DOES THE APPLE FALL FAR FROM THE TREE? EMERGING ADULT CHILDREN RESPONSES TO PARENTS DURING CONFLICT INTERACTIONS

By

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Communication—Doctor of Philosophy

2020

ABSTRACT

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The present study uses family communication patterns (FCP), expectancy violations theory (EVT), and conflict strategies as theoretical frameworks to predict how emerging adult children will *enter* and *respond* to conflict with their parent. Participants (N = 423) completed an experimental survey and were randomly assigned to a parental condition. Message components were, first, assessed to see how the child would *enter* the conflict situation with their parent. Then, participants were randomly assigned to a conflict strategy message from their parent (i.e., constructive, destructive, or avoidant). Finally, participants rated messages as to their likelihood of using that conflict strategy message to *respond* to their parent. Results revealed high conversation orientation positively predicted the initial use of constructive conflict strategies and negatively predicted the initial use of avoidant conflict strategies. High conformity orientation positively predicted the initial use of destructive and avoidant strategies, while negatively predicting the initial use of constructive conflict strategies. FCP dimensions' ability to predict responding conflict strategies were not as consistent as for initial conflict strategies, and the interactions between the two dimensions of FCP (conversation and conformity orientations) were also analyzed. Four significant interactions emerged. In terms of EVT, highly negatively-valenced violations predicted the likelihood of a child responding destructively or avoidantly, whereas highly positively-valenced violations predicted the likelihood of a child responding constructively. Moderated moderation analyses revealed several three-way interactions between

the FCP dimensions, degree of unexpectedness, and the valence of the violation on responding conflict strategies.

Keywords: family communication patterns, expectancy violations theory, conflict strategies, parent-child conflict, emerging adults, financial conflict, experiment

My dissertation is dedicated to my habibi, best friend, role model, and grandfather, Nicholas Shebib. He was my greatest supporter and he always told me I could achieve anything I put my mind to. He was a courageous man who taught me the importance of discipline and hard work. Papa—I wish you could be here to witness this huge milestone in my life, but I know you are looking down and beaming with pride. Not a day goes by without me thinking of you and all the lessons you taught me my entire life. I love you past the stars and galaxies, and way beyond the miles it takes to heaven. I dedicate my dissertation to you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My dissertation, along with my entire academic journey, would not have been possible without the encouragement and support of a number of wonderful people. As they say, it *does* take a village. I owe my deepest and sincerest gratitude to my mentor and advisor, Dr. Amanda Holmstrom. Mandy: It has been a true honor to be your advisee. Thank you for all the opportunities you have provided me, your continuous support, always challenging me, and so much more. This is actually extremely hard for me to write (shockingly) because it would take the length of this dissertation to articulate everything you have done for me. You made me into the scholar I am, and for that, I am forever grateful. But this is just the beginning of our academic relationship together; you are stuck with me.

In addition to my advisor, I would like to thank the rest of my dissertation committee, Dr. Elizabeth Dorrance Hall, Dr. Gary Bente, and Dr. William Chopik, for their willingness to impart upon me their immense knowledge and constructive feedback, which contributed greatly to my dissertation. I admire each of you as teachers and researchers, and it was a privilege to have you on my committee.

I would also like to thank my former master's advisor, Dr. William Cupach, and my former undergraduate professor who encouraged me to pursue graduate school, Dr. Melissa Tafoya. Dr. Cupach: Thank you for always being there for me throughout my masters and doctorate journey. Even while you were retired and I was in Michigan, you provided me with so much support and guidance and you will always be a life-long friend. Dr. Tafoya: If it was not for you, I would not have thought I was even capable of going to graduate school. No

exaggeration. You have been there since the beginning of my academic journey and have mentored me throughout the entire process.

I am beyond fortunate to have some of the most incredibly supportive friends, but there are a few in particular I would like to mention. Cassie Peña: You were there through it all since my sophomore year at ASU. Thank you for always supporting my academic endeavors and giving me the confidence that I actually can do this. Lauren Meier: My best friend, sister, and so much more, your friendship means the world to me. Thank you for always being the remedy to my anxiety and being my confidant. Lauren Kosowski: I am not sure how I would have survived after the traumatic loss of Bentley without you. And finally, Clint Townson: You were the most supportive person throughout my time at MSU. You will always be my first work husband.

I would also like to express appreciation to my loving, large, close-knit, and supportive family. To my Oma and Opa: Thank you for supporting me, encouraging me to follow my dreams, and giving me the professor genes. To my grandma: Thank you for being my safe zone, my confidant, and for always being willing for some retail therapy shopping at T.J. Maxx with me. You know how much I admire and love you. To my sister and brother-in-law, Sharon and Jesse: Thank you for always asking me how my day was and expressing sincere interest in my research (if you know, you know). To my boyfriend, Perry Comito: Thank you for putting up with me, reminding me to eat when I have been on my computer for 12 consecutive hours, and for keeping me sane. To my puppies, Bentley and Gordie: Thank you for loving me unconditionally, licking my tears despite the sodium content when I feel sad, getting me outside for a bracing and healing walk on days I wanted to do absolutely nothing, moving across country (several times), and being the only constant in my life.

Most importantly, I want to thank my mother and father for helping me pursue my dreams. I pride myself in having words for everything, but I am at a loss for words when attempting to describe how much I love them and appreciate the efforts they have put into giving me the life I have now. Making them proud is my main goal in life. Dad: It's official! I'm finally a Spartan!

–Dr. Samantha J. Shebib, Ph.D.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

The parent–child relationship is one of the most significant, enduring, emotionally intense, and meaningful human social ties (Birditt, Miller, Fingerman, & Lefkowitz, 2009; Fingerman, Hay, & Birditt, 2004). It is unique because it represents an involuntary relationship (i.e., not by choice), an imbalance of power (Adams & Laursen, 2001; Emery, 1992), and responsibility on behalf of the parent to act as a caregiver to the child (Canary, Cupach, & Messman, 1995). Although parents and children can express positive and supportive communication, they can also express and communicate mutual oppositions with one another (Luescher & Pillemer, 1998; Nelson, Boyer, Smith, & Villarreal, 2019). Conflict between family members is conceptually defined as "incompatibilities that can be expressed by people related through biological, legal, or equivalent ties" (Canary & Canary, 2013, p. 6). Indeed, parents and their children report experiencing conflict even long after children are grown (Clarke, Preston, Raksin, & Bengtson, 1999; Fingerman, 1996). These disagreements can range from every day, mundane differences of opinions to more serious, emotionally charged arguments. While the negative effects of conflict in relationships, such as in families, are well documented, conflict is also functional in nature; for example, it can allow for the negotiation of beliefs and rules, stimulate interest, enhance perspective-taking skills, air and solve problems, contribute to identity, and allow for change (e.g., Deutsch, 1973; Paikoff & Brooks-Gunn, 1991; Paulson, Hill, & Holmbeck, 1991; Selman, 1980).

A great deal of scholarly attention has been devoted to examining conflict between parents and their young and/or adolescent children (see Birditt & Fingerman, 2013; Canary, Cupach, & Messman, 1995; Crosnoe & Cavanagh, 2010; Ehrlich, Richards, Lejuez, & Cassidy, 2015; Moed et al., 2015; Montemayor, 1983; Orrego & Rodriguez, 2001; Reyes et al., 2012;

Sillars, Koerner, & Fitzpatrick, 2005). Limited research has also examined conflict between parents and their adult children (e.g., Birditt et al., 2009; Birditt et al., 2019; Cichy, Lefkowitz, & Fingerman, 2013; La Valley & Guerrero, 2012). However, considerably less research has focused on conflict between parents and their *emerging adult children*, even though the majority of emerging adults and their parents remain invested in each other throughout this phase and into adulthood (Fingerman & Birditt, 2011; Rossi & Rossi, 1990). In fact, Demo (1991) emphasized the need to examine differences in conflict across different stages of childhood development.

An emerging adult is defined as "someone who is legally an adult, but who continues to be financially, emotionally, or otherwise dependent upon his/her parents" (Givertz & Segrin, 2014, p. 1112). Emerging adulthood represents a unique, transitional time in the child's life, as they are trying to become independent but they are not fully there yet, and thus, they are still dependent upon their parents in some capacity (Lowe & Arnett, 2019). Research has found that parents of emerging adult children provide them with financial assistance. Since these children remain economically dependent upon their parents, it is not uncommon for disagreements to arise regarding financial support (Fingerman & Yahirun, 2016; Norona, Preddy, & Welsh, 2016). Though some research has been conducted regarding the financial support parents provide in this relationship, very little, if any, research has examined it from the child's perspective and in conflict interactions. Therefore, a gap exists in the present family communication and conflict literature.

In order to address this gap, the present study focuses on two theories to help illuminate conflict between parents and emerging adult children. The first is family communication patterns (FCPs; the ways in which parents communicate with their children; Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990), which have been associated with family members' conflict styles (e.g., Dumlao & Botta, 2000;

Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Sillars et al., 2014). Research indicates that families are children's primary socialization agents (Halberstadt, 1986; Sillars, 1995) and socialize children to engage in certain conflict strategies when conflict arises (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997; Noller, 1995), which sets the tone for how children interpret conflict both within and outside the family unit (Harold, Shelton, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2004; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The family environment is the first setting in which children learn behaviors and develop expectations of communicative interactions (Sergin & Flora, 2011). Therefore, expectancy violations theory (EVT; Burgoon, 1993) is also used to understand how children assess parental behavior that deviates from what is expected and how children respond communicatively to such parental violations.

The goals of the present study were two-fold: to determine (a) how FCP orientations influence conflict initiation by the emerging adult child with a parent; and (b) how violated behavior, both negatively- and positively-valenced, from the parent impacts the emerging adult child's response to conflict. In order to do this, an experiment was conducted to see how conflict strategies stabilize (or change) throughout a manipulated conflict interaction. Theoretically, this study important as it is the first to use EVT in family relationships and the first to combine both FCP and EVT to make sense out of parent-child conflict interactions. In the section that follows, a discussion of the causes and consequences of conflict in emerging adulthood and the typology of conflict strategies in parent and child relationships will be reviewed. Then, I will discuss FCP theory and EVT as theoretical frameworks for the present study. Hypotheses and research questions will be proposed as they are warranted throughout the literature review.

Causes and Consequences of Conflict in Emerging Adulthood

Emerging adulthood is a distinct developmental period following adolescence with a focus on identity issues of love, work, and worldviews (Arnett, 2000). Thus, this stage of development is characterized by identity exploration. During this time, individuals experience a shift in the dynamics of their relationship with their parents, and parenting may play a crucial role in the successful transition into adulthood (Hardie, 1999). Research has illustrated that emerging adults are still influenced by their parents (McKinney, Milone, & Renk, 2011). Emerging adults report that they value their parents' opinions (Dubas & Peterson, 1996) and still require parental assistance (Arnett, 2001). As a result, emerging adults are often ambivalent regarding their transition to adulthood (Nelson & Barry, 2005), teetering between their need for separation and their need for connection (Youniss & Smollar, 1985). During the process of individuating from their family-of-origin, changes in emerging adults' relationships with their parents can ultimately lead to conflict (Lefkowitz, 2005).

Conflict and the strategies to managing conflict expose the relational renegotiation that characterizes the parent-child relationship (Riesch, Jackson, & Chanchong, 2003). Conflict in this relationship is important to study because of the inherent power differences that exist in parent-child interactions, with parents having more power compared to their children (Emery, 1992). Though the power differences between parents and children are more potent when a child is younger compared to when the child is an emerging adult (Adams & Laursen, 2001; Canary et al., 1995; Recchia, Ross, & Vickar, 2010), there still is a struggle of power during emerging adulthood. When power is imbalanced in relationships during conflict, the more powerful individual tends to achieve their goals more often than the person of less power (Perlman, Siddiqui, Ram, & Ross, 2000).

Parent-emerging adult child conflict is important to understand pragmatically because conflict in the family-of-origin sets the precedence for how children will communicate when conflict arises in their subsequent interpersonal relationships (e.g., Aquilino, 1997; Fincham, 1998; Gavin & Furman, 1996; Halberstadt 1986). Communication during conflict is a critical process for relational development, maintenance, and dissolution (Cahn, 1992). Thus, understanding conflict between parents and children has important implications for individual and family adjustment (Barber & Delfabbro, 2000; Orrego & Rodriguez, 2001; Sillars, Canary, & Tafoya, 2004), in addition to child development (e.g., Shantz & Hartup, 1992).

Furthermore, potential physiological and psychological health risks for children associated with conflict dealt with ineffectively (e.g., increased physiological reactivity, reduced resiliency, weakened immune system, elevated distress, and poorer academic performance), in addition to familial consequences (e.g., dissatisfaction, instability, and less commitment), render parent-emerging adult child conflict an essential communicative situation to understand empirically (e.g., Adams & Laursen, 2001; Bahrassa, Syed, Su, & Lee, 2011; Clarke et al., 1999; Lee & Liu, 2001; Manczak, McLean, McAdams, & Chen, 2015; Miller, Roloff, & Malais, 2007). The *effective and productive* management of conflict between parents and emerging adult children still has a significant, positive impact on familial satisfaction, stability, commitment, cohesiveness, and the emerging adult child's well-being (Adams & Laursen, 2001; Sillars et al., 2004; Stanley, Markman, & Whitton, 2002). Thus, it is essential to understand how communication during conflict between parents and emerging adult children can impact their (a) positive and negative and (b) proximal (i.e., immediate) and distal (i.e., long-term) outcomes.

Conflict Strategies in Parent and Child Relationships

A great deal of research has been conducted to examine conflict tactics, which refer to specific actions, moves, and styles people use when communicating during conflict (e.g., Sillars & Wilmot, 1994). However, a more common approach to studying conflict between members of a relational or family dyad is by categorizing how an individual intermixes various tactics during a conflict episode. The ways an individual mixes conflict tactics are referred to as *conflict strategies* (Cupach, Canary, & Spitzberg, 2010). Conflict strategies are viewed as a series of deliberate behaviors used to achieve one's goal (Wilson, 2002). Conflict strategies are important as they impact the degree of conflict resolution between the disputing individuals, in addition to the satisfaction between the members of the dyad (Sillars, 1995). The three most commonly cited conflict strategies, across any type of relational dyad, are: constructive, destructive, and avoidant (e.g., Canary & Cupach, 1988; Putnam & Wilson, 1982; Ross & DeWine, 1988; Sillars, Coletti, Parry, & Rogers, 1982). These conflict strategies have been confirmed across the parent-child conflict literature, as well (see Branje, van Doorn, & Van der Valk, 2009; Recchia et al., 2010; Rinaldi & Howe, 2003; Rueter & Conger, 1995).

The *constructive conflict strategy* is conceptually defined as explicit and direct discussion about the conflict situation (Sillars, 1980a) to find a mutually acceptable solution for both the parent and the child (Cupach et al., 2010). This conflict strategy has also been referenced in previous literature as integrative (Sillars et al., 1982), positive (Wilmarth, Nielsen, & Futris, 2014), solution-orientated (Putnam & Wilson, 1982), validating (Gottman, 1994), and prosocial (Roloff, 1976). One of the key characteristics of a constructive strategy is that it promotes information-exchange (Sillars, 1995) by using communicative behaviors that involve rational discussion (Roloff, 1976), compromising (Canary & Cupach, 1988; Filley, 1975), cooperation

(Ting-Toomey, 1983), and problem-solving (Alexander, 1979) tactics, which are typically communicated in a positive tone (Hocker & Wilmot, 1995). Since a constructive strategy employs positive messages (Alexander, 1979), disclosing and soliciting disclosure (Sillars et al., 1982), creating mutually acceptable solutions (Filley, 1975), and offering effective social support (e.g., Fitzpatrick & Winke, 1979), parents and children handle conflict in a way that allows for open discussion, which encourages trust and facilitates conflict resolution and relational satisfaction (Kaplan, 1980; Deutsch, 1973; Doolittle, 1976; Sillars, 1980a). In terms of children's use of constructive strategies, research has found children to use acceptance, openness, recognizing blame, and affectionate vocalics. In terms of parental constructive strategies, perspective-taking, moral reasoning, prosocial behavior, controlling temper, developing patience, empathy, and understanding have also been identified as markers of constructive conflict (Branje et al., 2009; Easterbrooks, Cummings, & Emde, 1994; Gottman, 1993, 1994; Riesch et al., 2003; Rinaldi & Howe, 2003). Constructive conflict strategies in parent-child relationships have been associated with alleviating distress (Burleson & Goldsmith, 1998), interpersonal warmth (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998), and liking and loving (Taraban, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1998).

The *destructive conflict strategy* is conceptually defined as active confrontation by promoting individual goals over mutual outcomes (Cupach et al., 2010; Sillars, 1980a) for both the parent and the child. This conflict strategy has also been referenced in previous literature as distributive (Sillars, 1980a), negative (Wilmarth et al., 2014), control (Putnam & Wilson, 1982), volatile (Gottman, 1994), and anti-social (Roloff, 1976). One of the key characteristics of a destructive strategy is that it is communicated using negative escalatory behaviors (Cupach, 2015; Deutsch, 1969; Du et al., 2015; Greeff & de Bruyne, 2000) that intensify the conflict situation by using manipulation (Frost & Wilmot, 1978), hostility (DeCharms & Wilkins, 1963),

competition (Goeke-Morey, 1999), and coercive compliance-gaining tactics (Billings, 1979; Cupach, 2015), which are typically communicated in a negative tone (Deutsch, 1969; Greeff & de Bruyne, 2000). Coercive tactics can succeed, for example, in parent-child conflict because dominance for parents is an option when power is not shared (Adams & Laursen, 2001). People who use a destructive strategy resort to threats (Gottman, 1979), sarcasm (Gottman, 1994), criticisms (Gottman, 1994; Sillars & Wilmot, 1994), name-calling (Frost & Wilmot, 1978; Deutsch, 1973), and defensiveness (Deutsch, 1969). Destructive conflict "leaves nagging tensions unresolved, creates a climate ripe for future overt destructive conflict, and fosters psychological separation" (Comstock, 1994, p. 264; see also Canary & Cupach, 1988; Galvin & Brommel, 1986). Destructive conflict strategies weaken the likelihood of conflict resolution and diminish the relational satisfaction between the parties in the dispute (Deutsch, 1973; Sillars, 1995). In terms of specific destructive strategies children use with their parents in conflict include whining, screaming, yelling, and angry affect (Canary & Canary, 2013). For parents, specific destructive strategies that are used with children include persuasive contentious arguments, making the other yield to one's own position, sarcasm, confrontation, threats, and the tendency to interfere with the achievement of mutually agreeable solutions (Branje et al., 2009; Forgatch, 1989; Riesch et al., 2002; Stanley et al., 2002). Consistent with differences in relationship power and stability, disputes by parents contain more destructive conflict strategies, such as anger, unilateral resolutions, and unequal outcomes than do those in relationships where power is more equitable (see Adams & Laursen, 2001; Laursen & Collins, 1994; McKinney, Walker, & Kwan, 2017).

