63

### 3.2.3 | Organisational cynicism

We assessed organisational cynicism at T3 by using the measure of Brandes, Dharwadkar, and Dean (1999), including three subscales. Cognitive cynicism was assessed with five items (e.g., "I believe [the organization] says one thing and does another"). Affective cynicism was assessed with four items (e.g., "When I think about [the organization], I feel irritation"). Behavioural cynicism was assessed with three items (e.g., "I criticize [the organization]'s practices and policies with others"). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  were acceptable for cognitive cynicism ( $\alpha = .82$ ) and affective cynicism ( $\alpha = .89$ ).

For behavioural cynicism, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was only .57 and a confirmatory factor analysis including all organisational cynicism items revealed some reliability issues. The three-factor model showed the best fit when compared with the one-factor model,  $\Delta\chi^2(3) = 246.58, p < .001$ , or all possible two-factor models,  $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 42.92, p < .001$ ;  $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 230.43, p < .001$ ;  $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 26.75, p < .001$ . However, the modification indices suggested that two of the three behavioural cynicism items had high cross-loadings (modification indices of 16.67 and 8.68). Because of these findings, we decided to exclude behavioural cynicism from our analyses.

### 3.2.4 | Controls

In line with previous research, we measured gender, age, organisational tenure, and contractually agreed work percentages from 10% to 100%, with 100% referring to 42 contracted working hours per week (Chiaburu et al., 2013; Hornung et al., 2010; Rosen et al., 2011). Because individual negotiation power might influence results (Liao et al., 2016; Rousseau et al., 2006), we also assessed the hierarchical rank of respondents. The ranks were employee without higher rank (Rank 1), assistant vice president (Rank 2), vice president (Rank 3), and director or managing director (Rank 4). Furthermore, theory suggests that employees with a higher need are more likely to receive i-deals (Marescaux & De Winne, 2015). Employees may possibly have a higher need for task-related i-deals when tasks do not fit their skills (the qualitative workload) or when the workload is too heavy (the quantitative workload). To assess quantitative workload, we asked for actual average working hours per week. To assess qualitative workload, we used the three-item scale of Udriș and Rimann (1999) (e.g., "Sometimes my work is too difficult for me,"  $\alpha = .74$ ). Additionally, to rule out the possibility that performance or rewards act as an omitted variable in our model or as alternative mediating mechanisms, we asked respondents to indicate the amount of performance-based salary they have received (bonus), the number of previous promotions, and the probability that they will soon be promoted (0–100%). However, following the recommendations of Becker (2005), we included in our final analyses only quantitative workload and organisational tenure as controls, because only these variables showed a significant relationship with the mediator or with the outcomes.

## 4 | RESULTS

### 4.1 | Descriptive statistics

Table 1 presents the correlations among mean scale scores of all variables measured. We examined our measurement model with a confirmatory factor analysis that indicated an adequate fit,  $\chi^2(156) = 179.71, p = .09$ , root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.03, confirmatory fit index (CFI) = 0.99, Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = 0.98.

### 4.2 | Model testing

We compared two alternative models: the direct effects mediation model and the indirect effects model. The direct effects model included direct pathways from T1 LMX to T3 cognitive and affective cynicism (test of a partial



mediation). The indirect effects model did not include these direct pathways, and correlations between T1 LMX and T3 cognitive and affective cynicism were constrained to zero (test of a full mediation). In both models, we allowed the residuals of cognitive and affective cynicism to correlate. The direct effects model,  $\chi^2(156) = 179.71$ ,  $p = .09$ , RMSEA = 0.03, CFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.98, and the indirect effects model,  $\chi^2(158) = 182.06$ ,  $p = .09$ , RMSEA = 0.03, CFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.98, showed good fit indices. However, the direct effects model did not fit significantly better to the data than the indirect effects model,  $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 2.34$ ,  $p = .310$ . We also found nonsignificant paths from T1 LMX to T3 cognitive cynicism ( $b = -.09$ ,  $p = .242$ ) and to T3 affective cynicism ( $b = -.09$ ,  $p = 0.164$ ). Consequently, the indirect effects model was favoured. Table 2 shows the pathway estimates of the indirect effects model. Our results supported that T1 LMX positively relates to T2 success in task-related i-deal negotiations ( $b = .51$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Our results also showed that T2 success in task-related i-deal negotiations was significantly negatively related to T3 cognitive cynicism ( $b = -.26$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and T3 affective cynicism ( $b = -.19$ ,  $p < .001$ ). For the control variables, we found only two significant relationships: First, T1 organisational tenure showed a significant, but weak negative relationship with cognitive cynicism T3 ( $b = -.01$ ,  $p = .020$ ); and second, T1 qualitative overload was significantly related to T3 affective cynicism ( $b = .28$ ,  $p = .002$ ). To examine the indirect effects, we used bootstrapping with 1,000 drawings. T1 LMX displayed a negative indirect relationship with T3 cognitive cynicism (95% CI [-0.21, -0.06]) and T3 affective organisational cynicism (95% CI [-0.16, -0.04]). Consequently, the results supported Hypothesis 1(a) and (b) that T1 LMX was related to T3 cognitive cynicism and T3 affective cynicism through T2 success of task-related i-deal negotiations.

### 4.3 | Robustness checks and supplementary analyses

Given the debate about the misuse of control variables (Becker, 2005; Becker et al., 2016; Bernerth & Aguinis, 2016), we also checked whether our main findings differed if the controls were excluded from our model. The findings remained the same.

**TABLE 2** Pathway estimates of the structural equation model predicting cognitive and affective organisational cynicism

Independent variable		Dependent variable	<i>b</i>
LMX	→	Success of i-deal negotiations	.51***
Organisational tenure	→	Success of i-deal negotiations	-.01
Qualitative overload	→	Success of i-deal negotiations	.08
Success of i-deal negotiations	→	Cognitive cynicism	-.26***
Organisational tenure	→	Cognitive cynicism	-.01*
Overload	→	Cognitive cynicism	.19
Success of i-deal negotiations	→	Affective cynicism	-.19***
Organisational tenure	→	Affective cynicism	-.01
Overload	→	Affective cynicism	.28**
Indirect effects			95% bootstrap CI
LMX → Success of i-deal negotiations → Cognitive cynicism			[-0.21, -0.06]
LMX → Success of i-deal negotiations → Affective cynicism			[-0.16, -0.04]

Note.  $N = 202$ .

Abbreviations: *b*, unstandardised regression weights; CI, confidence interval; i-deal, idiosyncratic deal; LMX, leader-member exchange.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Furthermore, missing data of the items measuring i-deal success were high (the highest at 28.28%), because a large share of respondents did not ask for all of the four i-deals proposed by the scale. Thus, we did several additional checks. First, we ran *t*-tests to compare respondents who had asked for all four i-deals ( $N = 103$ ) with respondents who had asked for one-to-three i-deals ( $N = 99$ ). The groups did not significantly differ. Second, we tested if our results changed when we controlled for whether a respondent had asked for all four i-deals (=1) or not (=0) with a dummy and when we controlled for the number of i-deals that the respondents asked for (ranging from 1 to 4). We found no significant differences in results. Third, we compared our findings with the findings of a model in that those 99 respondents who did not ask for all four i-deals were excluded. Again, we found no significant differences.

In addition, we ran further *t*-tests to support our proposition that asking individuals about the success of task-related i-deals rather than the extent of having task-related i-deals leads to different results. Our point was that when asking individuals about the extent of i-deals that they have, it is not possible to distinguish between individuals who have no or only limited i-deals because they were unsuccessful in negotiating them, and individuals who did not ask for any i-deals. We split the participants in three groups: one group that indicated to have not asked for any i-deal at all, one group that was not successful in task-related i-deal negotiations (values between 1 and 2.9 on the scale of 1 = *very unsuccessful* and 5 = *very successful*), and one group that considered their negotiations outcomes as neutral or successful (values between 3 and 5). Supporting our point, unsuccessful i-deals negotiators ( $N = 58$ ) reported on average significantly higher cognitive cynicism, 2.84 compared with 2.33,  $t(178) = 4.86$ ,  $p = .039$ , and affective cynicism, 1.71 compared with 1.28,  $t(178) = 4.11$ ,  $p < .001$ , than employees who did not ask for any i-deal at all ( $N = 122$ ). In addition, we found no significant differences in cognitive cynicism, 2.40 compared with 2.33,  $t(263) = 0.845$ ,  $p = .398$ , and in affective cynicism, 1.28 compared with 1.28,  $t(263) = 1.53$ ,  $p = .121$ , when we compared the group of successful i-deal negotiators with the persons who did not ask for any i-deal.