The *avoidance conflict strategy* is conceptually defined as nonconfrontational and passive communication that minimizes explicit acknowledgement about the conflict situation between

the parent and child (Sillars, 1995). This conflict strategy has also been referenced in previous literature as stonewalling (Gottman, 1979) or withdrawal (Whittaker & Bry, 1992). One of the key characteristics of an avoidant conflict strategy is the avoidance of confrontation (Rosenthal, Demetriou, & Efkides, 1989) that suppresses discussion of the issue (Sillars, 1995) by using tactics such as topic avoidance (Afifi & Burgoon, 1998; Afifi & Guerrero, 2000), shifting topics (Oetzel, Ting-Tommey, Tokochi, Masumoto, & Takai, 2000), silence (e.g., silent treatment; Williams, 2001; Wirth, Sacco, Hugenberg & Williams, 2010), yielding, distraction (Vuchinich, Emery, & Cassidy, 1988), disregarding the issue, letting the problem resolve itself (Sillars, 1980a), and withholding a complaint (Canary et al., 1995; Dryden & Hurton, 2013), which are typically communicated utilizing passive nonverbal behaviors (Cupach, 2015). The use of avoidance is sometimes a reaction to trivial problems, irresolvable disputes, or when someone perceives it as too costly to confront (Roloff & Ifert, 2000). Regardless, the use of avoidance inhibits conflict resolution (Sillars, 1995). Additionally, habitual avoidance impedes relational satisfaction (Buysse & Ickes, 1999; Ickes & Simpson, 1997; Simpson, Ickes, & Blackstone, 1995). In terms of avoidance in parent-child relationships, both parents and children report using indirect manipulation, withholding of thoughts and feelings, and the diversion from topic of conflict as avoidance conflict strategies (Riesch et al., 2002). Love withdrawal strategies, sometimes referred to as psychological control (Barber, 1996), which involves ignoring or isolating the child, is a specific strategy parents use to avoid conflict with their child. Additionally, research in parent-child avoidance of conflict has focused on the specific topics that are dodged in this specific dyad. For example, Guerrero and Afifi (1995a, 1995b) found that adolescents primarily avoid five topics with his or her parent – relationship issues, negative life experiences, friendships, dating experiences, and sexual experiences.

In sum, studies have shown constructive strategies to be more functional for relationships, whereas destructive and avoidant conflict strategies are more dysfunctional for relationships. More specifically, constructive strategies are consistently: (a) related to relational satisfaction (both concurrently, immediately; and longitudinally, over the course of time); (b) perceived as more effective and (c) more appropriate; (d) positively correlated with communication satisfaction; and (e) positively related to outcomes for children and adolescents. Conversely, destructive and avoidant conflict strategies are consistently: (a) related to relational dissatisfaction; (b) perceived as more ineffective and (c) more inappropriate; (d) negatively correlated with communication satisfaction; and (e) negatively related to outcomes for children and adolescents (see Canary & Cupach, 1988; Canary & Spitzberg, 1987, 1989, 1990; Gershoff, 2002; Gottman, 1994; Gross, Guerrero, & Alberts, 2004; Hoeve et al., 2009; Kuppens, Grietens, Onghena, & Michiels, 2009; Lynch et al., 2006; McKinney, Kelly, & Duran, 1997; Sillars, 1980a, 1980b; Spitzberg, Canary, & Cupach, 1994; Straus & Stewart, 1999; Ting-Toomey, 1983).

Family Communication Patterns (FCP) Theory

The conflict strategies that people exhibit during conflict depend heavily on how they were socialized to behave and communicate (or not) when conflict arises (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002c). One way to understand how people behave and communicate is by examining people's FCPs. FCPs are ''a set of norms governing the tradeoff between informational and relational objectives of communication'' (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990, p. 524). FCPs were originally conceptualized from a model developed by McLeod and Chaffee (1972, 1973; see also Chaffee, McLeod, & Atkin, 1971). This model was designed to illustrate families' tendencies to develop consistent and expected modes of communicating with others in the family unit. McLeod and

Chaffee (1972, 1973) were most interested in how families create and share social reality. They used the cognitive theory of coorientation (Heider, 1946, 1958; Newcomb, 1953) to ground their explanations of family communication behaviors. They proposed that families fluctuate in their preferences for and uses of two strategies: socio-orientation and concept-orientation (Chaffee et al., 1971; McLeod & Chaffee, 1972; Stone & Chaffee, 1970). "A *socio-oriented* family stresses relational harmony and avoidance of antagonism and conflict, whereas a *concept-oriented* family emphasizes the free expression of opinions and active engagement in debate" (Zhang, 2007, p. 114). Ritchie and Fitzpatrick (1990; Ritchie, 1991) later relabeled the two dimensions to represent two orientations: conformity orientation and conversation orientation (see also Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994). These two fundamental dimensions differentiate how families communicate and have been related to a variety of functional and dysfunctional familial consequences (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b; Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990).

Conformity orientation is the degree to which a family fosters a climate where parents are the authority figures and there is a strict adherence to family rules and norms. Therefore, the family stresses uniformity and homogeneity of ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and opinions (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a). Thus, families high on the conformity orientation dimension have interactions characterized by children's strict obedience to parents, as well as "harmony, conflict avoidance, and the interdependence of family members" (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a, p. 86; see also Fitzpatrick, 2004; Koerner & Cvancara, 2002; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997; Koesten, 2004; Ritchie, 1991; Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990). Families low on the conformity orientation dimension have interactions characterized by individuality of family members (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a).

Conversation orientation is the degree to which a family fosters open communication between one another (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a). Therefore, the family stresses diversity and heterogeneity of ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and opinions. A highly conversation-oriented family values the uniqueness and individuality of family members and spur-of-the-moment and unconfined interactions (Koerner & Cvancara, 2002; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997, 2002a; Koesten, 2004; Ritchie, 1991; Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990). Families low in the conversation orientation dimension interact less frequently with one another with few topics openly discussed between the family members. "In these families, activities that families engage in as a unit are not usually discussed in great detail, nor is everybody's input sought for family decisions" (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a, p. 85).

Koerner and Schrodt (2014) noted that conversation and conformity orientations are not discrete categories, but rather continuous dimensions. Consequently, conversation and conformity orientations crisscross to create a theoretical space that distinguishes four types of families (Ledbetter, 2019). The first family type are *pluralistic families*. Pluralistic families are high in conversation orientation, while low in conformity orientation (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). They make decisions as a family unit by openly discussing a variety of topics and valuing individuality of each member of the family (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006a). Children in pluralistic families value family conversations, while at the same time learning to be independent and autonomous (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006a). The second type of families are *consensual families.* Consensual families are high in both conversation and conformity orientations. In these families, parents make the decisions, but they also encourage open communication (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). Children in consensual families prioritize family conversations and tend to embrace their parents' beliefs and values (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006a). The third family type

is *protective families*. Protective families are low in conversation orientation, while high in conformity orientation. These families often depend on the parents to make decisions, emphasize compliance to authority and similarity of beliefs and values. Additionally, they only discuss a few topics openly in the family relationship (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a). Children in protective families discover that there is little value in family conversations and that they should doubt their own decision-making skills (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006a). Lastly, *laissez-faire families* are low in both conversation and conformity orientations. They do not spend a lot of time with one another and when they do, they do not openly discuss a wide variety of topics (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). Children in laissez-faire families learn to independently make their own decisions and believe there is little value in family conversations (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006a).

FCP Orientations and Conflict Strategies

FCP (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990) are related to family conflict strategies in a few distinct ways. First, FCP dimensions represent abstract orientations that apply to many contexts of communication aside from conflict. Nonetheless, FCP should foster congruent patterns of conflict, such as greater directness in conversation-oriented families and, potentially, more negativity in response to conflict within conformity-oriented families (i.e., positive vs. negative messages; see Sillars & Canary, 2013).

Second, FCP (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994) orientations may affect child social-cognitive abilities that underlie competence in conflict situations. Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002a) posited that children acquire internalized relationship models through interactions within families; moreover, these relationship schemata may affect psychosocial outcomes that determine

interpersonal competence (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b; Koesten, 2004; Schrodt, Witt, & Messersmith, 2008). For example, person-centered communication by parents, which represents a high conversation and a low conformity pattern, may help children acquire a more complex understanding of the psychological basis of others' behavior (Burleson, Delia, & Applegate, 1995). Studies have confirmed that FCP orientations in families-of-origin predict cognitive complexity and flexibility in young adults (Koesten & Anderson, 2004; Koesten, Schrodt, & Ford, 2009; Ledbetter & Schrodt, 2008). These social-cognitive abilities promote the use of constructive, problem-solving strategies in conflict, which require sensitivity to the goals of others and the ability to reconcile competing goals (Lakey & Canary, 2002).

FCP theory and research (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990) suggest particular associations between FCP dimensions and specific conflict strategies or conflict styles. High conversation orientation involves a belief in unrestrained interaction and therefore should be manifested in nonconfrontational discussion of conflict in supportive and collaborative ways (i.e., constructive conflict strategy) and low conflict avoidance. Koerner and Fitzpatrick (1997) found conflict avoidance was negatively associated with highly conversation-oriented families, and Zhang (2007) found this association as well. Similarly, Zhang (2007) found that high conversation-oriented families are less likely to use tactics such as competing, which is a characteristic of a destructive conflict strategy. Zhang did not examine conflict strategies, but rather looked at specific tactics or moves in parent and child conflict situations in individualistic compared to collectivistic cultures. Taken together, these prior studies' findings suggest that conversation orientation is positively associated with the use of constructive strategies (Dunlao & Botta, 2000; Shearman & Dumlao, 2008; Wrench & Socha-McGee, 1999; Zhang, 2007), while negatively

associated with the use of destructive and avoidant conflict strategies (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997; Zhang, 2007). Thus, I hypothesize, that when *entering* conflict with parents, emerging adult children will follow their FCP orientations regarding how their family is socialized to handle conflict (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c). In addition to assessing children's initial conflict strategy, children's *responding* conflict strategy will also be examined. By "response", I am referring to children's communicative reaction to a parental conflict strategy. I also hypothesize that when responding to parents, emerging adult children will follow their FCP orientations regarding how their family is socialized to handle conflict. More specifically, I posit:

H1: High conversation orientation will be positively associated with the *initial use* of a constructive conflict strategy by emerging adult children when entering the conflict situation with his/her parent.

H2: High conversation orientation will be negatively associated with the *initial use* of a (a) destructive conflict strategy and (b) avoidant conflict strategy by emerging adult children when entering the conflict situation with his/her parent.

H3: High conversation orientation will be positively associated with emerging adult children's *likelihood of responding* using a constructive conflict strategy.

H4: High conversation orientation will be negatively associated with emerging adult children's *likelihood of responding* using a (a) destructive conflict strategy and (b) avoidant conflict strategy.

Because a high conformity orientation represents an emphasis on uniformity of beliefs and obedience to parents, it should be manifested in pressure and confrontation by parents, along with avoidance and confrontation by children. Children in conformity-oriented families may avoid conflict due to family rules against expressing disagreement but intermix avoidance with

negativity because of frustration over lack of responsiveness to child complaints (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002c). Studies have found that conformity is associated with avoiding (Dunlao & Botta, 2000; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997; Shearman & Dumlao, 2008; Wrench & Socha-McGee, 1999; Zhang, 2007) and negativity/competing with parents (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997; Zhang, 2007). Further, conformity in the family-of-origin is associated with resisting, aggressing, mutual negativity, and demanding and withdrawing in adult romantic relationships (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002c). Additionally, Zhang (2007) found that conformity-oriented families were less likely to use support and collaboration during conflict between parents and children, which are key characteristics of constructive conflict strategies. Thus, I hypothesize that when *entering* or *responding* to conflict, children will communicate in a way that is consistent with their socialization. More specifically, I hypothesize:

H5: High conformity orientation will be positively associated with the *initial use* of a (a) destructive conflict strategy and (b) avoidant conflict strategy by emerging adult children when entering the conflict situation with his/her parent.

H6: High conformity orientation will be negatively associated with the *initial use* of a constructive conflict strategy by emerging adult children when entering the conflict situation with his/her parent.

H7: High conformity orientation will be positively associated with an emerging adult children's *likelihood of responding* using a (a) destructive conflict strategy and (b) avoidant conflict strategy.

H8: High conformity orientation will be negatively associated with an emerging adult children's *likelihood of responding* using a constructive conflict strategy.

Finally, I propose two research questions to examine how high and low conformity orientation interact with high and low conversation orientation on the *initial use* and *likelihood of responding* using the various conflict strategies. This is proposed as FCP theorizes about the interactions between the two dimensions, as people can fall on both dimensions simultaneously. Thus, it is imperative to explore the role family types (i.e., consensual, protective, pluralistic, and laissez-faire) play on both the *initial use* and *responding* conflict strategy variables. For example, Sillars et al. (2014) found that, for parents, high conversation orientation and low conversation orientation (i.e., pluralistic family type) was positively associated with analytical discussion, which is a key characteristic of constructive conflict strategy. Additionally, Sillars and colleagues found that being in a consensual family was related to more avoidance by the child. However, past research has not looked at this specifically in the form of the child's perspective, thus the present study poses research questions to understand how the interaction between FCP dimensions are associated with the initial and responding conflict strategies. More specifically:

RQ1: Do conversation and conformity orientation interact in their association with the *initial use* of a (a) constructive conflict strategy, (b) destructive conflict strategy, and (c) avoidant conflict strategy?

RQ2: Do conversation and conformity orientation interact in their association with the *likelihood of responding* using a (a) constructive conflict strategy, (b) destructive conflict strategy, and (c) avoidant conflict strategy?

Expectancy Violations Theory (EVT)

Familial influence often entails making decisions that are congruent with family expectations (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998). Research shows that the parent-child social system is relatively stable and predictable (Montemayor, 1985). Family members have

spent years developing interaction patterns which are known and anticipated by all (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a). However, research indicates that a variety of factors can violate expectations for family behavior (Afifi & Metts, 1998), and communication during conflict is amongst them. Expectancy, in the communication sense, represents a stable pattern of anticipated and foreseen behavior (Burgoon, 1993). EVT was developed from nonverbal expectancy violations theory (Burgoon & Hale, 1987, 1988), which was originally developed to explain how people respond to violations of proxemic (i.e., the use of personal space) expectations but was expanded to include all types of nonverbal expectancy violations and verbal communicative expectancy violations (see Burgoon, 1992, 1993; Burgoon & Hale, 1988; Burgoon & Jones, 1976; Burgoon, Stacks, & Burch, 1982; Hale & Burgoon, 1984).

EVT explicates how expectancies influence one's perception of others and how one would respond to them during the violated interaction (Burgoon, 1987). Expectancies can be broad (applicable to all people) or exclusive (applying to a specific person). In the latter situation, these expectancies integrate knowledge of a person's interactional style. Burgoon (1993) noted two types of expectancies: predictive expectancies, which refer to what is expected to occur in an interaction; and prescriptive expectancies, which refers to what is desired and preferred in an interaction. In some situations, these types of expectancies are similar, but they are not always compatible (White, 2015). As Burgoon and Hale (1988) explained, expectations are not always based on norms. In more established relationships, people may create expectations specific to that person based on prior knowledge of the other, relational history, or observation. When evaluating the expectancy violating behavior, people assess the valence of the violation as well as the degree of unexpectedness. I will first discuss violation valence.

When a violation occurs, people assess the valence of the violation; that is, whether it is perceived as positive or negative (Burgoon, 1993). *Negatively-valenced violations* are posited to typically lead to more negative interaction outcomes than confirming expectations. *Positively-valenced violations* are theorized to typically lead to more favorable interaction outcomes than confirming expectations (Burgoon, 1993; Burgoon & Hale, 1988). Positively- and negatively-valenced violations vary on their own respective continuums. In essence, violations are posited to provoke intensified reactions relative to confirming expectations, with the positivity or negativity of the interaction outcomes depending on the perceived valence of the expectancy violation behavior (Burgoon & Hale, 1987).

Based on propositions from EVT (Burgoon, 1992), negatively-valenced violations should garner a more negative evaluation of the communicator, and thus, a more negative response to the communicator. Conversely, positively-valenced violations should garner a more positive evaluation of the communicator, thus a more positive response to the communicator. Therefore, predictions about the way an emerging adult child would *respond* to their parent's violating behavior can be based on how positively- or negatively-valenced the violation of their parent's communication is perceived to be. Bachman and Guerrero (2006) and Guerrero and Bachman (2010) found that, for college students in dating relationships, constructive strategies are more positively-valenced, whereas destructive strategies are more negatively-valenced in the context of hurtful events. Since emerging adults are college students in the present study and conflict can be seen as a hurtful event, I propose that constructive and destructive strategies in the parent-child conflict scenario will be viewed in similar ways to the dating context. Thus, I posit that, regardless of a child's FCP but in the context of parent-child conflict interactions:

H9: Highly positively-valenced violations of a parent's conflict strategy will be positively associated with emerging adult children's *likelihood of responding* using a constructive conflict strategy.

H10: Highly negatively-valenced violations of a parent's conflict strategy will be positively associated with emerging adult children's *likelihood of responding* using a (a) destructive conflict strategy and an (b) avoidant conflict strategy.

Degree of Violation and Valence as Moderators between FCP and Conflict Strategies

In addition to the valence of the violating behavior, EVT research has clearly established that violations vary in the extent to which they are unexpected (e.g., Burgoon & Hale, 1988). Behaviors that are highly unexpected are ones that vary far from the expected range of behavior (e.g., discovering infidelity in a strictly monogamous relationship). However, other behaviors are less extreme in terms of the distance the behavior is from the expected range (e.g., telling a white lie to a relational partner to protect their feelings; Burgoon & Hale, 1988). Therefore, behavior that deviates from expectations can range on a continuum from a behavior that is somewhat unexpected to a behavior that is extremely unexpected (Afifi & Metts, 1998).

When a person's behavior violates what one would expect of them, EVT posits that the behavior is arousing—representing a form of "attentional reallocation, heightening attention to the characteristics of the communication, the relational implicature, and the meaning of the violated act" (Burgoon, 1993, p. 35). Consequently, a person attempts to find meaning surrounding the behavior through an appraisal process that involves interpreting and evaluating the violating behavior. Highly unexpected behaviors are more likely very salient and produce immediate and larger changes in responding behavior (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). The theorizing behind highly unexpected behaviors' greater impact on responding behavior is that the more

unexpected the behavior, the more it produces arousal changes (Burgoon & Le Poire, 1993). The change in arousal when something is highly unexpected is posited to cause an alertness or orienting response that diverts attention away from the perceived purpose of the interaction and focuses it to the source of the arousal—the violated behavior (Burgoon & Hale, 1987), causing the receiver to "engage in a two-stage interpretation and evaluation process that results in the violating act being defined as either a positive or negative violation of expectations" (Burgoon & Hale, 1988, p. 62). The more unexpected the violating behavior is perceived, the greater the impact on communication outcomes (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). Importantly, it is the *combination* of both unexpectedness and valence that are theorized to contribute to greater change in someone's behavior when confronted with a violated behavior (Burgoon, 1987).

Accordingly, the way an emerging adult child responds to their parent is based not only on the valence of the unexpected behavior, but also on the degree of unexpectedness (for review, see Burgoon & Hale, 1988). That is, the more unexpected and the more negatively-valenced the behavior is perceived, the receiver's response is theorized to be more negative, whereas the more unexpected and the more positively-valenced the behavior is perceived, the receiver's response is theorized to be more positive. According to EVT research (see Burgoon, Le Poire, & Rosenthal, 1995), positively-valenced violations lead to more pleasant and constructive behaviors. However, negatively-valenced violations contribute to reciprocal, negative communicative responses (see also Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Guerrero & Bachman, 2010). Since the degree of perceived unexpectedness and the degree of perceived positive or negative valence range on a continuum, more unexpected positively- or negatively-valenced violations might have greatest impact on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Therefore, I suggest that the relationships between FCP orientations and responses to conflict will be moderated by the perceived degree of unexpectedness of the parent's manipulated behavior and the valence of the violation. For example, when a highly conversation-oriented emerging adult's parent avoids the conflict or engages in destructive strategies, thus constituting a negative violation, the emerging adult child might respond less constructively than anticipated due to their perception that their parent's behavior constituted a highly negative, highly unexpected violation of expected behavior. As a result, perceived highly unexpected and highly negatively-valenced behaviors would reduce the strength of the positive association between conversation orientation and likelihood of responding using a constructive conflict strategy. Therefore, I posit:

> H11: Perceived highly unexpected, highly negatively-valenced violations of expectedness moderate the positive association between conversation orientation and *likelihood of responding* using a constructive conflict strategy by the emerging adult child with his/her parent, such that more highly unexpected, highly negative violations would reduce the strength of the positive association.

However, when the dependent variable is the destructive or avoidant strategy, I suspect that perceptions of highly unexpected and highly negatively-valenced violations would moderate the relationship between conversation orientation and likelihood of responding destructively or avoidantly. More specifically, I suspect the child's perception of highly negative, highly unexpected parental behavior would reduce the strength of the *negative* association between conversation orientation and likelihood of responding using a destructive or avoidant conflict strategy. For example, if a child is conversation-oriented, expects a constructive conflict strategy from their parent, and the parent handles it in a *very* dysfunctional manner (i.e., destructively or

avoidantly), the child is more likely to respond symmetrically, as per EVT theorizing (Burgoon, 1993; Burgoon & Hale, 1998). That is, children would be more likely to respond destructively or avoidantly to the extent that they view their parent's behavior as highly unexpected and highly negative. Additionally, EVT (1993) indicates that a highly violating behavior that is perceived as highly negatively-valenced are theorized to produce more negative interaction patterns than conforming to expected behavior. Thus, perceived highly negatively-valenced violations would reduce the strength of the negative association between conversation orientation and likelihood of responding using a destructive or avoidant conflict strategy. The theorization is that the violations of expectations will *not* change the overall associations between FCP orientations and responding conflict strategies. However, the theorizing is that violations (both high degree of unexpectedness and high degree of valence) will weaken the association between an FCP orientation and the responding conflict strategies. Since FCP orientations are still powerful in predicting behavior, just not as powerful when expectations are violated during conflict interactions, the relationship is suggested to be weakened instead of changing directions. Therefore, I posit:

> H12: Perceived highly unexpected, highly negatively-valenced violations of expectedness moderate the negative association between conversation orientation and *likelihood of responding* using a destructive conflict strategy by the emerging adult child with his/her parent, such that more highly unexpected, highly negative violations would reduce the strength of the negative association.
>
> H13: Perceived highly unexpected, highly negatively-valenced violations of expectedness moderate the negative association between conversation orientation and *likelihood of responding* using an avoidant conflict strategy by the emerging adult child with his/her

parent, such that more highly unexpected, highly negative violations would reduce the strength of the negative association.

The reverse logic applies to the conformity-oriented individuals. For example, when a highly conformity-oriented emerging adult child expects their parent to engage destructively or avoidantly, but instead the parent communicates constructively during conflict, this constitutes a positive violation. Following EVT's (Burgoon, 1993) theorizing, since positive expectancy violations solicit more positive interactions, I suspect that the emerging adult child might respond more positively than anticipated. Thus, perceived highly positively-valenced violations that are highly unexpected would reduce the positive association between conformity orientation and likelihood of responding using a destructive or avoidant conflict strategy. As such, I hypothesize:

H14: Perceived highly unexpected, highly positively-valenced violations of expectedness moderate the positive association between conformity orientation and *likelihood of responding* using a destructive conflict strategy by the emerging adult child with his/her parent, such that more highly unexpected, highly positive violations would reduce the strength of the positive association.

H15: Perceived highly unexpected, highly positively-valenced violations of expectedness moderate the positive association between conformity orientation and *likelihood of responding* using an avoidant conflict strategy by the emerging adult child with his/her parent, such that more highly unexpected, highly positive violations would reduce the strength of the positive association.

On the other hand, when the dependent variable is the constructive strategy, I suspect that highly unexpected behaviors that are perceived as highly positive would moderate the relationship

between conformity orientation and likelihood of responding using a constructive conflict strategy. For this hypothesis, I am theorizing that highly unexpected and highly positive violations of expectations *will change* the overall negative association between high conformity orientation and likelihood of responding constructively to a positive association. This is theorized because EVT suggests that positively-valenced violations that are highly unexpected will lead to more constructive responses (Burgoon, 1992). Thus, when receiving a constructive response that is highly unexpected and high positive, responding behavior should be symmetrical (i.e., constructive) as a response. Since this is the only condition where the participants receive a constructive conflict strategy from the parent and perceive it as highly unexpected and highly positive, it differs from the previous moderated moderation hypotheses. This situation is theorized to *change* the negative association to a positive association because the violated behavior is perceived as highly unexpected and highly positive. More specifically, I posit:

> H16: Perceived highly unexpected, highly positively-valenced violations of expectedness moderate the negative association between conformity orientation and *likelihood of responding* using a constructive conflict strategy by the emerging adult child with his/her parent, such that more highly unexpected, highly positive violations would change the direction of the negative association to a positive association.

PILOT STUDY METHODS

Participants

Participants were recruited from two communication courses at a large Midwestern University and received extra credit for participating. Although college students in a four-year residential college typically move out of the family home when going to college, they rarely completely separate from the family (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). Since college students typically represent the ages of emerging adults (i.e., 18 to 29; Lowe & Arnett, 2019; Renk et al., 2007), they warranted sampling for the present study. Furthermore, conflict with parents is a common source of distress among college students (Arria et al., 2009; Locke et al., 2011). Due to the timing of data collection, the pilot study was conducted during the first week of COVID-19's entrance to the United States and students were told to leave the University and head home.

The pilot study's sample consisted of 42 undergraduate students. Composition of the sample was 73.8% female and 26.2% male. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 23 with a mean age of 20.93 (*SD* = 0.73). Participants primarily identified as White/Caucasian (78.6%), followed by Asian or Pacific Islander (11.9%), Black or African American (4.8%), Native American or American Indian (2.4%), and Hispanic or Latino (2.4%). The vast majority of the participants were communication majors (90.5%) and were domestic students (90.5%).

Measurements

All instrumentation assessed items along a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 4 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), unless otherwise mentioned. Items for each scale were averaged to create composite indices. Additionally, higher scores indicate greater degrees of the construct of interest.

Conflict scenario. When parents and emerging adults do argue, research has found one of the main topics of conflict is money (e.g., Kenyon & Koerner, 2009; Renk et al., 2007). An informative study by Renk et al. (2007) identified material possessions, including money, to be among the top three most frequent domains of conflict between parents and emerging adults. Qualitative research has also documented that parents and emerging adults often have divergent perspectives on the provision and use of money (Arnett & Fishel, 2013; Kenyon & Koerner, 2009). Financial independence is a key criterion for adulthood, and less than half of emerging adults have attained it (Lowe & Arnett, 2019). Since previous research has identified money as a source of contention from both the parent and emerging adult child's perspectives (Descartes, 2006), the present study's conflict scenario will concern a money disagreement (see Appendix A).

Parent's manipulated conflict strategy messages. The parent's manipulated conflict strategy messages were devised by the researcher and were based on past research on message features for each conflict strategy. Parallel to Shebib and Holmstrom (2020), each strategy is in the form of a message that the parent would say to their child regarding the conflict situation. Additionally, messages were exactly the same in word count (50 words) so message length would not conflate results. Participants received all three messages in the pilot study.

When creating the parent's constructive message, I emphasized positive nonverbal vocalics (Cupach, 2015), collaboration (Ting-Toomey, 1983), and problem-solving tactics by stressing the desire to create mutually acceptable solutions (Filley, 1975). When creating the parent's destructive message, I emphasized negative nonverbal vocalics (Cupach, 2015), mind-reading behaviors (e.g., "you always" and "you never"; Gottman, 1979), loss of privileges (Riesch et al., 2002), and defensiveness (Gottman, 1994). When creating the parent's avoidant

message, I emphasized neutral nonverbal vocalics (Cupach, 2015), diversion (Riesch et al., 2002), topic avoidance, and shifting topic discussion.

In addition to conducting this pilot study to ensure that the messages reflect the conflict strategy they were intended to represent, two individuals, unrelated to the present study, but scholars who study conflict in relationships, reviewed the responses that were written for the parent's manipulated conflict strategy messages to ensure they met the criteria for each conflict strategy (see Appendix B).

Realism. As manipulation checks, participants were asked about the realism of the (a) the conflict scenario, (b) the parent's manipulated conflict strategy messages, and (c) the responding conflict strategy messages. The three-item realism scale was derived from Shebib and Holmstrom's (2020), Shebib et al.'s (2020), and Shebib et al.'s (2019) scale realism scales. This scale appeared in the survey 13 times (i.e., after conflict scenario, after each of the three parent's manipulated conflict strategy messages, and after each of the nine responding conflict strategy messages). Different stems were used for the scenarios and messages but items included, for example, "*The conflict situation [stem]….* is realistic." Reliability analyses produced an $\alpha = .94$, $M = 5.74$, $SD = 1.27$ (see Appendix C).

Manipulation check of messages. Parallel to Shebib and Holmstrom (2020), one item was used to conduct a manipulation check of conflict strategy messages to ensure that participants perceived messages represented the correct conflict strategy they were intended to represent. This item was categorical and was used for all messages (i.e., the three parent's manipulated conflict strategy messages and the nine responding conflict strategy messages). Participants indicated whether they perceived the message to be positive (constructive), negative (destructive), or avoidant (see Appendix D).

Positive valence. Participants answered ten items, which were created by the researcher and based on past research, to assess the positivity of the parent's manipulated conflict strategy message. Items included "*The parent's response to the conflict situation would be a very [stem]*….. positive behavior." Reliability analysis produced an $\alpha = .99$, $M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.93$ (see Appendix E).

Negative valence. Participants answered ten items, which were created by the researcher and based on past research, to assess the negativity of the parent's manipulated conflict strategy message. Items included "*The parent's response to the conflict situation would be a very [stem]*….. negative behavior." Reliability analysis produced an $\alpha = .98$, $M = 4.53$, $SD = 1.93$ (see Appendix F).

Responding conflict strategy messages. Participants were randomly presented with nine hypothetical responses the college child could say in response to the parent. The responding conflict strategy messages were devised by the researcher and created using the same methods as the parents' conflict strategy messages. Three instantiations of all three conflict strategies were used. Including three instantiations of each messages enhances the inferences one can make about various messages that are perceived as constructive, destructive, and avoidant, as opposed to utilizing a single message.

When creating the child's constructive messages, I emphasized importance of discussing the issue, accepting responsibility, rational discussion, and cooperation. When creating the child's responding destructive messages, defensiveness, mindreading, and criticisms were communicated. When creating the child's avoidant messages, not wanting to discuss the issue, diversion, shifting the topic, and distraction were communicated (Sillars, 1995; Vuchinich et al., 1988). Two individuals, unrelated to the present study, but scholars who study conflict in

relationships, reviewed the responses that were written for the responding conflict strategy messages to ensure they met the criteria for each conflict strategy (see Appendix G).

Procedures

Participants completed a survey where they were given a financial conflict situation that was hypothetically between a college student and his/her parent. After reading the conflict situation, participants answered the *realism* items. Then, participants read each of the three *parent's manipulated conflict strategy messages* and answered the *manipulation check, realism*, *positive valence*, and *negative valence* items for each of the three messages. Finally, participants read all nine messages for the *responding conflict strategy messages* from the child to the parent. Participants answered the *manipulation check* and *realism* items for all nine responding messages. Finally, participants completed demographic questions (see Figure 1 for survey flow).

The purpose of the pilot test was three-fold. First, I wanted to ensure that the conflict scenario was realistic. Second, I wanted to ensure the conflict strategy messages represented the correct conflict strategy they were intended to represent. And third, I wanted to ensure constructive conflict messages constituted as a positively-valenced message, and destructive and avoidant messages constituted as a negatively-valenced message (see Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Guerrero & Bachman, 2010).

PILOT STUDY RESULTS

The first goal of the pilot study was to look at realism. A one-samples *t*-test indicated that the conflict scenario was perceived as moderately realistic. The parent's conflict strategy messages and child's responding conflict strategy messages were all perceived as realistic based off one-sample *t*-test analyses (see Table 1 for descriptive and inferential statistics).

The second goal was to conduct manipulation checks of the conflict strategy messages that were created. The parent's manipulated conflict strategy messages were correctly identified by the participants as the conflict strategy the message was supposed to represent, $\chi_2(4) = 213.19$, $p < .001$ (see Table 2). Additionally, the responding conflict strategy messages were correctly identified by the participants in terms of the conflict strategy the message was supposed to represent, $\chi_2(4) = 714.98$, $p < .001$ (see Table 3).

The final goal of the pilot test was to assess the perceived positive and negative valence of the parent's manipulated conflict strategy messages using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The independent variable was categorical, the parent's manipulated conflict strategy messages (i.e., constructive, destructive, avoidant). The dependent variables were positive valence and negative valence scales. In terms of the perceived *positive valence* as the dependent variable, results from the ANOVA were significant, $F(2, 97) = 27.91$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta_2 = .37$. A Scheffe post-hoc revealed where the differences existed. The parent's constructive conflict strategy message ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 2.25$) was perceived as more positively-valenced than the parent's destructive conflict strategy message ($M = 2.09$, $SD = 1.01$), $p < .001$; and the parent's avoidant conflict strategy message ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.31$), $p < .001$. No significant difference emerged between the parent's destructive conflict strategy message and the parent's avoidant conflict strategy message, $p = .142$ on degree of positive valence.

In terms of the perceived *negative valence* as the dependent variable, results from the ANOVA were significant, $F(2, 97) = 71.72$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .61$. A Scheffe post-hoc revealed where the differences existed. The parent's destructive conflict strategy message ($M = 5.89$, $SD = 1.08$) was perceived are more negatively-valenced than the parent's constructive conflict strategy message ($M = 2.14$, $SD = 1.32$), $p < .001$; and the parent's avoidant conflict strategy message ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 1.31$), $p = .001$. The parent's avoidant conflict strategy message was perceived as more negatively-valenced than the parent's constructive conflict strategy message, $p < .001$.

MAIN STUDY METHODS

Participants

Participants (N = 423) were recruited from the Department of Communication's research pool and classes at a large Midwestern University. Again, college students warranted sampling as they are typically the age of emerging adults. The average age of participants was 20.03 (SD = 0.50), with participants ranging from 18 to 29 years old. Participants were all financially dependent upon their parents, as indicated by several questions in the survey. Thus, no cases were excluded because participants were financially independent or not in the age range of emerging adult children. In terms of biological sex, participants primarily identified themselves as female (55.6%), whereas 44.4% identified as male. In terms of gender, participants indicated they were moderately feminine (27%), followed by moderately masculine (23.6%), extremely feminine (22.9%), extremely masculine (16.3%), slightly feminine (4.3%), slightly masculine (3.1%), and androgynous (2.8%). In terms of ethnic identity, 3.1% identified as Hispanic or Latino. Racially, the vast majority identified as White/Caucasian (75.4%), followed by Asian/Pacific Islander (10.9%), Black or African American (8.1%), and Multiple Races (2.6%). Participants reported that they were freshman (28.4%), sophomore (25.8%), junior (24.4%), 4th year senior (17.3%), or 5th year seniors (3.8%). One person identified as being beyond a 5th year senior (0.2%). Growing up, participants primarily identified their socioeconomic class as upper-middle class (37.8%), followed by middle class (36.6%), lower middle and working class (13.7%), wealthy (9.9%), and poor (1.9%). Additionally, 55.9% identified that they were not communication majors and 92.7% were domestic students.

Measurements

Closed-ended Likert-type scales were used to operationalize variables in the present study. All instrumentation assessed items along a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 4 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), unless otherwise noted. Composite scores were constructed by averaging responses to the individual items to create composite indices. Unless otherwise indicated, higher scores indicate greater degrees of the construct of interest. Factor analyses and reliability statistics were conducted on all multi-item scales.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were conducted on all pre-existing scales using AMOS to ensure that they met the criteria of face validity, internal consistency, and parallelism (Hunter & Gerbing, 1982). To perform the CFA for each scale, each item was identified as a continuous indicator, and the variance of the factor was fixed at one so that each item's factor loading could be freely estimated. CFAs were assessed using fit indices with the following criteria to determine goodness of fit: (a) the model chi-square and degrees of freedom (Bentler & Bonett, 1980), (b) the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA; Steiger & Lind, 1980) of less than 0.05 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993), and (c) comparative fit index of above .80 (CFI; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Missing data was handled using full information maximum likelihood (FIML) for CFAs.

Exploratory factor analyses (EFA) were conducted on all newly created scales using SPSS. EFAs were assessed using the following criteria: (a) Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of .80 or above (Kline, 1994), (b) significant Bartlett's Test of Sphercity ($p < .05$; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), (c) an eigenvalue of greater than 1 (Kaiser, 1960), (d) 60% or more of variance explained (Gorsuch, 1983), (e) scree test (Cattell, 1966), and for multidimensional scales, (f) a primary loading of .60 or greater with a secondary loading of .40 or lower (Kline, 1994). Cases

with missing values were deleted to prevent overestimation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Factor retention criteria method used was Kaiser's (1960) mineigen greater than 1 criterion (K1). Thus, eigenvalues greater than 1 were retained as a factor. Extraction method, rotation method, and factor loadings for items are located in the respective appendix associated with the scale. Zero-order correlations for all variables in the main analyses are reported in Table 4.

Family communication patterns. FCP was operationalized using items from Koerner and Fitzpatrick's (2002a, 2002b, 2002c) revised family communication patterns (RFCP) instrument and Horstman et al.'s (2018) expanded conformity orientation scale (ECOS). The stem was adapted and asked participants to reflect on how they would respond to the items based on communication patterns when they were growing up. Conversation orientation was assessed using 15 items from the RFCP scale. Items include "My parents liked to hear my opinion, even when I didn't agree with them." Conformity orientation was assessed using 24 items from the ECOS. Items include "I was expected to adopt my parents' views." Participants received a score for both subscales. *The conversation orientation* scale produced an alpha of .95 (M = 4.69, SD = 1.24) and good model fit was achieved, $\chi_2(90) = 689.01$, $p < .001$, CFI = .87, RMSEA = .03, 90% CI [.12, .13]. *The conformity orientation* scale produced an alpha of .92 (M = 5.02, SD = 0.87) and good model fit was achieved, $\chi_2(90) = 390.09$, $p < .001$, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .04, 90% CI [.05, .10] (see Appendix H).