## 5 | DISCUSSION

### 5.1 | Theoretical contributions

Our results support our proposition that LMX translates into organisational cynicism through the success of task-related i-deal negotiations. This finding adds to the knowledge in three ways.

First, we found support for the mediating role of task-related i-deals negotiations, in the relationship between LMX and organisational cynicism. In other words, we identified the success of i-deal negotiations as a potential link that may explain how the quality of social exchange employees have with their supervisor (i.e., LMX) influences how employees perceive their social exchange relationship with the organisation. Importantly, thus far, the literature provides little guidance on why and how LMX should influence how employees perceive their organisations (Loi et al., 2009). Particularly, when the supervisor's role as organisational representative is less salient, employees are likely to distinguish between the treatment of the supervisor and the treatment of the organisation (Eisenberger et al., 2010). In contrast, when supervisors are responsible for the negotiation of i-deals, and in doing so act as enforcer of organisational interests, the supervisor's role as organisational representative becomes increasingly salient. Thus, employees appear to perceive treatment by the supervisor as more indicative of treatment by the organisation, when supervisors have more responsibilities in implementing organisational practices, such as i-deals. This finding is important for social exchange literature, as it advances the understanding of when and why LMX is more likely to affect the social exchange that employees maintain with the organisation.

Second, our results suggest that employees with low-quality LMX may not be less likely to have task-related i-deals because they do not ask for them, but rather, because they were less successful in negotiating for them. Importantly, employees with low-quality LMX are already at a disadvantage because they have less access to work-related resources, such as the autonomy and support that supervisors can provide (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, & van den Heuvel, 2015). Consequently, our findings support Bal and Lub's (2015) concerns that the

use of i-deals can reinforce a “Matthew effect.” This effect, named after a passage in the Gospel of Matthew (Merton, 1968), implies that the use of task-related i-deals can widen the gap between employees who benefit from a motivating job design and a rich pool of resources and employees who do not. This brings into question the extent to which allowing employees to negotiate task-related i-deals offers organisations a remedy to overcome disadvantages caused by low-quality LMX (Anand, Vidyarthi, Liden, & Rousseau, 2010).

Third, our findings emphasise that unsuccessful task-related i-deal negotiations may increase organisational cynicism. Thus, institutionalising task-related i-deal negotiations can come at a cost. To date, the majority of research has focused on favourable attitudes of employees who have i-deals (Bal & Rousseau, 2015). However, explicit negotiations may also create losers whose i-deal requests are refused. Particularly, our supplementary *t*-tests suggest that unsuccessful i-deal negotiations may provoke organisational cynicism, whereas successful i-deal negotiators do not differ in organisational cynicism when compared with individuals who do not have any i-deals. Thus, our evidence suggests that differences in attitudes of employees who have a larger number of i-deals in comparison with employees who have a limited number of i-deals (e.g., Hornung et al., 2010; Rosen et al., 2011) are also driven by negative reactions of individuals whose i-deal requests were denied. Our findings therefore highlight the need to develop a more balanced view when studying i-deals by considering potential shortcomings.

## 5.2 | Limitations, strengths, and further research

Our study was conducted among bankers in a Swiss bank that used task-related i-deals as an HR practice. Because of the uniqueness of our sample, the generalisability of our results is limited. Therefore, we encourage replication studies and studies that investigate how organisational context influence results. However, focusing on bankers appears suitable, given that the nature of the work in service- and knowledge-oriented organisations, such as the bank investigated, allows the most room for task-related i-deals (Langfred & Rockmann, 2016). Moreover, it might be of interest to use data from multiple organisations to study fairness perceptions (Rousseau, 2004) and the involved i-deal practices (such as the degree of formalisation, encouragement of i-deals negotiations, and communication) as a moderator in the relationship between the success of task-related i-deal negotiations and organisational cynicism.