Past financial interactions. To understand how the participants have previously communicated with their parents in regard to finances and money, 12 items were created by the researcher. Four items were used to tap each conflict strategy (constructive, destructive, and avoidant). An example of a destructive item includes "My parent(s) get really defensive whenever I need to talk about my finances." An EFA produced an acceptable multidimensional

solution, consisting of three factors, with four items each. Both the KMO measure (.77) and Bartlett's test [χ_2 = 2556.06(66), p < .001] were acceptable. Collectively, these factors explained 66.8% of the variance. The first factor, labeled *past constructive,* explained 13.18% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 1.34, α = .81 (M = 4.60, SD = 1.18). The second factor, labeled *past destructive,* explained 17.17% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 2.06, α = .87 (M = 3.17, SD = 1.32). The third factor, labeled *past avoidant,* explained 36.45% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 3.78, α = .80 (M = 3.46, SD = 1.42). These scales are used for preliminary analyses (see Appendix I).

Manipulation check of parental condition. To ensure that participants were reflecting upon their mother or father, based on random assignment, one categorical item was devised by the researcher. Participants indicated whether they were assigned to the mother condition or the father condition, as a manipulation check for the present study.

Parent's expected conflict strategy. To assess the parent's expected conflict strategy, Gottman's (1994, 1999) conflict strategies categorical item was used. This approach has participants choose one description that best describes how their mother or father handles conflict. Three descriptions were given, one for each conflict strategy. The descriptions were adapted to reflect financial conflict, specifically. This variable is used for preliminary analyses (see Appendix J).

Productiveness of financial conversations. To assess the productivity of financial communication with one's mother or father, based on random assignment, five items were created by the researcher. Items included "I feel that I can discuss finances with my [mother/father] productively." An EFA produced an acceptable one-factor solution. Both the KMO measure (.88) and Bartlett's test [χ_2 = 997.11(10), p < .001] were acceptable. The one

factor solution explained 63.29% of the variance with a 3.13 eigenvalue. Additionally, reliability was .85 (M = 4.68, SD = 1.30). This variable is used for preliminary analyses (see Appendix K).

Realism. The same three-item scale in the pilot study to assess realism was utilized in main study. The scale produced an alpha of .86 (M = 4.81, SD = 1.39). A CFA was not calculated as the model is under-identified (see Appendix C).

Severity. As a manipulation check, participants were asked how severe the conflict scenario was using three items adapted from Shebib and Holmstrom (2020), Shebib et al.'s (2020), and Shebib et al.'s (2019) scale. Items included "*The conflict situation is [stem]*…. severe." The scale produced an alpha of .84 (M = 4.67, SD = 1.12). A CFA was not calculated as the model is under-identified (see Appendix L).

Participant's initial conflict strategy. Participants were asked about how they would enter the conflict situation with their mother or father. These items are referred to as "message components," which are actual discrete comments emerging adult child could say to their parent. They are in the form of a fragmented sentence. The items were created by the researcher, based on previous research, to assess each conflict strategy. Ten items tapped each strategy and participants were given a score for each subscale. An EFA produced an acceptable multidimensional solution, which consisted of three factors each containing ten items. Both the KMO measure (.91) and Bartlett's test [χ_2 = 6785.97(425), p < .001] were acceptable. Collectively, the three factors explained 73.76% of the variance. The first factor labeled, *initial constructive strategy*, explained 30.85% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 8.66, α = .87 (M = 4.95, SD = 1.03). The second factor labeled, *initial destructive strategy*, explained 28.31% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 4.29, α = .91 (M = 3.12, SD = 1.24). The third factor labeled,

initial avoidant strategy, explained 14.60% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 2.38, $\alpha = .87$ ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 1.18$; see Appendix M).

Parent's manipulated conflict strategy messages. Parent's manipulated conflict strategies were created in the form of a message that the parent would say to their child regarding the conflict situation. The messages that were previously pilot tested were used in the main study. Participants were randomly assigned to either a constructive, destructive, or avoidant conflict strategy message that was, hypothetically, from their mother or father. Message content was identical regardless of parent sex (e.g., messages from mother were same wording as messages from father; see Appendix B).

Manipulation check of parent's manipulated conflict strategy message. The same categorical item that was used in the pilot test was used in the main study to conduct a manipulation check of parent's manipulated conflict strategy message (see Appendix D).

Expected behavior. A categorical item was created by the researcher to assess whether the participants perceived their parent's manipulated conflict strategy message violated their expectations. This variable acts as a filter for the EVT and moderated moderation hypotheses (see Appendix N).

Degree of unexpectedness. The degree of unexpectedness of the parent's conflict strategy was assessed using six items, four of which were adapted from Burgoon (1991), and two additional items were devised by the researcher. Items included "My parent behaved in a way that was unexpected." An EFA produced an acceptable one-factor solution. Both the KMO measure (.82) and Bartlett's test [$\chi_2 = 1382.46(15)$, $p < .001$] were acceptable. The one factor solution explained 63.65% of the variance with a 3.64 eigenvalue. Additionally, reliability was

.87 (M = 3.77, SD = 1.25). This variable is included as a moderating variable and a control variable (see Appendix O).

Positive valence. Participants were asked the same ten items from the pilot study for this variable, but with an adapted stem to reflect the participant's assigned parent. An EFA produced an acceptable one-factor solution. Both the KMO measure (.95) and Bartlett's test [χ^2 = 4681.73(45), p < .001] were acceptable. The one factor solution explained 73.14% of the variance with a 7.31 eigenvalue. Additionally, α = .96 (M = 4.30, SD = 1.43; see Appendix E).

Negative valence. Participants were asked the same ten items from the pilot study for this variable, but with an adapted stem to reflect the participant's assigned parent. An EFA produced an acceptable one-factor solution. Both the KMO measure (.95) and Bartlett's test [χ^2 = 4888.20(45), p < .001] were acceptable. The one factor solution explained 75.23% of the variance with a 7.52 eigenvalue. Additionally, α = .97 (M = 3.54, SD = 1.51; see Appendix F).

Ambivalence. In case participants perceived their parent's manipulated conflict strategy message was both positively- and negatively-valenced, five items were created by the researcher to assess the child's ambivalence towards their parent's manipulated conflict strategy message. Items included "I have mixed feelings regarding how my parent handled this conflict." An EFA produced an acceptable one-factor solution. Both the KMO measure (.82) and Bartlett's test [χ^2 = 949.60(45), p < .001] were acceptable. The one factor solution explained 64.98% of the variance with a 2.75 eigenvalue. Additionally, α = .86 (M = 4.15, SD = 1.18). This scale is a covariate for some analyses (see Appendix P).

Responding conflict strategy messages. Participants were randomly presented with nine hypothetical responses to their mother or father. The messages pilot tested for responding conflict strategies were the messages used for the main study (see Appendix G). Thus, three

messages were used for each of the three conflict strategies to enhance generalizability of the results.

Likelihood of responding. To assess the likelihood with which participants would use each responding conflict strategy message, five items were adapted from Shebib et al.'s (2020) scale. Items included "It is likely that I would use this message to respond to my parent." The items were averaged across the three messages representing each strategy. The *likelihood of responding constructively* produced an alpha of .95 (M = 5.11, SD = 1.13) and model fit was acceptable as low degrees of freedom can result in overestimated RMSEA scores (Bentler & Bonett, 1980), $\chi_2(5) = 19.73$, $p = .001$, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .07, 90% CI [.05, .12]. The *likelihood of responding destructively* produced an alpha of .95 (M = 2.94, SD = 1.32) and good model fit was achieved, $\chi_2(5) = 17.99$, $p = .003$, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .06, 90% CI [.04, .12]. The *likelihood of responding avoidantly* produced an alpha of .95 (M = 2.30, SD = 1.27) and model fit was acceptable as low degrees of freedom can result in overestimated RMSEA scores (Bentler & Bonett, 1980), $\chi_2(5) = 14.58$, $p = .012$, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .07, 90% CI [.03 .11] (see Appendix Q).

Spendthrift-tightwad. The spendthrift-tightwad (ST-TW) scale is an individual difference measure used to assess the extent to which people find the prospect of spending money painful (Rick, Cyder, & Loewenstein, 2008). Tightwads tend to experience a high pain of paying and spend less than they would ideally like to spend, whereas spendthrifts tend to experience insufficient pain and spend more than they would ideally like to spend. The scale consists of four items. A Likert scale (1 to 5) assessed three of the items, while a Likert-type scale (1 to 11) assessed one item. This scale was distributed twice to participants: once reflecting on themselves and another time reflecting on the parent they were randomly assigned to. Higher

scores indicate more spendthrift tendencies. Reliability, for children, was .69 (M = 3.92, SD = .97); and, for parents, was .61 (M = 3.61, SD = 1.00). This variable is used for preliminary analyses (see Appendix R).

Perceived sensitivity of survey. The social desirability bias is an important limitation in self-reported data, as participants want to appear normal, thus responding in a socially appropriate way (Randall & Fernandes, 1991). In an attempt to screen for bias in responding, participants were given the balanced inventory of desirable responding—short form's (BIDR-16; Hart, Ritchie, Hepper, & Gebauer, 2015) 16 items, which is a shorter version of the balanced inventory of desirable responding (Paulhus, 1984, 1991). The scale consists of two subscales with eight items each. The first subscale, *self-deceptive enhancement*, which represents a tendency to give honest but positively biased reports (Paulhus, 1984). Items included "I never regret my decisions." Model fit was not acceptable, $\chi_2(20) = 156.68$, $p < .001$, CFI = .59, RMSEA = .13, 90% CI [.01 .15]. Neither was reliability (α = .64). The second subscale, *impression management*, signifies a tendency to give inflated self-descriptions to an audience (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964). Items included "I never cover up my mistakes." Model fit was not acceptable, $\chi_2(20) = 266.09$, $p < .001$, CFI = .54, RMSEA = .17, 90% CI [.15 .19]. Neither was reliability (α = .59). Neither dropping various items from each model or running the models together helped achieve acceptable model fit or improve reliabilities. These subscales were intended to be covariate variables, but due to their lack of reliability, validity, and correlations with the main variables of interest, this scale was dropped from the analyses (see Appendix S).

Financial dependence. Financial dependence was operationalized using five items created by the researcher. Items were rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *never*, 4 = *sometimes*, 7 = *all the time*) and included "How often does your parent(s) provide you financial

support?" Cases would be excluded if participants answered "never" to any of the five items. However, no participants were excluded on the basis of these variables. An EFA produced an acceptable one-factor solution. Both the KMO measure (.82) and Bartlett's test [$\chi_2 = 909.14(10)$, $p < .001$] were acceptable. The one factor solution explained 63.03% of the variance with a 3.15 eigenvalue. Additionally, $\alpha = .85$ ($M = 5.17$, $SD = 1.43$). This scale is a covariate for some analyses (see Appendix T).

Procedures

To qualify for this study, participants had to meet the criteria for emerging adulthood: between 18 and 29 years of age (Lowe & Arnett, 2019; Renk et al., 2007), somewhat financially dependent upon their parent (e.g., pays for some of tuition, car, lease, health insurance, etc.), and have heterosexual parents with at least one parent living. Participants were assured that their responses would be anonymous to the researchers, participation was completely voluntary, and they were free to discontinue participation at any time. After they agreed to the informed consent electronically, participants were directed to the questionnaire.

First, participants answered items from the *RFCP* and *ECOP* scales. Then, participants completed the *past financial interactions* items. Next, participants were randomly assigned to a mother or father condition and answered the *manipulation check of parental condition* question, *expected financial conflict strategy,* and *productiveness of financial conversation* items. Then, participants were given the conflict situation and rated *realism*, *severity,* and *participant's initial conflict strategy* items.

After that, participants were randomly assigned to one of the three *parent's manipulated conflict strategy messages* and answered the *manipulation check of parent's manipulated conflict strategy* question and the *expected behavior* question. Participants then rated *degree of*

unexpectedness, *positive valence*, *negative valence*, and *ambivalence* items. Following this, participants received all nine *responding conflict strategy messages*, in a randomized order, and rated the *likelihood of responding* items for each message. Before concluding, participants answered the *perceived sensitivity* items to screen for bias responding items and the *spendthrift-tightwad* items. Finally, the survey concluded with *financial dependence* and *demographic* questions (see Appendix U for demographic questions and Figure 2 for the survey's flow).

MAIN STUDY RESULTS

Manipulation Checks

Before testing the hypotheses, four manipulation checks were conducted. The *first manipulation check* was conducted before averaging the responding conflict strategy message ratings. Pearson's correlation analyses were performed correlating likelihood of use ratings for each of the nine messages. Results revealed that ratings for constructive message one were positively correlated with ratings of constructive message two, $r(421) = .57$, $p < .001$; and ratings of constructive message three, $r(421) = .64$, $p < .001$. Ratings of constructive message two were positively correlated with ratings of constructive message three, $r(421) = .57$, $p < .001$. Ratings of destructive message one were positively correlated with ratings of destructive message two, $r(421) = .62$, $p < .001$; and ratings of destructive message three, $r(421) = .56$, $p < .001$. Ratings of destructive message two were positively correlated with ratings of destructive message three, $r(421) = .58$, $p < .001$. Finally, ratings of avoidant message one were positively correlated with ratings of avoidant message two, $r(421) = .53$, $p < .001$; and ratings of avoidant message three, $r(421) = .50$, $p < .001$. Ratings of avoidant message two were positively correlated with ratings of avoidant message three, $r(421) = .65$, $p < .001$ (see Table 5 for descriptive statistics for each message). Thus, items were averaged across message ratings to created composite variables for likelihood of responding constructively, destructively, and avoidantly.

The *second manipulation check* utilized one-samples *t*-tests to ensure the conflict scenario was both moderately realistic and severe. Both realism and severity were significantly above their midpoints on a 7-point Likert-type scale (see inferential and descriptive statistics in Table 6).

The *third manipulation check* was conducted to ensure that participants in the mother condition were reflecting upon their interactions and communication with their mother, whereas participants in the father condition were reflecting upon their interactions and communication with their father. A chi-square analysis was performed and results revealed significance, $\chi_2(1) = 311.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta = .86$ (see Table 7). For the main analyses, cases were excluded for answering this manipulation check incorrectly.

Finally, the *fourth manipulation check* was conducted to determine if participants perceived that the parent's manipulated conflict strategy was constructive, destructive, or avoidant. A chi-square analysis was performed and results revealed significance, $\chi_2(4) = 293.88$, $p < .001$, $\eta = .52$ (see Table 8). All manipulations were successful.

Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analyses were conducted on this 2 (parental condition) by 2 (manipulated conflict strategy message) experiment before conducting the main analyses. The following variables were used: (a) sex differences of child, parent, and the interaction between parent-child sex (i.e., daughter-mother, daughter-father, son-father, son-mother); (b) past financial interactions and productiveness of financial conversations; (c) expected conflict strategy from parent; and (d) spending habits. These variables were all assessed on the following dependent variables: (a) FCP orientations; (b) initial use of conflict strategies; (c) unexpectedness; (d) positive valence; (e) negative valence; (f) ambivalence; (g) and likelihood of responding using the conflict strategy messages.

Potential biological sex differences for the child on *all variables* were analyzed using independent samples *t*-tests. Three significant differences existed for sex differences in the child. First, males were more likely to perceive their parent's manipulated conflict strategy message as

a positively-valenced violation compared to females. Second, females rated initial use of constructive conflict strategies significantly higher than males. Finally, females also rated the likelihood of responding constructively significantly higher than males. Descriptive and inferential statistics can be found in Table 9.

Potential sex differences of the parent were also explored using independent samples *t*-tests. No parental sex differences emerged on any variable. The interaction between parent and child biological sex were also explored. The frequency of parent-child sex among dyads are as follows: daughter reflecting on mother (31.2%), daughter reflecting on father (24.3%), son reflecting on father (22.7%), and son reflecting on mother (21.7%). Potential sex differences of the parent-child dyads were analyzed using ANOVAs. However, no interactions between sex of parent and sex of child emerged on any variable. Since the biological sex of the child was the only sex difference to arise on any variable, biological sex of the child was included as a control variable in the main analyses.

In regard to how participants perceived their past financial interactions with both parents, I ran frequencies analyses. Participants perceived their *past financial interactions* with both their mother and father to be largely constructive (M = 4.60, SD = 1.18), followed by avoidant (M = 3.45, SD = 1.42) and destructive (M = 3.17, SD = 1.32). Assessing the *productiveness of financial conversation* variable, participants indicate their financial conversations with their parent to be fairly productive (M = 4.68, SD = 1.30).

Preliminary analyses on the categorical variable of *parent's expected conflict strategy* revealed that 59.3% of participants expected their parent (mother = 59.2%, father = 59.5%) to use a constructive strategy, 20.8% of participants expected their parent (mother = 22.4%, father = 19%) to use a destructive strategy, and 19.9% of participants expected their parent (mother =

18.4%, father = 21.5%) to use an avoidant strategy. In terms of the *expected behavior* item, the vast majority of participants identified that they did not expect their parent to handle the conversation like the message they read (75.2%), while 24.8% expected their parent to handle the conversation like the message they read.

Finally, I looked at the degree to which participants find spending money painful. Participants identified closer to a tightwad compared to a spendthrift (M = 3.92, SD = .97). This was done for parents as well. Perceptions of parent was closer to tightwad, as well, compared to a spendthrift (M = 3.61, SD = 1.00). The correlation between father and son for spendthrift-tightwad scale was significant, $r(96) = .21$, $p = .039$. The others were not significant; for father-daughter, $r(103) = .04$, $p = .67$; for mother-son, $r(92) = .09$, $p = .413$; and for mother-daughter, $r(132) = -0.07$, $p = .439$.

Main Analyses

A series of hierarchical regressions were used to analyze FCP predicting an emerging adult child's conflict strategy. In the first step, the control variable was entered, which was *the child's biological sex*. In the second step, the predictor variables were entered, which were *conversation* and *conformity orientations.* The outcome variable was the *initial use* or *likelihood of responding using* each of the conflict strategies: constructive, destructive, and avoidant. Neither of the predictor variables produced tolerance (TOL = .96) nor variance inflation factor (VIF = 1.04) statistics indicating collinearity in the below analyses. Standardized betas are reported in text in the below analyses.

FCP Orientations on *Initial* Conflict Strategies

H1 and H6 predict that high conversation orientation will be positively associated (H1) and conformity orientation will be negatively associated (H6) with the initial use of constructive

conflict strategies by the emerging adult child. Results of the regression analysis indicated that after statistically controlling for child's biological sex, 21.2% of the variance in the *initial use of constructive strategies* could be predicted by *conversation* and *conformity orientations*, R^2_{adj} = .21, $F(3, 422) = 36.60$, $p < .001$, thus, accounting for a significant amount of variance in the outcome variable. Analysis of regression coefficients indicated that both *conversation orientation,* $\beta = .44$, $t = 9.88$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.29, .44]; and *conformity orientation,* $\beta = -0.21$, $t = -4.81$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.37, -0.15], were significant individual predictors of the *initial use of constructive strategies. Conversation orientation* was a positive predictor, while *conformity orientation* was a negative predictor. Thus, the data are consistent with H1 and H6.

H2a and H5a predict that high conversation orientation will be negatively associated (H2a) and high conformity orientation will be positively associated (H5a) with the initial use of destructive conflict strategies by the emerging adult child. Results of the regression analysis were not significant, $R^2_{adj} = .01$, $F(3, 422) = 0.98$, $p = .403$. Thus, together, *conversation* and *conformity orientations* did not account for a significant amount of variance in the outcome variable. However, analysis of regression coefficients indicated that *conformity orientation,* $\beta = 0.08$, $t = 7.63$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.18, 0.24], was an individual significant, positive predictor of the *initial use of destructive strategies.* Thus, the data are inconsistent with H2a, but the data are consistent with H5a.

H2b and H5b predict that high conversation orientation will be negatively associated (H2b) and high conformity orientation will be positively associated (H5b) with the initial use of avoidant conflict strategies. Results of the regression analysis indicated that after statistically controlling for the child's biological sex, 4.2% of the variance in the *initial use of avoidant strategies* could be predicted by *conversation* and *conformity orientations*, $R^2_{adj} = .04$, $F(3, 422)$

= 6.16, $p < .001$, accounting for a significant amount of variance in the outcome variable. Analysis of regression coefficients indicated that both *conversation orientation,* $\beta = -0.15$, $t = -3.31$, $p = .002$, 95% CI [-0.24, -0.06], and *conformity orientation,* $\beta = .10$, $t = 2.03$, $p = .034$, 95% CI [.01, .27], were each significant individual predictors of the *initial use of avoidant strategies. Conversation orientation* was a negative predictor, while *conformity orientation* was a positive predictor. Thus, the data are consistent with H2b and H5b.

FCP Orientations on *Responding* Conflict Strategies

H3 and H8 predict that high conversation orientation will be positively associated (H3) and conformity orientation will be negatively associated (H8) with the likelihood of responding constructively. Results of the regression analysis indicated that after statistically controlling for child's biological sex, 11.8% of the variance in the *likelihood of responding constructively* could be predicted by *conversation* and *conformity orientations*, $R^2_{adj} = .11$, $F(3, 422) = 18.73$, $p < .001$, thus accounting for a significant amount of variance in the outcome variable. Analysis of regression coefficients indicated that both *conversation orientation,* $\beta = .29$, $t = 6.13$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.18, .35]; and *conformity orientation,* $\beta = -0.19$, $t = -3.97$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.12, -0.36]; were significant individual predictors of the *likelihood of responding constructively.* Conversation orientation was a positive predictor, while conformity orientation was a negative predictor. Thus, the data are consistent with H3 and H8.

H4a and H7a predict that high conversation orientation will be negatively associated (H4a) and high conformity orientation will be positively associated (H7a) with the likelihood of responding destructively. Results of the regression analysis indicated that after statistically controlling for the child's biological sex, 4.7% of the variance in the *likelihood of responding destructively* could be predicted by *conversation* and *conformity orientations*, $R^2_{adj} = .01$, $F(3,$

422) = 9.69, p = .046, thus accounting for a significant amount of variance in the outcome variable. Analysis of regression coefficients indicated that only *conversation orientation,* β = -0.11, t = -2.16, p = .031, 95% CI [-0.22, -0.01], was a significant and negative individual predictor of the *likelihood of responding destructively.* Thus, the data are consistent with H4a, but inconsistent with H7a.

H4b and H7b predict that high conversation orientation will be negatively associated (H4b) and high conformity orientation will be positively associated (H7b) with the likelihood of responding avoidantly. After controlling for the biological sex of the child, results of the regression analysis were not significant, R_{2adj} = .006, F(3, 422) = 0.898, p = .442. Thus, *conversation* and *conformity* were not able to account for a significant amount of variance in the outcome variable and neither was a significant individual predictor of the likelihood of responding avoidantly. Thus, the data are inconsistent with H4b and H7b.

Interactions of FCP Orientations on Conflict Strategies

RQ1 was concerned with the interaction between conversation and conformity orientation on the initial use of each conflict strategy, whereas RQ2 was interested in the same interaction of FCP orientations but with the responding conflict strategies. To examine these RQs, Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro for SPSS v. 26 was used to assess the moderating effect of conformity and conversation on each conflict strategy (both initial and responding). Model 1 in PROCESS was used to assess these simple moderations. Since a categorical variable cannot be entered as a covariate in PROCESS, before running PROCESS, I selected cases based off the biological sex of the child and ran all six moderation analyses for male participants and then for female participants. No sex differences for the child emerged for these moderation analyses, so the data are collapsed below. Significant interactions will be further articulated in the discussion section.

The first three simple moderation analyses examined the interaction between conformity and conversation orientations on *initial use* of constructive (RQ1a), destructive (RQ1b), and avoidant conflict strategies (RQ1c). For RQ1a, the interaction was not significant, b_4 = -0.05, *SE* = .03, *p* = .1563, 95% CI [-0.11, 0.02]. For RQ1b, the interaction was significant, b_4 = .17, *SE* = .04, *p* = .002, 95% CI [.08, .25]. As can be seen in Figure 3, when conversation orientation is low, the model estimates a weaker chance of initially using destructive conflict strategies when conformity orientation is high rather than low. However, when conversation orientation is high, the opposite pattern appears; here, the model estimates a weaker chance of initially using destructive conflict strategies for those low in conformity orientation compared to those high on conformity orientation. For RQ1c, the interaction was not significant, b_4 = .07, *SE* = .04, *p* = .0767, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.16].

The last three simple moderation analyses examined the interaction between conformity and conversation orientations on *likelihood of responding* using constructive (RQ2a), destructive (RQ2b), and avoidant conflict strategies (RQ2c). For RQ2a, the interaction was significant, b_4 = -0.08, *SE* = .04, *p* = .0346, 95% CI [-0.15, -0.01]. As can be seen in Figure 4, though high conformity orientation is associated with a greater use of constructive strategies at any level of conversation orientation, at low levels of conversation orientation, the difference between low and high conformity orientation is greater than at high levels of conversation orientation.

For RQ2b, the interaction was significant, b_4 = .14, *SE* = .05, *p* = .0037, 95% CI [.05, .23]. As can be seen in Figure 5, when conversation orientation is low, the model estimates a stronger likelihood of responding destructively for those also low on conformity orientation compared to those high on conformity orientation. However, the opposite pattern occurs under

conditions of high conversation orientation, in which case there is a stronger likelihood of responding destructively when conformity orientation is high as opposed to low.

Finally, for RQ2c, the interaction was significant, $b_4 = .17$, $SE = .05$, $p = .0003$, 95% CI [.08, .26]. As can be seen in Figure 6, when conversation orientation is low, the model estimates a greater likelihood of responding avoidantly for those also low on conformity orientation compared to individuals higher on conformity orientation. However, the opposite pattern is apparent at high levels of conversation orientation; here, participants are more likely to respond avoidantly when they are high as opposed as low on conformity orientation.

Degree of Valence of Unexpected Behavior on *Responding* Conflict Strategies

In order to conduct analyses for the remaining hypotheses (H9-H16), cases were selected based on the categorical variable of *expected behavior,* such that only those who indicated that their parent's manipulated conflict message was unexpected were included in the analyses. For H9 and H10, hierarchical regressions were conducted. In the first step, the control variables were entered, which were the *child's biological sex, ambivalence,* and the *degree of unexpectedness* of the parent's conflict strategy message. Previous research has shown that sometimes individuals have ambivalence regarding expectancy violating behaviors, and such ambivalence could impact responding behavior (see Floyd, Ramirez, & Burgoon, 2008). Additionally, the degree of unexpectedness was entered as a control variable, as the hypotheses were interested in the direct effect of valence of the violation on the responding conflict strategy messages. In the second step, the predictor variables were entered, which were the *positive valence* and *negative valence* scales. The outcome variable was the relevant *likelihood of responding* conflict strategy scale.

H9 predicted that highly *positively-valenced violations* will be positively associated with *likelihood of responding constructively.* Results of the regression analysis indicated that after

statistically controlling for the covariates, 4% of the variance in *likelihood of responding constructively* could be predicted by how *positively-valenced* the violation was perceived, R^2_{adj} = .03, $F(4, 316) = 4.17$, $p = .003$. Analysis of regression coefficients indicated that how *positively-valenced* the violation was perceived, $\beta = .11$, $t = 2.10$, $p = .036$, 95% CI [.01, .16], was a significant and positive individual predictor of the *likelihood of responding constructively.* Thus, the data are consistent with H9.

H10a predicted that highly *negatively-valenced violations* will be positively associated with *likelihood of responding destructively.* Results of the regression analysis indicated that after statistically controlling for the covariates, 13.1% of the variance in *likelihood of responding using destructive strategy messages* could be explained by how *negatively-valenced* the violation was perceived, $R^2_{adj} = .12$, $F(4, 316) = 15.77$, $p < .001$. Analysis of regression coefficients indicated that how *negatively-valenced* the violation was perceived, $\beta = .27$, $t = 6.15$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.19, .36], was a significant and positive predictor of the *likelihood of responding destructively.* Thus, the data are consistent with H10a.

H10b predicted that highly *negatively-valenced violations* of a parent's conflict strategy will be positively associated with the emerging adult children's *likelihood of responding avoidantly.* Results of the regression analysis indicated that after statistically controlling for the covariates, 7.1% of the variance in *likelihood of responding avoidantly* could be explained by how *negatively-valenced* the violation was perceived, $R^2_{adj} = .06$, $F(4, 316) = 7.97$, $p < .001$. Analysis of regression coefficients indicated that how *negatively-valenced* the violation was perceived, $\beta = .16$, $t = 2.98$, $p = .003$, 95% CI [.05, .22], was a significant and positive predictor of the *likelihood of responding avoidantly*. Thus, the data are consistent with H10b.

Moderated Moderation Models

Moderated moderation models were conducted for the rest of the hypotheses (H11-H16) using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro for SPSS v. 26. Again, cases were selected such that the parent's message had to be a violation of expectation before running these analyses. In each case, a bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval (95%) based on 10,000 bootstrap samples was computed. The independent variables were either *conversation* or *conformity orientations.* The moderating variables were *degree of unexpectedness* of behavior and either the *positive valence* or *negative valence* scale. The dependent variable was *likelihood of responding* using each of the conflict strategies. *Ambivalence* was a covariate for all analyses below. Model 3 in PROCESS was used to develop and analyze a three-way interaction model (Hayes & Matthes, 2009; Preacher, Rucker & Hayes, 2007). The PROCESS macro automatically determines the centering and interaction terms and provides the point estimate and first- and second-order variance estimates of the conditional indirect effect for a given set of moderator values. I used the Johnson-Neyman computational technique (Hayes, 2013) to identify the values of the moderating variables for which the independent and dependent variables showed a significant association.

For each model, and for the sake of parsimony, only the three-way interaction results which pertain specifically to my hypotheses, are discussed in the below text. Simple effects (e.g., independent and moderating variables effect on dependent variable) are reported in the corresponding figure and the rest of the model's information (e.g., two-way interactions) are reported in the corresponding table.

H11 predicted that perceived highly unexpected, highly negatively-valenced violations of expectedness moderate the positive association between conversation orientation and likelihood

of responding constructively, such that more highly negative violations (i.e., high degree of unexpectedness and high degree of perceived negative valence of the violation) would reduce the strength of the association between the independent and dependent variables. Results revealed a significant three-way interaction between conversation orientation, degree of unexpectedness, and how negatively-valenced the violation was perceived, $b_7 = .04$, $SE = .01$, $p = .0037$, 95% CI [.01, .07], on likelihood of responding constructively (see Figure 7 and Table 10). Results from the Johnson-Neyman computational technique indicated that the three-way interaction exists when all three variables are high on their respective continuum, $\theta_{XY \rightarrow Y}|$ (Z = -1.51) = -0.14, $F(1, 414) = 14.53$, $p = .002$. As can be seen in Figure 8, high conversation orientation interacted with the other variables when the degree of unexpectedness was high and the violation's valence was perceived as highly negative. When this occurred, the result was a decrease in the likelihood of responding constructively. Thus, the data are consistent with H11.

H12 predicted that perceived highly unexpected, highly negatively-valenced violations of expectedness moderate the negative association between conversation orientation and likelihood of responding destructively. The result revealed that the three-way interaction between conversation orientation, degree of unexpectedness, and how negatively-valenced the violation was perceived on likelihood of responding destructively was not significant, $b_7 = .02$, $SE = .02$, $p = .3204$, 95% CI [-0.02, 0.04] (see Figure 9 and Table 11). Thus, the data are inconsistent with H12.

H13 predicted that perceived highly unexpected, highly negatively-valenced violations of expectedness moderate the negative association between conversation orientation and likelihood of responding avoidantly. The three-way interaction between conversation orientation, degree of unexpectedness, and how negatively-valenced the violation was perceived on likelihood of

responding avoidantly was not significant, b_7 = -0.01, *SE* = .02, *p* = .3852, 95% CI [-0.04, 0.02] (see Figure 10 and Table 12). Thus, the data are inconsistent with H13.

H14 predicted that perceived highly unexpected, highly positively-valenced violations of expectedness moderates the positive association between conformity orientation and likelihood of responding destructively, such that highly positive violations (i.e., high degree of unexpectedness and high degree of perceived positive valence of the violation) would reduce the strength of the association. The three-way interaction between conformity orientation, degree of unexpectedness, and how positively-valenced the violation was perceived on likelihood of responding destructively was not significant, b_7 = .01, *SE* = .03, *p* = .6119, 95% CI [-0.04, 0.06] (see Figure 11 and Table 13). Thus, the data are inconsistent with H14.

H15 predicted that perceived highly unexpected, highly positively-valenced violations of expectedness moderate the positive association between conformity orientation and likelihood of responding avoidantly, such that highly positive violations (i.e., high degree of unexpectedness and high degree of perceived positive valence of the violation) would reduce the strength of the association between the independent and dependent variables. The three-way interaction was significant between conformity orientation, degree of unexpectedness, and how positively-valenced the violation was perceived, b_7 = -0.07, *SE* = .03, *p* = .0191, 95% CI [-0.12, -0.02], on the likelihood of responding avoidantly (see Figure 12 and Table 14). Results from the Johnson-Neyman computational technique indicated that the three-way interaction exists when all three variables are all high on their continuum, $\theta_{XY \rightarrow Y|}$ (Z = 1.43) = -0.16, $F(1, 415) = 5.13$, *p* = .0241. As can be seen in Figure 13, when conformity orientation, degree of unexpectedness, and positive valence were all high, the result was a decrease in the likelihood of responding avoidantly. Thus, the data are consistent with H15.

H16 predicted that perceived highly unexpected, highly positively-valenced violations of expectedness moderate the negative association between conformity orientation and likelihood of responding constructively, such that highly positive violations (i.e., high degree of unexpectedness and high degree of perceived positive valence of the violation) would change the direction of the negative association between the independent and dependent variables to a positive association. Results revealed a significant three-way interaction between conformity orientation, degree of unexpectedness, and how positively-valenced the violation was perceived, $b_7 = .06$, $SE = .02$, $p = .0048$, 95% CI [.02, .10], on the likelihood of responding constructively (see Figure 14 and Table 15). Results from the Johnson-Neyman computational technique indicated that the three-way interaction exists when all three variables are all high on their continuum, $\theta_{XY \rightarrow Y|}$ (Z = 1.43) = 0.24, $F(1, 415) = 16.06$, $p = .001$. As can be seen in Figure 15, high conformity orientation interacted with the other variables when the degree of unexpectedness was high and the violation's valence was perceived as highly positive. When this occurred, the result was a positive association with the likelihood of responding constructively; thus, changing the direction of the previous negative association between high conformity orientation and likelihood of responding constructively to a positive association between these variable. That is, the relationship between high conformity orientation and likelihood of responding constructively reversed directions when children perceived their parents communication to be highly unexpected but highly positive. Thus, the data are consistent with H16.

DISCUSSION

The primary goal of the present study was to test FCP and EVT in relation to communicative interactions between emerging adult children and parents during financial disagreements. Overall, the findings are very illuminating. In terms of FCP and *initial* conflict strategies, high conversation orientation positively predicted the initial use of constructive conflict strategies (H1) and negatively predicted the initial use of avoidant conflict strategies (H2b). No significance was found for the hypothesis that high conversation orientation would predict the initial use of destructive conflict strategies (H2a). High conformity orientation negatively predicted the initial use of constructive conflict strategies (H6) and positively predicted the initial use of destructive (H5a) and avoidant strategies (H5b).

For FCP's impact on *responding* conflict strategies, only three significant findings emerged. First, conversation orientation positively predicted likelihood of responding constructively (H3). Second, conversation orientation negatively predicted likelihood of responding destructively (H4a). And finally, conformity orientation negatively predicted likelihood of responding constructively (H8). Furthermore, interactions between high and low conversation orientation with high and low conformity orientation on both initial (RQ1) and responding (RQ2) conflict strategies were explored and are also further discussed in the subsequent section.

In terms of EVT and violation valence, positively-valenced violations positively predicted one's likelihood of responding constructively (H9). Conversely, negatively-valenced violations positively predicted one's likelihood of responding destructively (H10a). Finally, negatively-valenced violations positively predicted one's likelihood of responding avoidantly (H10b).

With respect to the moderated moderation models, results revealed three significant three-way interactions. First, an interaction occurred when high conversation orientation interacted with a high degree of unexpectedness and a high degree of perceived negative valence of that violation by decreasing the likelihood of responding constructively (H11). The second three-way interaction that was significant occurred when high conformity orientation interacted with a high degree of unexpectedness and a high degree of perceived positive valence of that violation by decreasing the likelihood of responding avoidantly (H15). The final three-way significant interaction occurred when high conformity orientation interacted with a high degree of unexpectedness and a high degree of perceived positive valence of that violation by changing the direction of the negative relationship between conformity orientation and likelihood of responding constructively, such that the three-way interaction made it a positive association (H16). This finding emphasizes the importance of understanding not only how unexpected the behavior is perceived, but also the attributed valence of the violation when predicting responding behavior. Theoretical and pragmatic implications are articulated below.

Theoretical Implications

FCP. Research in the FCP tradition suggests how overall communication climate may affect parent-child conflict and its outcomes for children. People first learn about how conflicts work and how to resolve problems within their families (Noller, 1995). Participants in the present study entered conflict fairly consistently with FCP's theorizing. High conversation orientation was positively associated with the initial use of constructive conflict strategies (H1) and were negatively associated with the initial use of avoidant conflict strategies (H2b). High conformity orientation was positively associated with the initial use of destructive (H5a) and

avoidant conflict strategies (H5b), and they were negatively associated with the initial use of constructive conflict strategies (H6).

One interaction between the two orientations of FCP on *initial* conflict strategies emerged as significant. For the initial use of destructive conflict strategy (RQ1b), conversation orientation interacted with conformity orientation such that those high on both conversation and conformity orientation were more likely to use destructive strategies compared to those who were low on conformity orientation. Consensual families (i.e., high conversation orientation and high conformity orientation) were more likely to initially use destructive strategies when comparing them with protective families (i.e., high conformity orientation and low conversation orientation).