In addition, our study design does not facilitate the drawing of strong conclusions about causality. Further research is needed to explore potential reverse causality, namely, whether and when success in i-deal negotiations may also lead to an LMX increase (Liao et al., 2016). However, as i-deal negotiations are usually initiated by employees, the time point of i-deal negotiations is difficult to predict, making studies with multiple measurement points (immediately before and after i-deal negotiations take place) difficult to realise. We therefore recommend further research, utilising field experiments or measuring instrument variables. Instrument variables enable endogeneity issues to be taken into account and strongly correlate with the predictor—but not with the error term of the dependent variable (Antonakis, Bendahan, Jacquart, & Lalive, 2010).

Further, we cannot exclude the possibility that cynicism “may be somewhat self-fulfilling” (Wanous, Reichers, & Austin, 2000, p. 147). Thus, further research on what motivates employees to ask more frequently for task-related i-deals may be worthwhile. Specifically, differentiation between economic and social exchange may provide useful insights (Shore, Tetrick, Lynch, & Barksdale, 2006). Applied to LMX (Kuvaas, Buch, Dysvik, & Haerem, 2012), employees with high economic LMX prefer more explicit agreements, whereas employees with high social LMX rely less on such arrangements (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In addition, an interesting avenue for further research would be to explore how the consistency in requesting and obtaining desired i-deals influences outcomes and employee willingness to ask for i-deals.

Regarding our control variables, we were unable to support the theoretical notion that employees with a greater need (higher qualitative and quantitative workload) are more likely to be successful in task-related i-deal negotiations. Similarly, variables that were used as proxies for performance and rewards (such as performance-based salary) exhibited no significant relationship with success of task-related i-deal negotiations. An explanation for this null

finding may be that performance is highly monitored and rewarded, especially in the banking sector. In such contexts, supervisors may rely less on task-related i-deals to stimulate or reward performance. Therefore, further research is worthwhile. Particularly, it would be interesting to study whether an interaction between performance and LMX predicts the success of i-deals negotiations and reactions to unsuccessful i-deals negotiations. For example, employees who perform at a high level and have a low-quality LMX may show more organisational cynicism when an i-deal is denied, as performers are probably more likely to attribute a denied i-deal to unfair treatment by the organisation, rather than to their own failure (i.e., low performance).

Although all our data was self-reported, measuring our key variables at different time points limited the possibility of a common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Moreover, our goal was to examine the effect of the success of task-related i-deal negotiations from the employees' viewpoint. We consequently had theoretical reasons to collect self-reported data. However, research that extends our study by incorporating the supervisor perspective, such as motives of supervisors to grant i-deals (Hornung et al., 2009), would be very fruitful. Research could also collect supervisors or co-workers ratings to assess employee behaviours as reactions to unsuccessful task-related i-deal negotiations. Such research would be especially worthwhile, given that we were unable to distinguish behavioural cynicism from cognitive and affective cynicism sufficiently.

Commonly, in i-deal research, the scale used to assess the success of task-related i-deal negotiations was retrospective (Hornung et al., 2010; Liu et al., 2013; Rosen et al., 2011). This makes sense, because success refers to a retrospective evaluation after a process has been completed. However, studies that investigate the negotiation process itself, by assessing variables such as individual negotiation strategies in more detail, are also perceived as promising. Importantly, previous research has not often properly distinguished whether employees reported not having any i-deals because they had not asked for them or because the i-deals were not granted (Bal & Rousseau, 2015). Consequently, a key methodological strength of our study was using a scale that better captured both poles of the success of task-related i-deal negotiations (i.e., very unsuccessful and very successful i-deal negotiations). The use of this scale enabled us to gain a richer understanding of the costs that institutionalisation of task-related i-deals may bring.

### 5.3 | Practical implications

Our findings inform the community of practice about the potential negative side effects of institutionalising task-related i-deals. The practice of institutionalising task-related i-deals seems to confer with the implicit promise that employee requests for i-deals are heard and truly considered. Harlos (2001) stressed that HR practices that encourage employee proactivity can destroy trust in the organisation, when requests are not handled well. Accordingly, our results suggest that organisational cynicism may be observed among those employees who are not successful in negotiating task-related i-deals. The major organisational challenge would seem to be to communicate and demonstrate that i-deals are fairly negotiated (Rousseau, 2004). Thus, implementing clear policies that ensure procedural justice, consistency, and transparency should be a priority for organisations that offer i-deals (Hornung et al., 2014).