For *consensual families*, children's communication is typically characterized by the pressure to agree and to preserve parental authority, on one hand, and an interest in open communication, on the other hand (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Thus, the fact that the child approaches conflict and addresses it (i.e., does not choose avoidant strategies) makes logical sense, as these children are high in conversation orientation. However, as opposed to just being high in conversation orientation, these children are also high in conformity orientation, and past research has indicated that high conformity orientation is related to destructive strategies during conflict (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997; Zhang, 2007). Additionally, the research on family types and conflict strategies is generally analyzed from the parent's perspective. For example, Koerner and Fitzpatrick (1997) found that parents in consensual families are interested in their child's opinions, but at the same time they believe they should make decisions for the family. However, results from the present study show that *children* in consensual families are more likely to initially use destructive conflict strategies. This could be due to the child trying to become

independent from their parents and wanting to create their autonomy of opinions. Therefore, emerging adult children might want more of a *pluralistic family* (i.e., high conversation orientation and low conformity orientation), as emerging adult children are trying to create a more peer-like relationship with their parent(s).

In terms of FCP orientations on *responding* conflict strategies, high conversation orientation was positively associated with responding constructively (H3) and negatively associated with responding destructively (H4a). High conformity orientation was negatively associated with responding constructively (H8). Additionally, all interactions between the two orientations of FCP on *responding* conflict strategies for RQ2 were significant. For RQ2a, when conversation orientation is high, people are more likely to respond constructively. However, when conversation orientation is low, conformity orientation plays a more significant role than at high levels of conversation orientation. More specifically, at low levels of conversation orientation, the likelihood of responding constructively goes up when conformity orientation is high compared to when conformity orientation is low.

Laissez-faire families (i.e., low on both conformity and conversation orientations) value neither dimension; as a result, it makes sense that children in these families would be less likely to respond to parents constructively because these families do not openly discuss issues. When issues do arise, due to their lack of openness and interest in the child's opinions, it seems reasonable that the child is not equipped to handle conflict conversations productively (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997, 2002c). *Protective families* (i.e., low conversation orientation and high conformity orientation) are characterized by an obedience to parental authority, and Fitzpatrick and Ritchie (1994) previously found that protective children tend to be easily influenced by their parent's influence; thus, this makes sense why children would respond constructively to their

parents because of their natural agreeance with parental authority. This finding also highlights how parents are more powerful compared to their child. Past conflict research on power differences in relationships has found that people of more power (e.g., parents in conformity-orientated families) are more likely to achieve their goals of the conversation than those of less power (Perlman et al., 2000), and the present study indicates that this is more likely to be the case when conversation orientation is low.

For RQ2b and RQ2c, when conversation orientation and conformity orientation are both low, which describes the *laissez-faire* family type, participants were more likely to respond to parents destructively and avoidantly. In terms of *laissez-faire* children, avoidance makes sense as these children learn that there is little value in family conversation because of the little support they receive from their parents (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a). However, the present findings indicate that children from laissez-faire families are also likely to respond destructively to parents. This could be due to resentment by the emerging adult child and the parent because they were raised in a family where parents have little interest in their children's decisions and therefore do not talk to them about their decisions (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997).

The present study highlighted important implications for FCP. The study provides evidence that FCP plays an important role in terms of *entering* conflict conversations. Children in high conversation-oriented families are more likely to initially use constructive strategies, whereas children in high conformity-oriented families are more likely to initially use destructive and avoidant conflict strategies. Children in consensual and protective families, specifically, are more likely to enter conflict using destructive strategies. Additionally, the present study highlights that FCP *does* play a role in responding during conflicting interactions, too. Children in high conversation-oriented families or children in protective families are more likely to

respond constructively. Children in laissez-faire families are less likely to respond constructively during conflict with their parent; however, these children are more likely to respond destructively or avoidantly to parents during conflict. These findings are important for two central reasons. First, FCP research on conflict has yet to empirically test how FCP orientations influence *responding* conflict strategies in an interactional context. Second, the majority of research on FCP and conflict is examined from the parents' perspective. The present study examines FCP orientations and conflict from the child's perspective, which provides important information for family scholars when understanding how both conversation and conformity orientations guide children's conflict strategies both when they enter and respond to conflict with their parent.

However, results from the present study also suggest that FCP orientations are tempered by violations of expectations when assessing responding communicative behavior. When an interaction violates expectations, the degree of unexpectedness and the valence of the violation make the relationship between FCP orientations and responding conflict strategies less robust (or change direction for H16). Results from the present study suggest that when behavior does not conform to expectations based off FCP orientations, perceptions of parents' violating behavior and the valence of parental behavior have an impact when predicting responding conflict strategies from the emerging adult child.

EVT. The present study contributes significantly to literature on EVT (Burgoon, 1993). The most notable contribution is that this is the first study to use EVT as a theoretical framework to understand parent-child interactions (see White, 2015). Expectancies exert a significant influence on people's interaction patterns, on their impressions of others, and on the outcome of interactions (Burgoon, 1993). The present research provides evidence that families form expectations about conflict behavior, and these expectations shape and guide family interactions.

When expectations are violated in family conversations, the result is assessing the degree of unexpectedness and the perceived valence of the violation, as proposed by EVT. The present research shares findings similar to the original work on EVT but differs by examining the parent-child dyad as opposed to romantic relationships or friendships (see Burgoon, 1993; Burgoon & Hale, 1988). The present study indicates that expectancies, like FCP, are salient in family conflict interactions, and this study emphasizes the need to examine their roles together in conflict interactions and beyond. The results from the present study expand on EVT's predictions on violating interactions by including the antecedent variables of conversation and conformity orientations from FCP theory. Additionally, both the family context and conflict strategy messages provide valuable insights for understanding and expanding the scope of the expectancy violation process.

More specifically, the degree of unexpectedness and the valence of the unexpected behavior played a role in how the child would respond. The results were fairly consistent with predictions based off EVT. That is, positively-valenced violations positively predicted the likelihood of responding constructively (H9). As theorized by EVT (Burgoon, 1993), positively-valenced violations are expected to lead to more favorable interaction outcomes. Thus, if a child expected a parent to be destructive, but the parent instead behaved constructively, constituting a positive valence violation, the child was more likely to respond constructively. Conversely, negatively-valenced violations positively predicted the likelihood of responding destructively (H10a) and the likelihood of responding avoidantly (H10b). This is consistent with EVT's (Burgoon, 1993) claim that negatively-valenced violations lead to less favorable interaction outcomes and escalate conflict intensity (Fincham et al., 1990). Additionally, Burgoon and Hale (1988) theorize that negative valence violations lead to more reciprocal negative responses,

which is consistent with the present study's findings. It is important to note that the effect for valence on responding conflict strategies were relatively small, explaining between 4% and 13% of the variance. Positive and negative valence do not account for 100% of the reason why people respond constructively, destructively, or avoidantly in emerging adult children conflict interactions with parents. Many other factors could play a role, such as satisfaction with parent, reward value of parent, and things alike. Thus, there are more things going on and other variables that need to be assessed when predicting children's responding behavior besides for the valence of parent's violating behavior.

In terms of the moderated moderation analyses, *three* significant three-way interactions occurred. First, H11 found that at high degrees of unexpectedness, high conversation orientation interacted with high perceived negative valence violations by decreasing the likelihood of responding constructively. As H3 discovered, high conversation orientation was positively related to likelihood of responding constructively. However, the degree of unexpectedness and the perceived negative valence of the behavior moderated the relationship between high conversation orientation and likelihood of responding constructively. Thus, children in high conversation-oriented families who found their parent's behavior to be highly unexpected and highly negative were less likely to respond constructively (H11). Again, this finding is consistent with EVT research, that highly unexpected, and highly negatively-valenced violations are less likely to be responded to with favorable interaction patterns and outcomes (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). The degree of unexpectedness was added in the three-way interactions because of the theorizing that highly unexpected behaviors produces a change in arousal that leads an individual to make attributions based off the valence of the violating behavior (Burgoon & Hale, 1987). Additionally, high degree of unexpectedness allows for scholars to see immediate changes in

behavior and communicative responses to violated interactions (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). This is because EVT posits that the arousal we experience during expectancy violated interactions heightens attention to sender and message characteristics (Burgoon et al., 1995), which influences our response to the sender (Burgoon, 1993).

Second, H15 detected a three-way interaction. The moderated moderation analysis found that at high degrees of unexpectedness, high conformity orientation interacted with highly positively-valenced violations by decreasing the likelihood of responding avoidantly. More specifically, children in high conformity-oriented families who found their parent's behavior to be highly unexpected but highly positive were less likely to respond avoidantly.

Finally, data was consistent with H16. The moderated moderation analysis revealed that at high degrees of unexpectedness, high conformity orientation interacted with high perceived positive valence violations by increasing the likelihood of responding constructively. That is, children in high conformity-oriented families who found their parent's behavior to be highly unexpected but highly positive were more likely to respond constructively. Moreover, this finding is consistent with EVT research, that highly unexpected and highly positively-valenced violations are more likely to be responded with favorable interaction patterns and outcomes (Burgoon, 1993; Burgoon & Hale, 1988).

Conflict. The present study sheds some light on how children enter conflict and respond to parents during a financial disagreement. First, the conflict topic used in the present study extends work on financial disagreements in relationships, in general (see Arnett & Fishel, 2013; Kenyon & Koerner, 2009; Shebib & Cupach, 2018). Past qualitative research has documented that parents and emerging adults often have divergent perspectives on the provision and use of money (Arnett & Fishel, 2013; Kenyon & Koerner, 2009), but from the parent's perspective

(e.g., Lowe & Arnett, 2019). The present study examines it from the emerging adult's perspective. This is important because taking into consideration the child's perspective is imperative to understand how conflict interactions are perceived and the outcomes that are associated with conflict for both parents and children. Additionally, the present study is the first of its kind to experimentally test how emerging adult children's conflict strategy changes (or stabilizes) over time throughout the course of a manipulated conflict interaction. This is important because conflict interactions can be heated, and violations of expectations are likely to occur (Cupach et al., 2010). Understanding how conflict interactions unfold is essential for understanding how to manage and fix dysfunctional conflict behaviors. Experiments allow researchers to draw more causal conclusions regarding relationships, as opposed to correlational associations among variables.

Second, the present study expands research on conflict by offering insights into a relationship that is understudied—emerging adult children and parents. Little empirical work has examined this relationship in terms of conflict. The majority of studies in parent-child conflict focus on young children, adolescent children, or adult children. According to Noller (1995), conflict is a part of the developmental transition as adolescents become more autonomous.

Additionally, the present study looked at a proximal outcome of conflict interactions, responding behavior. Immediate responding behavior was chosen because proximal outcomes can produce more immediate changes in behavior (Bradbury & Fincham, 1991). Additionally, Sanford (2006) argues that studying the proximal context over the distal context has the most direct influence on current communicative behavior in an interaction. However, future research would also benefit from examining more distal outcomes of parent-child conflict interactions, such as family satisfaction, stability, and commitment.

Finally, this study was the first to apply EVT (Burgoon, 1993) to parent-child interactions during conflict (see White, 2015), thus expanding EVT's theoretical framework and pushing the boundaries of its propositions. In regard to the present study's results, EVT was useful in understanding proximal outcomes (i.e., responding conflict behavior) associated with communicative interactions during conflict when communication violated expectations. FCP was useful at predicting how emerging adult children would both enter and respond to conflict situations with their parents. The present study was also the first to use FCP and EVT together to help explain the interactional process of parent-child conflict. Results from the present study show that both FCP and EVT are useful theoretical frameworks to understand parent-child conflict and they warrant further investigation. FCP orientations seem to set expectations for how children and parents communicate with each other when differences arise. However, when parents do not conform to children's expectations for how parents typically communicate when conflict arises, EVT provides a useful framework to understand these violated interactions. Using the theories together seems to be more powerful when attempting to explain the mechanisms by which parent-child conflict interactions unfold compared to using the theories separately.

Pragmatic Implications

The present study offers four pragmatic recommendations for family therapists, family communication scholars, parents, children, and other family members. The first recommendation is to foster an open family climate where children feel they can constructively communicate issues and conflict with their parents. Fostering an open family climate will allow for children to enter conversations with more of a problem-solving dialogue compared to getting defensive or avoiding the issue. Thus, it is important for parents to teach children functional and constructive conflict behaviors via conversation-oriented communication patterns, as indicated by the results

of the present study. Past research has shown that not teaching children healthy conflict behaviors could have profound implications for the children's personal and social development (Eckstein, 2007). Additionally, past research has found that one particularly dark outcome of conflict in families occurs when children learn ineffective, inappropriate, dysfunctional, and even violent conflict interaction behaviors as part of normal conflict patterns and perpetuate these behaviors in subsequent interpersonal relationships (Messman & Canary, 1998). Thus, interventions may be useful for family therapists to help families decrease the intensity of the conflict interaction by reducing dysfunctional conflict management strategies and increasing constructive strategies (e.g., Canary et al., 2001).

The second recommendation is to learn to adjust expectations. Results from the present study shows that expectancy violations in family relationships *do occur* in the context of parent-child conflict interactions. From a practical view, a conflict practitioner or family therapist might focus on modifying expectations so as to make them more realistic or on finding ways to increase awareness of expectations so that they are less likely to be violated negatively (Roloff & Miller, 2006). Families need to understand how important and influential the role of expectations play in our daily communication encounters. Additionally, as emerging adult children are changing their roles in their family-of-origin, adjustments to expectations are likely to occur (Hawk, Keijsers, Hall, & Meeus, 2009). Thus, during this time, it is not uncommon for expectations to be violated. When violated, there are things that can be communication to effectively understand the violating behavior. For example, if a mother acts in an unexpected and destructive way during conflict, rather than reciprocating a destructive strategy, an adolescent may respond constructively. The adolescent may ask for clarity of the mother's perspective: "Mom, I did not expect you to react this way. Can you help me better understand your point-of-

view?" As Shebib and Holmstrom (2020) found in romantic relationship dyads, constructive responses beget more constructive responses, which was also similar to the findings of the present study. Before jumping to conclusions, it is important to understand the violated behavior by asking questions, constructively, to make sense of the other person's perspective.

The third recommendation is to combat negative reciprocity. This is a dark pattern that occurs in family communication, as well as romantic relationships during conflicting episodes (Messman & Canary, 1998). Gottman (1994) found that negative reciprocity over the course of time erodes the relationship between the disputing individuals. Bochner and Eisenberg (1987), when reviewing the family interaction literature, observed that unhealthy families not only fall into spirals of reciprocated negativity, but they also tend to be paranoid and look for ways to blame each other as well as look for hidden motivations in their partners' utterances. The reciprocity of negative and dysfunctional (i.e., destructive and avoidant) interactions was evident in the present study. Gottman (1994) argues that in order to combat this, disputing partners must maintain a balance of positive and negative statements during conflict interactions. More specifically, he found that "happy" couples engage in five positive conflict behaviors for each negative conflict behavior. Though, it is important to note that satisfied couples or families are not immune from the urge to reciprocate the other person's negative behavior (Messman & Canary, 1998), so this is important for all families to engage in during conflicting interactions (i.e., the five to one ratio of positive to negative behaviors) as Gottman (1994) notes this as an important criteria for all types of relationships when engaging in conflict interactions.

Finally, the fourth recommendation is in regard to communicating about money within families in a constructive and productive style. Individuals are likely to have differing opinions about how money is acquired, earned, and spent over long periods of time (Davilla Robbins &

Thompson, 2020). Communication, or lack thereof, about money and personal financial decisions have consequences for families. Typically, individuals *assume* that financial communication begins between a committed couple. However, results from the present study show that conversations about money do happen at the family unit, as participants indicated that the scenarios were realistic. Thus, emerging adult children *do* have financial discussions with their parents regarding their economic dependence with their parent(s). How each person was raised to know about and discuss finances largely influences how well he or she will collectively communicate and make these decisions later in life (Davilla Robbins & Thompson, 2020). Therefore, it is important to mention that there are likely other antecedent variables that might impact behavior in parent-child conflict interactions, such as, past financial conversations, attachment styles, and satisfaction with parent. For example, attachment style can include expectations for family interaction and conflict behavior (Ducharme, Doyle, & Markiewicz, 2002; O'Connell-Corcoran & Mallinckrodt, 2000). Additionally, conflict strategies can impact satisfaction (both in positive and negative ways), but even before a conflicting disagreement begins one's satisfaction with their parent can influence the conflict strategy the child uses (see Montes, Rodríguez, & Serrano, 2012). Despite this, from a practical viewpoint, teaching children constructive and functional ways to communicate about money and skills about handling money early on in life will only benefit them in the long-term (Davilla Robbins & Thompson, 2020).

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Avenues for Research

The present research sheds light on the process of conflict interactions between emerging adult children and their parent. However, it is imperative to acknowledge some limitations of the present study, while highlighting future directions for empirical research. The first limitation is that the data were *not* collected dyadically. This is a limitation because the parent-child dyad is a

distinguishable dyad and having data from both the parent and the child would allow researchers to look at both partner and actor effects, thus allowing researchers to avoid common method bias (i.e., variance misattributed to the measurement method compared to the constructs the measure represented; Campbell & Fiske, 1959). This bias is due to partner effects representing how one partner's reports are associated with the other partner's reports (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006). Dyadic data collection is an important avenue for parent-child conflict researchers as it allows scholars to see both the child and parent's view of the conflict, as conflict recovery is systematically linked to dyadic processes (Gottman, 1994). Additionally, dyadic data would allow scholars to examine both actor and partner effects, while avoiding common method bias (i.e., variance misattributed to the measurement method compared to the constructs the measure represented; Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Difference in perceptions of conflict in families can reveal important insight about family relationships. For example, Sillars and colleagues (2005) found that adolescent children tend to have a more negative perception about their relationship with their parents and their communication with them than do parents. The same may hold true for emerging adult children. Thus, obtaining both perspectives within a parent-child dyad would provide useful insight into parent-child conflict and interactions.

On a similar note, the present study's data were *not* collected longitudinally (i.e., over the course of time), but rather, collected cross-sectionally (i.e., one point in time). This is a limitation as the cross-sectional models in the present study precluded the determination of causal associations that can be drawn from the data. Thus, longitudinal and experimental data would allow scholars to draw stronger casual conclusions about parent-child conflict interactions. Furthermore, longitudinal data would allow scholars to see how reactions might vary over time when receiving the same conflict strategy or various conflict strategies from one's parent.

The self-report and retrospective nature of the measure of family communication patterns pose a threat to internal validity in this study, as this instrument was adapted for participants reflecting upon their years growing up. Self-reported data is a limitation due to perceptual biases (i.e., motives of impression management; see Frese & Zapf, 1988; Spector & Brannick, 1995) and the social desirability response bias (i.e., responding in a socially appropriate way; Randall & Fernandes, 1991). Additionally, the use of hypothetical vignettes brings forth other limitations, as vignettes are clearly not real instances of a situation occurring. Thus, it can impact the external validity of the present study's findings. However, the vignette in the present study was statistically significantly above average in terms of realism and severity, as indicated by the participants, and previous research have shown that people respond to *conflict* vignettes similarly to how they would respond in a real-life conflict situation (see Rahman, 1996).

In terms of the content of the vignette used in the present study, the vignettes all contained an influence goal of the participant—to get money from their parent. Thus, the conflict situation had an instrumental goal that needed to be obtained. Conflict goals are generally categorized into one of three categories: instrumental (e.g., getting money from a parent), relational (e.g., maintain relationship with parent), and self-presentation (e.g., not wanting to be seen as incapable of paying for one's bills; Canary & Cody, 1994; Newton & Burgoon, 1990). The present study focused mainly on the instrumental goal for the emerging adult child to obtain money from their parent. However, self-presentational goals are known for being most important in anger-provoking situations (Ting-Toomey, 1988). When a person's presentation of self is questioned, confrontation and defensiveness (i.e., destructive strategies) are likely to follow. Measuring or manipulating the extent to which the parent's conflict strategy message questioned the child's presentation of self might illuminate more dysfunctional cycles of parent and

emerging adult children conflict interactions. This would seem to be especially true for emerging adult children, as they are seeking to become fully independent from their parents. Additionally, examining the parent's goal in the conflict interaction would be provide some useful knowledge because it is important to take into consideration both parties intentions during conflict.

Something interesting to note about the present study is in regard to the parent's manipulated *avoidant* conflict strategy message. When running the manipulation check (see Table 8), some participants perceived the avoidant response from their parent to be positive, when having to categorically chose a perception of the message. This is consistent with past research on avoidance in conflict, which indicates that sometimes people do perceive avoidance as a positive response to conflict (e.g., Rusbult, 1993). In terms of proximal outcomes, avoidance might seem positive, but distally, avoidance does not allow a person to achieve their goal in the conflict. Generally, habitual avoidance has more negative long-term impacts on the disputing individuals' relationship (see Gottman, 1994). Future research should qualitatively ask participants why they see avoidance as positive to gain more understanding for this discrepancy.

Before concluding, it is important to mention some notable strengths of the study. First, the use of multiple instantiations of conflict strategy messages enhances generalizability. This was a strength, because it allowed the researcher to control the message being sent and ensure represented one of the three conflict strategies. The present study expanded upon Shebib and Holmstrom's (2020) work by (a) developing a scale using message components as items to better and more realistically assess conflict strategies rather than using past scales, which are more susceptible to socially desirable responses (Roloff & Miller, 2006); (b) piloting-test messages for parent's manipulated conflict strategy messages; (c) creating and pilot-testing messages for the child to rate in terms of their likelihood of using as a response to their parent; (d) assessing

severity with realism immediately after the conflict scenario to ensure that the severity items are not conflated by the rest of the survey's measures and manipulations; (e) applying conflict strategies as conflict messages to a different relational dyad where power is imbalanced; and (f) assessing two time points in the interaction (i.e., initial and responding).

CONCLUSION

The present study adds to the existing literature on parent-child conflict using FCP and EVT as theoretical frameworks for understanding the interactional nature of conflict interactions in this relational dyad. FCP orientations impact how children enter and respond to financial conflict with their parents, but children's responses were tempered by parental violations of expectations (i.e., the degree of unexpectedness and the valence of the violation). The present study urges further research to consider using these two theories together; they are more powerful together compared to separate when attempting to explain the interactional nature of the communication that occurs during parent-child conflict conversations.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Conflict Scenarios

Pilot Study

A college student and his/her parent are having a discussion about the college student's finances. The college student is running low on money and is asking for some financial help from their parent. The parent feels that the college student is over-spending, not saving enough money, and does not agree with the college student's financial decisions lately. The child can tell their parent is upset with them regarding this issue, but they still need some money. (76 words)

Main Study

Mother Condition: Imagine that you are having a discussion with your mother regarding your finances. You are running low on money and are asking for some financial help from your mother. Your mother feels that you are over-spending, not saving enough money, and does not agree with your financial decisions lately. You can tell your mother is upset with you regarding this issue, but you still need money from her. (68 words)

Father Condition: Imagine that you are having a discussion with your father regarding your finances. You are running low on money and are asking for some financial help from your father. Your father feels that you are over-spending, not saving enough money, and does not agree with your financial decisions lately. You can tell your father is upset with you regarding this issue, but you still need money from him. (68 words)

APPENDIX B

Parent's Manipulated Conflict Strategy Messages

Constructive

Pilot Study: In a calm tone, the parent says "I would just like to help you figure out a way to budget your money better. We each should create a budget plan for you to discuss and compare. This will allow us to find a plan that works for both of us." (50 words)

Main Study: In a calm tone, your [mother/father] says "I would just like to help you figure out a way to budget your money better. We each should create a budget plan for you to discuss and compare. This will allow us to find a plan that works for both of us." (50 words)

Destructive

Pilot Study: In a harsh tone, the parent says "You know better than this. You never save your money in case of emergencies. You always just do what you want. If you keep this up, I will stop giving you any money all together and you will be on your own financially." (50 words)

Main Study: In a harsh tone, your [mother/father] says "You know better than this. You never save your money in case of emergencies. You always just do what you want. If you keep this up, I will stop giving you any money all together and you will be on your own financially." (50 words)

Avoidant

Pilot Study: In a neutral tone, the parent says "I do not feel like discussing money and your financial decisions with you at the moment. It has been a busy day. Why don't we talk about something else and not this? What is new in your life? How has your day been?" (50 words)

Main Study: In a neutral tone, your [mother/father] says "I do not feel like discussing money and your financial decisions with you at the moment. It has been a busy day. Why don't we talk about something else and not this? What is new in your life? How has your day been?" (50 words)

APPENDIX C

Realism Scale

Conflict Scenario (Pilot Study & Main Study)

Directions: Please rate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements in regard to the conflict scenario you read.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

1. The conflict scenario is realistic.
2. The conflict scenario is believable.
3. The conflict scenario commonly occurs.

Parent's Manipulated Conflict Strategy Messages (Pilot Study Only)

Directions: Please rate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements in regard to the parent's message you just read.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

1. The parent's response to the conflict is realistic.
2. The parent's response to the conflict is believable.
3. The parent's response to the conflict commonly occurs.

Child's Responding Conflict Strategy Messages (Pilot Study Only)

Directions: Please rate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements in regard to the child's message you just read.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

1. The child's response to the conflict is realistic.
2. The child's response to the conflict is believable.

3. The child's response to the conflict commonly occurs.

APPENDIX D

Manipulation Check of Messages

Parent's Message (Pilot Study & Main Study)

Pilot Study: If you had to pick one description of the parent's response to the conflict that you just read, which of the following do you perceive the parent's response to be?

1. Positive
2. Negative
3. Avoidant

Main Study: If you had to pick one description of your parent's response to the conflict that you just read, which of the following do you perceive your parent's response to be?

1. Positive
2. Negative
3. Avoidant

Child's Message (Pilot Study Only)

If you had to pick one description of the child's response, which would it be?

1. Positive
2. Negative
3. Avoidant

APPENDIX E

Positive Valence Scale

Directions Pilot Study: Please rate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements in regard to the parent's message.

Directions Main Study: Please rate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements with your parent's response in mind.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

Pilot Study's Stem: This parent's response to the conflict would be very.....

Main Study's Stem: My parent's response to the conflict would be very.....

Table A1

Results from an Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Positive Valence Scale

Positive Valence Scale Items	Factor Loading
5. good.	**.91**
7. cooperative.	**.90**
3. encouraging.	**.89**
10. favorable.	**.89**
1. positive.	**.89**
4. helpful.	**.87**
6. desirable.	**.86**
9. sympathetic.	**.85**
8. pleasant.	**.84**
2. constructive.	**.79**

Note. The extraction method was principal axis factoring with an oblique (promax with Kaiser normalization) rotation. Factor loadings above .60 are in bold. No items were reverse scored.

APPENDIX F

Negative Valence Scale

Directions Pilot Study: Please rate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements in regard to the parent's message.

Directions Main Study: Please rate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements with your parent's response in mind.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

Pilot Study's Stem: This parent's response to the conflict would be very.....

Main Study's Stem: My parent's response to the conflict would be very.....

Table A2

Results from an Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Negative Valence Scale

Negative Valence Scale Items	Factor Loading
3. discouraging.	**.91**
7. uncooperative.	**.90**
10. unfavorable.	**.90**
5. bad.	**.90**
9. unsympathetic.	**.88**
6. undesirable.	**.88**
8. unpleasant.	**.87**
1. negative.	**.87**
2. destructive.	**.86**
4. unhelpful.	**.85**

Note. The extraction method was principal axis factoring with an oblique (promax with Kaiser normalization) rotation. Factor loadings above .60 are in bold. No items were reverse scored.

APPENDIX G

Responding Conflict Strategy Messages

Constructive #1: "I think it is important that we talk about this. It is certainly true that I have not been budgeting my money properly. I know I could do a better job at it. I promise I will work on it." (40 words)

Constructive #2: "I know I am at fault for this, and I take responsibility. I am so sorry for upsetting you, as that was not my intention. I understand that you are frustrated and I swear, I will do a better job." (40 words)

Constructive #3: "I'm fully aware that I've not been budgeting my money in an effective way. I completely understand why you are mad at me regarding this. I know I'm capable of handling my money better. Can you give me another chance?" (40 words)

Destructive #1: "Whatever, I am extremely frustrated. You always just assume I am spending my money in poor ways and you are wrong! You never listen to my opinions and just jump to conclusions instead of hearing what I have to say." (40 words)

Destructive #2: "You literally think the worst of me. You don't consider my point of view. I hate that you always think I'm spending my money on stupid stuff when that's far from the truth. I'm a student, what do you expect?" (40 words)

Destructive #3: "Why do you always do this? You always get tense whenever I need to talk to you about money. I just do not understand your frustration with me. You act like I have control over this, when I do not!" (40 words)

Avoidant #1: "I don't want to talk about this. I just need money. Can you just give me some money in the meantime? I have a lot going on in school and I do not have time to discuss this with you." (40 words)

Avoidant #2: "I seriously cannot handle this right now. I am so stressed out in classes and school. I just need money to pay my bills. There is not enough time in the day for me to have this disagreement with you." (40 words)

Avoidant #3: "I am so stressed out, right now, in school and with classes, I cannot even have this conversation with you. It's too much. I do not want to talk about this with you right now. It's too stressful for me." (40 words)

APPENDIX H

Family Communication Patterns Scale & Expanded Conformity Orientation Scale

Directions: We would like to learn more about how your family communicated while growing up. Please use this scale to indicate your agreement with the following statements.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

1. In our family we often talked about topics like politics and religion where some people disagreed with others.
2. My parents often said something like "Every member of the family should have some say in family decisions."
3. My parents often asked my opinion when the family is talking about something.
4. My parents encouraged me to challenge their ideas and beliefs.
5. My parents often said something like "You should always look at both sides of an issue."
6. I usually told my parents what I was thinking about things.
7. I could tell my parents almost anything.
8. In our family we often talked about our feelings and emotions.
9. My parents and I often had long, relaxed conversations about nothing in particular.
10. I really enjoyed talking with my parents, even when we disagreed.
11. My parents encouraged me to express my feelings.
12. My parents tended to be very open about their emotions.
13. We often talked as a family about things we had done during the day.
14. In our family, we often talked about our plans and hopes for the future.
15. My parents liked to hear my opinion, even when I didn't agree with them.
16. My parents expected us to respect our elders.
17. In our home, I was expected to speak respectfully to my parents.
18. My parents had clear expectations about how a child was supposed to behave.
19. When I was at home, I was expected to obey my parents' rules.
20. My parents insisted that I respect those who have been placed in positions of authority.
21. My parents emphasized certain attitudes that they wanted the children in our family to adopt.
22. In our home, my parents had the last word.
23. My parents expected me to trust their judgment on important matters.
24. I was expected to follow my parents' wishes.
25. My parents felt it is important to be the boss.
26. My parents became irritated with the views if they were different from their views.
27. My parents tried to persuade me to view things the way they saw them.
28. My parents said things like "You'll know better when you grow up."
29. My parents said things like "You may not understand why we are doing this right now, but someday you will."

30. My parents said things like “My ideas are right and you should not question them.”
31. In my family, family members were expected to hold similar values.
32. I was expected to adopt my parents’ views.
33. My parents encouraged me to adopt their values.
34. Our family had a particular way of seeing the world.
35. I felt pressure to adopt my parents’ views.
36. I was expected to challenge my parent’s beliefs. (R)
37. In our home, we were allowed to question my parents’ authority. (R)
38. My parents encouraged open disagreement. (R)
39. In our home, we were encouraged to question my parents’ authority. (R)

Reverse scored items are denoted with (R).

Items 1 – 15 averaged for *conversation orientation* subscale from RFCP.
Items 16 – 39 averaged for *conformity orientation* subscale from ECOS.

APPENDIX I

Past Financial Interactions Scale

Directions: We would like to learn more about your past communicative interactions with your parents about money and finances. Please use this scale to indicate your agreement with the following statements.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

Table A3

Results from an Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Past Financial Interactions Scale

Past Financial Interactions Scale Items	Factor loading		
	1	2	3
Factor 1: Past Constructive			
9. My parent(s) talk about finances in front of me in a very nonconfrontational way.	**.91**	-.15	-.16
10. Both my parent(s) and I try to discuss the financial matter in an open way.	**.83**	-.20	-.16
11. My parent(s) help me figure out a way to solve a financial problem when I encounter them.	**.80**	-.21	-.08
12. My parent(s) communicate openly about financial decisions with me.	**.79**	-.27	-.05
Factor 2: Past Destructive			
3. My parent(s) usually criticize me for how I handle my money.	-.04	**.91**	.04
4. My parent(s) typically don't agree with how I spend my money and get upset about it.	-.08	**.90**	.10
1. My parent(s) usually argue about finances and money in front of me.	-.08	**.90**	-.08
2. My parent(s) get really defensive whenever I need to talk about my finances.	-.22	**.87**	.12
Factor 3: Past Avoidant			
7. My parent(s) and I don't talk about financial things.	-.21	.05	**.88**
6. Both my parent(s) and I try to shy away from discussing financial matters.	-.16	.10	**.86**
8. Both my parent(s) and I avoid financial conversations.	-.20	.10	**.86**
5. My parent(s) never talk about finances in front of me.	-.06	-.03	**.80**

Note. The extraction method was principal axis factoring with an oblique (promax with Kaiser normalization) rotation. Factor loadings above .60 are in bold. No items were reverse scored.

APPENDIX J

Parent's Expected Conflict Strategy Scale

Directions: Below are three common ways to handle financial disagreements or financial conflict in parent-child relationships. Please choose the ONE that best describes your [mother/father].

1. My [father/mother] discuss financial issues, but it is important to [him/her] to display a lot of self-control and to remain calm. [He/She] prefer to let others know that their opinions and emotions are valued even if they are different from [his/hers]. When arguing, [he/she] try to spend a lot of time validating others as well as trying to find a compromise. [Constructive, 62 words]

2. My [father/mother] can get pretty upset when [he/she] talking about finances . When [he/she] is upset at times, [he/she] insults others by using something like sarcasm or put downs. During intense financial discussions, [he/she] finds it difficult to listen to what others are saying because [he/she] is trying to make [his/her] point. Sometimes [he/she] has intensely negative feelings toward others when there is financial conflict. [Destructive, 62 words]

3. My [father/mother] avoids financial conflict issues. [He/She] doesn't think there is much to be gained from getting openly angry with others. In fact, to [him/her] a lot of talking about emotions and difficult financial issues seems to make matter worse. [He/She] thinks that if people just relax, these problems would have a way of working themselves out. [Avoidant, 57 words]

APPENDIX K

Productiveness of Financial Conversations Scale

Directions: Please rate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

Table A4

Results from an Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Productiveness of Financial Conversations Scale

Productiveness of Financial Conversations Scale Items	Factor Loading
4. I don't like financial conversations with my [mother/father].(R)	**.84**
3. I'm scared to talk to my [mother/father] about finances. (R)	**.81**
1. I feel that I can discuss finances with my [mother/father] productively.	**.79**
2. I feel that my [mother/father] gets anxious whenever I bring up money. (R)	**.76**
5. I feel like I can talk with my [mother/father] about financial issues because she helps me constructively with it.	**.75**

Note. The extraction method was principal axis factoring with an oblique (promax with Kaiser normalization) rotation. Factor loadings above .60 are in bold. Reverse scored items are denoted with (R).

APPENDIX L

Severity Scale

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Directions: Please rate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements in regard to the conflict scenario you read.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

1. I would perceive this conflict situation as serious.
2. I would perceive this conflict situation as severe.
3. I would perceive this conflict situation as upsetting.

APPENDIX M

Participant's Initial Conflict Strategy Scale

Directions: Please rate the extent to which you would enter this conflict conversation saying the following statements to your parent.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

Stem: I see myself saying…

Table A5

Results from an Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Participant's Initial Conflict Strategy Scale

Initial Conflict Strategy Scale Items	Factor loading		
	1	2	3
Factor 1: Initial Constructive			
8. "I recognize that I could be handling my money better."	**.88**	-.14	-.07
9. "There are things I could work on to budget more effectively."	**.85**	-.09	-.08
7. "I understand where you're coming from."	**.83**	-.14	-.07
10. "I appreciate all that you do for me."	**.83**	-.27	-.15
1. "What exactly frustrates you regarding my spending habits?"	**.77**	.19	-.15
2. "I know you disagree with how I've been spending my money lately."	**.74**	.02	-.04
4. "I can see why you are annoyed with my spending habits lately."	**.68**	-.14	-.05
5. "I'd like to discuss my money situation with you."	**.65**	-.07	.01
3. "I'm sorry you're frustrated with me."	**.64**	-.09	.02
6. "I think if we can just sensibly talk about it, we can come to a resolution."	**.61**	.11	-.02
Factor 2: Initial Destructive			
8. "You never understand me and it annoys me."	-.08	**.86**	.20
10. "You're doing this to upset me."	-.02	**.80**	.08

Table A5 Continued

Initial Conflict Strategy Scale Items Continued	Factor loading		
	1	2	3
7. “You won’t place yourself in my situation and it’s not fair.”	-.07	**.80**	.16
6. “Ugh, you always do this.”	-.08	**.79**	.25
5. “I don’t know why you’re so frustrated at me.”	-.12	**.74**	.08
4. “If you would just help me pay my bills, everything would be ok.”	-.07	**.71**	.05
1. “You always get tense whenever I need to talk to you about money.”	-.09	**.70**	.13
3. “Whenever we talk about money, you always assume I’ve done something wrong.”	-.14	**.69**	-.01
9. “I have no control over this.”	-.12	**.68**	.11
2. “It’s not my fault that I don’t have enough money. I’m a student, what do you expect?”	-.06	**.61**	.04
Factor 3: Initial Avoidant			
9. “I’m overwhelmed and can’t deal with this right now.”	.02	.20	**.78**
8. “I’ve been so stressed lately. I can’t handle talking about it.”	.01	.07	**.77**
5. “We’re never going to agree on this, so I don’t know why I’m bothering bringing this up.”	-.05	.21	**.73**
7. I would just avoid talking to my parent because it’s not going to help.	-.11	-.06	**.72**
10. “You have no idea how much work I have to do and worrying about money is the last thing I need to be dealing with.”	-.04	.08	**.71**
2. “I don’t want to talk about my spending habits, I just need some money.”	-.15	.13	**.66**
4. I would postpone the discussion for as long as possible.	-.04	-.03	**.65**
1. “I’d rather not get into this argument with you at the moment.”	.07	-.14	**.64**
6. “It’s not a big deal.”	-.09	.26	**.63**
3. I wouldn’t say anything.	-.15	.06	**.61**

Note. The extraction method was principal axis factoring with an oblique (promax with Kaiser normalization) rotation. Factor loadings above .60 are in bold. No items were reverse coded.

APPENDIX N

Expected Behavior Scale

Did you expect your parent to handle the conversation the way they did in the message you read?