The "execution of these policies needs strong managers" (Kroon et al., 2015, p. 87). Our findings support the important role of supervisors in determining the success of task-related i-deal negotiations and, consequently, organisational cynicism. It follows that supervisors should have the necessary skills to handle i-deal negotiations fairly and to gain employees acceptance when i-deals cannot be granted. However, being good negotiators might not be enough. Our findings also support the fact that employees who have a high-quality LMX are more likely to be successful in task-related i-deal negotiations. Granting i-deals in high-quality LMX is proposed to develop to more beneficial outcomes for all parties involved (Rousseau et al., 2006). Thus, organisations would benefit from selecting and training supervisors in their abilities to develop high-quality LMX with their employees. For instance, evidence supports the idea that transformational leadership (such as setting high goals and providing support and individual considerations) contributes to a high-quality LMX (Dulebohn et al., 2011).

Our results also suggest that efforts should be made not to unintentionally disadvantage some employees. Our results indicated that those employees who were less supported by their supervisors (low-quality LMX) were also less likely to obtain task-related i-deals. To tackle the potential Matthew effect, organisations could support employees in the development of negotiation skills (Kroon et al., 2015). Empowering employees to make better use of task-related i-deals corresponds with organisational interests, as long as organisations strive for a better fit between individual needs and job requirements, rather than for rewarding “the lucky few” (Bal & Lub, 2015, p. 19) with preferential treatment.

## 6 | CONCLUSION

We identified the success of task-related i-deal negotiations as a mediator between LMX and organisational cynicism. Specifically, employees with low-quality LMX seem to be less successful in task-related i-deal negotiations. Being unsuccessful in task-related i-deal negotiations can result in organisational cynicism, an attitude that organisational practices are not perceived as fair and trustworthy. Thus, our findings emphasise the importance of strong leadership skills in order to reduce potential negative side effects when organisations use task-related i-deals.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The first author received funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation (Grant 168566). The funder had no role in the design of the study, data collection and analysis, or preparation of the manuscript. We thank Dr. Heidi E. Bodenmann for her valuable comments and coordination of the data collection.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

## ORCID

Manuela Morf  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0527-9958>

Arnold B. Bakker  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1489-1847>

## REFERENCES

- Anand, S., Vidyarthi, P. R., Liden, R. C., & Rousseau, D. M. (2010). Good citizens in poor-quality relationships: Idiosyncratic deals as a substitute for relationship quality. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53, 970–988. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2010.54533176>
- Antonakis, J., Bendahan, S., Jacquart, P., & Lalive, R. (2010). On making causal claims: A review and recommendations. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 21, 1086–1120. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2010.10.010>
- Bal, P. M., & Dorenbosch, L. (2015). Age-related differences in the relations between individualised HRM and organisational performance: A large-scale employer survey. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 25, 41–61. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12058>
- Bal, P. M., & Lub, X. D. (2015). Individualization of work arrangements: A contextual perspective on the rise and use of i-deals. In M. Bal, & D. M. Rousseau (Eds.), *Idiosyncratic deals between employees and organizations: Conceptual issues, applications and the role of co-workers* (pp. 9–23). Abingdon, UK: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315771496-2>
- Bal, P. M., & Rousseau, D. M. (2015). The future of i-deal research: An agenda. In M. Bal, & D. M. Rousseau (Eds.), *Idiosyncratic deals between employees and organizations: Conceptual issues, applications and the role of co-workers* (pp. 122–130). Abingdon, UK: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315771496-9>
- Becker, T. E. (2005). Potential problems in the statistical control of variables in organizational research: A qualitative analysis with recommendations. *Organizational Research Methods*, 8, 274–289. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428105278021>
- Becker, T. E., Atinc, G., Breaugh, J. A., Carlson, K. D., Edwards, J. R., & Spector, P. E. (2016). Statistical control in correlational studies: 10 essential recommendations for organizational researchers. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 37, 157–167. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2053>

- Bernerth, J. B., & Aguinis, H. (2016). A critical review and best-practice recommendations for control variable usage. *Personnel Psychology, 69*, 229–283. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12103>
- Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Brandes, P., Dharwadkar, R., & Dean, J. W. (1999). Does organizational cynicism matter? Employee and supervisor perspectives on work outcomes. In *Eastern Academy of Management proceedings* (pp. 150–153).
- Breevaart, K., Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & van den Heuvel, M. (2015). Leader-member exchange, work engagement, and job performance. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 30*, 754–770. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-03-2013-0088>
- Buch, R., Thompson, G., & Kuvaas, B. (2016). Transactional leader-member exchange relationships and followers' work performance: The moderating role of leaders' political skill. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, 23*, 456–466. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1548051816630227>
- Chaudhry, A., Wayne, S. J., & Schalk, R. (2009). A sensemaking model of employee evaluation of psychological contract fulfillment: When and how do employees respond to change? *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 45*, 498–520. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886309341739>
- Chiaburu, D. S., Peng, A. C., Oh, I.-S., Banks, G. C., & Lomeli, L. C. (2013). Antecedents and consequences of employee organizational cynicism: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 83*, 181–197. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2013.03.007>
- Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Management, 31*, 874–900. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206305279602>
- Dean, J. W., Brandes, P., & Dharwadkar, R. (1998). Organizational cynicism. *Academy of Management Review, 23*, 341–352. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.1998.533230>
- Dulebohn, J. H., Bommer, W. H., Liden, R. C., Brouer, R. L., & Ferris, G. R. (2011). A meta-analysis of antecedents and consequences of leader-member exchange. *Journal of Management, 38*, 1715–1759. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206311415280>
- Eisenberger, R., Karagonlar, G., Stinglhamber, F., Neves, P., Becker, T. E., Gonzalez-Morales, M. G., & Steiger-Mueller, M. (2010). Leader-member exchange and affective organizational commitment: The contribution of supervisor's organizational embodiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 95*, 1085–1103. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020858>
- Fried, Y., Laurence, G., & Levi, A. S. (2007). The job characteristics model and LMX-MMX leadership. In G. B. Graen & J. A. Graen (Eds.), *New Multinational Network Sharing* (pp. 157–197). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Gilbert, C., De Winne, S., & Sels, L. (2011). The influence of line managers and HR department on employees' affective commitment. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 22*, 1618–1637. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2011.565646>
- Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *The Leadership Quarterly, 6*, 219–247. [https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843\(95\)90036-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(95)90036-5)
- Grote, G., & Staffelbach, B. (Eds.) (2014). *Schweizer HR-barometer 2014: Arbeiterleben und Job Crafting [Swiss HR-Barometer 2014: Experience of work and job crafting]*. Zurich: University of Zurich and ETH Zurich.
- Harlos, K. P. (2001). When organizational voice systems fail. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 37*, 324–342. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886301373005>
- Hornung, S., Rousseau, D. M., & Glaser, J. (2009). Why supervisors make idiosyncratic deals: Antecedents and outcomes of i-deals from a managerial perspective. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 24*, 738–764. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940910996770>
- Hornung, S., Rousseau, D. M., Glaser, J., Angerer, P., & Weigl, M. (2010). Beyond top-down and bottom-up work redesign: Customizing job content through idiosyncratic deals. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 31*, 187–215. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.625>
- Hornung, S., Rousseau, D. M., Weigl, M., Müller, A., & Glaser, J. (2014). Redesigning work through idiosyncratic deals. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 23*, 608–626. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2012.740171>
- Kroon, B., Freese, C., & Schalk, R. (2015). A strategic HRM perspective on i-deals. In M. Bal, & D. M. Rousseau (Eds.), *Idiosyncratic deals between employees and organizations: Conceptual issues, applications and the role of co-workers* (pp. 73–91). Abingdon, UK: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315771496-6>
- Kuvaas, B., Buch, R., Dysvik, A., & Haerem, T. (2012). Economic and social leader-member exchange relationships and follower performance. *The Leadership Quarterly, 23*, 756–765. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.12.013>
- Langfred, C. W., & Rockmann, K. W. (2016). The push and pull of autonomy. *Group & Organization Management, 41*, 629–657. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601116668971>



- Liao, C., Wayne, S. J., & Rousseau, D. M. (2016). Idiosyncratic deals in contemporary organizations: A qualitative and meta-analytical review. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 37*(S1), 9–29. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1959>
- Liu, J., Lee, C., Hui, C., Kwan, H. K., & Wu, L.-Z. (2013). Idiosyncratic deals and employee outcomes: The mediating roles of social exchange and self-enhancement and the moderating role of individualism. *The Journal of Applied Psychology, 98*, 832–840. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032571>
- Loi, R., Mao, Y., & Ngo, H. Y. (2009). Linking leader-member exchange and employee work outcomes: The mediating role of organizational social and economic exchange. *Management and Organization Review, 5*, 401–422. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1740-8784.2009.00149.x>
- Louis, M. R., & Sutton, R. I. (1991). Switching cognitive gears: From habits of mind to active thinking. *Human Relations, 44*, 55–76. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872679104400104>
- Marescaux, E., & De Winne, S. (2015). Equity versus need: How do co-workers judge the distributive fairness of i-deals? In M. Bal, & D. M. Rousseau (Eds.), *Idiosyncratic deals between employees and organizations: Conceptual issues, applications and the role of co-workers* (pp. 107–121). Abingdon, UK: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315771496-8>
- Merton, R. K. (1968). The Matthew effect in science: The reward and communication systems of science are considered. *Science, 159*(3810), 56–63. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.159.3810.56>
- Morrison, E. W. (2014). Employee voice and silence. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 1*, 173–197. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091328>
- Morrison, E. W., & Robinson, S. L. (1997). When employees feel betrayed: A model of how psychological contract violation develops. *Academy of Management Review, 22*, 226–256. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.1997.9707180265>
- Oldham, G. R., & Fried, Y. (2016). Job design research and theory: Past, present and future. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 136*, 20–35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2016.05.002>
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J.-Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *The Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*, 879–903. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879>
- Rofcanin, Y., Las Heras, M., Bal, P. M., Van der Heijden, B., & Erdogan, D. T. (2018). A trickle-down model of task and development i-deals. *Human Relations, 71*, 1508–1534. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726717751613>
- Rosen, C. C., Slater, D. J., Chang, C.-H., & Johnson, R. E. (2011). Let's make a deal: Development and validation of the ex post i-deals scale. *Journal of Management, 39*, 709–742. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310394865>
- Rousseau, D. M. (2004). Under the table deals: Preferential, unauthorized or idiosyncratic? In A. O'Leary-Kelly, & R. Griffin (Eds.), *The dark side of organizational behavior* (pp. 262–290). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Rousseau, D. M., Ho, V. T., & Greenberg, J. (2006). I-deals: Idiosyncratic terms in employment relationships. *Academy of Management Review, 31*, 977–994. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2006.22527470>
- Schyns, B. (2002). Überprüfung einer deutschsprachigen Skala zum Leader-Member-Exchange-Ansatz [Examining a German scale of leader-member exchange]. *Zeitschrift für Differentielle und Diagnostische Psychologie, 23*, 235–245. <https://doi.org/10.1024//0170-1789.23.2.235>
- Shore, L. M., Tetrick, L. E., Lynch, P., & Barksdale, K. (2006). Social and economic exchange: Construct development and validation. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 36*, 837–867. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-9029.2006.00046.x>
- Udris, I., & Rimann, M. (1999). SAA und SALSA: Zwei Fragebögen zur subjektiven Arbeitsanalyse [SAA and SALSA: Two questionnaires for a subjective analysis of job design]. In H. Dunckel (Ed.), *Handbuch psychologischer Arbeitsanalyseverfahren [Manual of psychological methods for job design analyses]* (pp. 397–419). Zürich, Switzerland: Vdf Hochschulverlag.
- Wanous, J. P., Reichers, A. E., & Austin, J. T. (2000). Cynicism about organizational change measurement, antecedents, and correlates. *Group & Organization Management, 25*, 132–153. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2F1059601100252003>
- Wayne, S. J., Coyle-Shapiro, J. A.-M., Eisenberger, R., Liden, R. C., Rousseau, D. M., & Shore, L. M. (2009). Social influences. In H. J. Klein, T. E. Becker, & J. P. Meyer (Eds.), *Commitment in organizations: Accumulated wisdom and new directions. SIOP organizational frontiers series* (pp. 253–284). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

**How to cite this article:** Morf M, Bakker AB, Feierabend A. Bankers closing idiosyncratic deals: Implications for organisational cynicism. *Hum Resour Manag J.* 2019;29:585–599. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12245>