1. Yes, I expected my parent to handle the conversation like the message I read.
2. No, I did not expect my parent to handle the conversation like the message I read.

APPENDIX O

Degree of Unexpectedness Scale

Directions: Please rate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements with your parent's message in mind.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

Table A6

Results from an Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Degree of Unexpectedness Scale

Degree of Unexpectedness Scale Items	Factor Loading
5. My parent acted as I expected him/her to handle this conflict situation. (R)	**.85**
4. My parent behaved the way I anticipated him/her to. (R)	**.84**
2. My parent's behavior was surprising, as I did not anticipate him/her to react this way.	**.82**
3. My parent engaged in his/her normal conversational behavior when dealing with conflict. (R)	**.80**
6. My parent's communication during this conflict would catch me off guard.	**.75**
1. My parent behaved in a way that was unexpected.	**.64**

Note. The extraction method was principal axis factoring with an oblique (promax with Kaiser normalization) rotation. Factor loadings above .60 are in bold. Reverse scored items are denoted with (R).

APPENDIX P

Ambivalence Scale

Directions: Please rate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements in regard to your parent's message.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

Table A7

Results from an Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Ambivalence Scale

Ambivalence Scale Items	Factor Loading
1. I have mixed feelings regarding how my parent handled this conflict.	**.85**
3. I have, at the same time, both positive and negative feelings regarding how my parent handled this conflict.	**.82**
5. I feel conflicted with my parent's response to this conflict.	**.81**
4. I feel both satisfied and unsatisfied with my parent's response to this conflict.	**.76**
2. I feel divided with respect to how my parent handled this conflict.	**.75**

Note. The extraction method was principal axis factoring with an oblique (promax with Kaiser normalization) rotation. Factor loadings above .60 are in bold. No items were reverse scored.

APPENDIX Q

Likelihood of Responding Scale

Directions: Please rate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

[Displays 1 of 9 messages, one at a time, but will repeat these items for all 9 messages]

1. It is likely that I would use this message to respond to my parent.
2. I would say something similar to this to my parent in response to their handling of the conflict.
3. I can see myself saying this to my parent if they said what I just read.
4. It is possible I would say this to my parent in response to their handling of the conflict.
5. I would never say this to my parent as a response to their handling of the conflict. (R)

Reverse scored items are denoted with (R).

APPENDIX R

Spendthrift-Tightwad Scale

1. Which of the following descriptions fits you better?

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**
Tightwad					**About the same or neither**					**Spendthrift**

2. Some people have trouble limiting their spending: they often spend money—for example, on clothes, meals, vacations, phone calls—when they do better not to.
   Other people have trouble spending money. Perhaps because spending money makes them anxious, they often don't spend money on things they should spend it on.
   a. How well does the first description fit you? That is, do you have trouble limiting your spending?

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Never	**Rarely**	**Sometimes**	**Often**	**Always**

   b. How well does the second description fit you? That is, do you have trouble spending money? (R)

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Never	**Rarely**	**Sometimes**	**Often**	**Always**

3. Following is a scenario describing the behavior of two shoppers. After reading about each shopper, please answer the question that follows.
   Mr. A is accompanying a good friend who is on a shopping spree at a local mall. When they enter a large department store, Mr. A sees that the store has a "one-day-only-sale" where everything is priced 10-60% off. He realizes he doesn't need anything, yet can't resist and ends up spending almost $100 on stuff.
   Mr. B is accompanying a good friend who is on a shopping spree at a local mall. When they enter a large department store, Mr. B sees that the store has a "one-day-only-sale" where everything is priced 10-60% off. He figures he can get great deals on many items that he needs, yet the thought of spending the money keeps him from buying the stuff.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Mr. A		**About the same or neither**		**Mr. B**

   a. In terms of your own behavior, who are you more similar to, Mr. A or Mr. B? (R)

Reverse scored items are denoted with (R).

APPENDIX S

Perceived Sensitivity Scale

Directions: Please indicate your agreement with the following statements.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

1. When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening.
2. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget. (R)
3. I have sometimes doubted my ability as a lover. (R)
4. I have said something bad about a friend behind his/her back. (R)
5. I am very confident of my judgements.
6. I am a completely rational person.
7. I always know why I like things.
8. I don't gossip about other people's business.
9. There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone. (R)
10. I never regret my decisions.
11. I sometimes lose out on things because I can't make up my mind soon enough. (R)
12. I never take things that don't belong to me.
13. I sometimes tell lies if I have to. (R)
14. I have not always been honest with myself. (R)
15. It is hard for me to shut off a disturbing thought. (R)
16. I never cover up my mistakes.

Reverse scored items are denoted with (R).

Items 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 12, 13, and 16 averaged for *impression management* subscale.
Items 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, and 15 averaged for *self-deceptive enhancement* subscale.

APPENDIX T

Financial Dependence Scale

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Never	**Very Infrequently**	**Infrequently**	**Sometimes**	**Frequently**	**Very Frequently**	**All the Time**

Table A8

Results from an Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Financial Dependence Scale

Financial Dependence Scale Items	Factor Loading
1. How often does your parent(s) provide you financial support?	**.82**
3. How often do you receive financial support from your parent(s) to pay college tuition?	**.80**
2. How often do you receive financial support from your parent(s) to help pay for rent and utilities?	**.80**
5. How often do you receive financial support from your parent(s) to pay for health expenses?	**.80**
4. How often do you receive financial support from your parent(s) to pay for transportation (e.g., purchase of car, car payments, car insurance, other forms of transportation)?	**.75**

Note. The extraction method was principal axis factoring with an oblique (promax with Kaiser normalization) rotation. Factor loadings above .60 are in bold. No items are reverse scored.

APPENDIX U

Demographic Questions

Parent's Marital Status

1. Please indicate your parents' current marital status.
    1. Currently married to each other
    2. Divorced
    3. Separated
    4. Legally separated
    5. Cohabitating (i.e., living together, but not married)
    6. My father is a widower.
    7. My mother is a widower.

Parent Identification

1. Which parent do you identify the most with?
    - Your mother
    - Your father

Decision Maker [only receives if parent's are currently married to each other]

1. Which parent makes the major decisions in your family?
    1. Your mother
    2. Your father
    3. Both my mother and father

Financial Decision Maker [only receives if parent's are currently married to each other]

1. Which parent is responsible for the day-to-day decisions about money?
    1. Your mother
    2. Your father
    3. Both your mother and father
    4. I don't know/not sure

Comparing Parents Financially [only receives if parent's are currently married to each other]

1. Which parent do you think brings in more financially?
    1. Your mother
    2. Your father
    3. Both your mother and father contribute equally to the finances
    4. I don't know/not sure

Financial Control [only receives if parent's are currently married to each other]

1. Which parent is responsible for making billing payments in the household?
    1. Your mother
    2. Your father
    3. Both your mother and father
    4. I don't know/not sure

Age

1. What is your age? Please type your age as a numerical value in the box provided (e.g., 18, 26).

   _____

Biological Sex

1. What is your biological sex?
    1. Male
    2. Female

Gender

1. Please click the option that best describes your gender.
    1. Extremely feminine
    2. Moderately feminine
    3. Slightly feminine
    4. Androgynous
    5. Slightly masculine
    6. Moderately masculine
    7. Extremely masculine

Living while growing up

1. Please click on the response that best describes your living situation while growing up.
    1. My mother and father lived together and I lived with them.
    2. My mother and father did not live together, but I primarily lived with my mother.
    3. My mother and father did not live together, but I primarily lived with my father.
    4. My mother and father did not live together, but I spent 50% of my time living with each of them.
    5. I did not live with my mother or my father.
    6. Other

Current Living Situation

1. Do you live with your parent(s) during the academic school year?
    1. Yes, I live with both my mother and father during the academic school year.
    2. Yes, I live with only my mother during the academic school year.
    3. Yes, I live with only my father during the academic school year.
    4. No, I do not live with either of my mother or father during the academic school year.

Socioeconomic Class

1. During your growing-up years, which socioeconomic class best describes your family?
    1. Wealthy
    2. Upper-middle class
    3. Middle-class
    4. Lower middle/Working class
    5. Poor

Race

1. Which of the following choices best describes your race?
    1. White/Caucasian
    2. Hispanic or Latino
    3. Black or African American
    4. Native American or American Indian
    5. Asian or Pacific Islander
    6. Other or prefer not to answer

Class

1. What is your class standing?
    1. Freshman
    2. Sophomore
    3. Junior
    4. 4th year Senior
    5. 5th year Senior
    6. Beyond 5th year Senior
    7. Graduate Student

Work

1. Do you typically work for pay in the academic year and/or summer?
    1. Yes
    2. No

Dependent

1. Are you declared as a dependent or independent on taxes?
    1. Dependent
    2. Independent
    3. I don't know/not sure

Communication Major

1. Are you a communication major?
    1. Yes
    2. No

International Student

1. Are you an international student?
    1. Yes
    2. No

Table 1

Pilot Study's Descriptive and Inferential Statistics for Perceived Realism

	M (*SD*)	*t*-value	df	95% CI	Cohen's *d*	*r*
Conflict Scenario	6.65 (0.50)	40.92	41	3.00, 3.31	12.78	.99
Parent Constructive	5.39 (1.25)	9.82	41	1.50, 2.28	3.07	.84
Parent Destructive	5.98 (1.09)	14.78	41	2.14, 2.81	4.62	.92
Parent Avoidant	5.00 (1.45)	6.53	41	1.01, 1.91	2.04	.71
Responding Constructive	6.29 (1.23)	19.95	123	1.10, 1.44	3.60	.87
Responding Destructive	6.44 (1.33)	24.08	123	1.22, 1.51	4.34	.91
Responding Avoidant	6.11 (1.31)	18.52	123	1.16, 1.39	3.34	.86

Note: M = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *t* = *t*-test statistic; df = degrees of freedom; CI = confidence intervals; Cohen's *d* and *r* = effect sizes; all tests were significant at $p < .001$.

Table 2

Pilot Study's Manipulation Check of Parent's Manipulated Conflict Strategy Messages

Count

		Manipulation Check			
		Constructive	Destructive	Avoidant	Total
Correct	Constructive	41	0	1	42
	Destructive	1	40	1	42
	Avoidant	4	0	38	42
Total		46	40	40	126

Table 3

Pilot Study's Manipulation Check of Responding Conflict Strategy Messages

Count

		Manipulation Check			
		Constructive	Destructive	Avoidant	Total
Correct	Constructive Message 1	41	0	1	42
	Constructive Message 2	41	0	1	42
	Constructive Message 3	42	0	0	42
	Destructive Message 1	0	42	0	42
	Destructive Message 2	0	41	1	42
	Destructive Message 3	0	42	0	42
	Avoidant Message 1	1	0	41	42
	Avoidant Message 2	2	0	41	42
	Avoidant Message 3	1	0	41	42
Total		128	125	126	378

Table 4

Zero-Order Correlations for All Key Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Conversation	--										
2. Conformity	-0.20**	--									
3. Positive Valence	0.21**	-0.09	--								
4. Negative Valence	-0.17**	0.13**	-0.75**	--							
5. Ambivalence	-0.03	0.08	-0.25**	-0.41**	--						
6. Unexpectedness	-0.12*	-0.32	-0.23**	0.24**	0.18**	--					
7. I. Constructive	0.39**	0.14**	0.12*	-0.03	0.10*	-0.12*	--				
8. I. Destructive	-0.08	0.02	-0.02	0.28**	0.27**	-0.02	-0.14**	--			
9. I. Avoidance	-0.18**	0.13**	-0.12*	0.31**	0.37**	0.01	-0.17**	0.68**	--		
10. R. Constructive	0.25**	0.13**	0.87	-0.07	0.05	-0.08	0.68**	-0.28**	-0.23**	--	
11. R. Destructive	-0.09	-0.04**	-0.16**	0.33**	0.22**	-0.03	-0.23**	0.68**	0.56**	-0.31**	--
12. R. Avoidance	-0.04	-0.76**	-0.06*	0.21**	0.22**	-0.02	-0.14**	0.55**	0.53**	-0.20**	0.66**

Note. Conversation = conversation orientation; Conformity = conformity orientation; I. = Initial; R. = Responding; *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Likelihood of Use of Responding Conflict Strategy Messages

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Constructive Message 1	5.19	1.25
Constructive Message 2	5.06	1.39
Constructive Message 3	5.09	1.33
Destructive Message 1	2.98	1.58
Destructive Message 2	2.91	1.55
Destructive Message 3	2.91	1.50
Avoidant Message 1	3.06	1.48
Avoidant Message 2	3.08	1.51
Avoidant Message 3	3.08	1.58

Table 6

Descriptive and Inferential Statistics for Perceived Realism and Severity of Conflict Scenario

	M (*SD*)	*t*-value	df	*p*-value	95% CI	Cohen's *d*	*r*
Realism	4.81 (1.39)	19.46	422	< .001**	1.18, 1.44	1.89	.69
Severity	5.40 (1.31)	21.57	421	< .001**	1.07, 1.28	2.10	.72

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *t* = *t*-test statistic; df = degrees of freedom; CI = confidence intervals; Cohen's *d* and *r* = effect sizes; ***p* < .001.

Table 7

Manipulation Check of Parental Condition

Count

		Manipulation Check		
		Mother	Father	Total
Correct	Mother Condition	214	9	223
	Father Condition	21	179	200
Total		235	188	423

Table 8

Manipulation Check of Parent's Manipulated Conflict Strategy Message

Count

		Manipulation Check			
		Constructive	Destructive	Avoidant	Total
Correct	Constructive	131	6	14	141
	Destructive	32	90	19	141
	Avoidant	46	6	89	141
Total		199	102	122	423

Table 9

Preliminary Analyses of Children's Biological Sex Differences on Main Variables

	Males *M* (*SD*)	Females *M* (*SD*)	*t*-value	*p*	95% CI	Cohen's *d*	*r*
Conversation	4.79 (1.05)	4.61 (1.38)	1.55	.122	-.05, .42	0.15	0.08
Conformity	4.92 (0.81)	5.09 (0.92)	-1.93	.055	-.33, .01	0.19	0.09
Initial Constructive	4.82 (0.98)	5.06 (1.06)	2.34	.021*	.36, .43	0.23	0.11
Initial Destructive	3.14 (1.22)	3.17 (1.26)	-.259	.796	-.27, .21	0.03	0.01
Initial Avoidant	3.49 (1.21)	3.62 (1.16)	-1.15	.253	-.36, .09	0.11	0.06
Unexpectedness	3.78 (1.15)	3.77 (1.32)	.149	.882	-.22, .26	0.01	0.01
Positive Valence	4.45 (1.35)	4.18 (1.49)	2.03	.043*	.01, .56	0.20	0.09
Negative Valence	3.47 (1.42)	3.59 (1.58)	.796	.427	-.41, .17	0.08	0.04
Respond Constructive	4.94 (1.04)	5.25 (1.18)	2.89	.004*	2.14, 2.81	0.20	0.14
Respond Destructive	2.91 (1.26)	2.94 (1.36)	-.086	.932	-.26, .24	0.01	0.01
Respond Avoidantly	2.99 (1.23)	3.00 (1.31)	-.124	.901	-.27, .23	0.01	0.01

Note. Conversation = conversation orientation; Conformity = conformity orientation; degrees of freedom = 421 ; *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *t* = *t*-test statistic; CI = confidence intervals; Cohen's *d* and *r* = effect sizes; *$p < .05$.

Table 10

Model Coefficients for the Moderated Moderation of Conversation Orientations Effect on Responding Constructively based on the Degree of Unexpectedness and Perceived Negative Valence

		Coeff.	*SE*	*t*	*p*
R_2 = .1192, *MSE* =1.14					
Constant	i_y	5.06	0.06	90.33	.0000
Conver.	b_1	0.18	0.05	3.59	.0004
Neg. Val.	b_2	-0.08	0.05	-1.63	.1039
Unexpected	b_3	0.02	0.04	0.51	.6131
Conver. x Neg. Val.	b_4	-0.08	0.03	-2.39	.0172
Conver. x Unexpected	b_5	0.05	0.03	1.77	.0783
Unexpected x Neg. Val.	b_6	0.08	0.02	3.16	.0017
Conver. x Unexpected x Neg. Val.	b_7	0.03	0.02	1.98	.0482

Note. Conver. = conversation orientation; Neg. Val. = negative valence; Unexpected = degree of unexpectedness; *SE* = standard error.

Table 11

Model Coefficients for the Moderated Moderation of Conversation Orientations Effect on Responding Destructively based on the Degree of Unexpectedness and Perceived Negative Valence

		Coeff.	*SE*	*t*	*p*
R_2 = .1382, *MSE* =1.5174					
Constant	i_y	2.94	0.06	48.07	.0000
Conver.	b_1	-0.03	0.05	-0.62	.5352
Neg. Val.	b_2	0.30	0.04	7.00	.0000
Unexpected	b_3	-0.10	0.05	-1.91	.0571
Conver. x Neg. Val.	b_4	-0.27	0.03	-0.93	.3506
Conver. x Unexpected	b_5	-0.01	0.03	-0.98	.9217
Unexpected x Neg. Val.	b_6	-0.06	0.03	-2.04	.0416
Conver. x Unexpected x Neg. Val.	b_7	0.02	0.01	1.04	.3001

Note. Conver. = conversation orientation; Neg. Val. = negative valence; Unexpected = degree of unexpectedness; *SE* = standard error.

Table 12

Model Coefficients for the Moderated Moderation of Conversation Orientations Effect on Responding Avoidantly based on the Degree of Unexpectedness and Perceived Negative Valence

		Coeff.	*SE*	*t*	*p*
R_2 = .0622, *MSE* =1.55					
Constant	i_y	3.02	0.06	46.64	.0000
Conver.	b_1	0.06	0.05	1.06	.2888
Neg. Val.	b_2	0.19	0.05	3.65	.0003
Unexpected	b_3	-0.05	0.06	-0.89	.3740
Conver. x Neg. Val.	b_4	-0.04	0.04	-0.99	.3226
Conver. x Unexpected	b_5	-0.01	0.04	-0.13	.8963
Unexpected x Neg. Val.	b_6	-0.06	0.03	-1.90	.0584
Conver. x Unexpected x Neg. Val.	b_7	-0.01	0.02	-0.67	.5002

Note. Conver. = conversation orientation; Neg. Val. = negative valence; Unexpected = degree of unexpectedness; *SE* = standard error.

Table 13

Model Coefficients for the Moderated Moderation of Conformity Orientations Effect on Responding Destructively based on the Degree of Unexpectedness and Perceived Positive Valence

		Coeff.	*SE*	*t*	*p*
R_2 = .0809, *MSE* =1.5212					
Constant	i_y	2.07	0.26	7.95	.0000
Conform.	b_1	-0.17	0.07	-2.34	.0198
Pos. Val.	b_2	-0.01	0.05	-0.01	.9889
Unexpected	b_3	-0.04	0.06	-0.62	.5342
Conform. x Pos. Val.	b_4	-0.05	0.05	-0.86	.3877
Conform. x Unexpected	b_5	-0.07	0.06	-1.35	.1782
Unexpected x Pos. Val.	b_6	0.06	0.03	2.15	.0318
Conform. x Unexpected x Pos. Val.	b_7	-0.04	0.02	-1.66	.0946

Note. Conform. = conformity orientation; Pos. Val. = positive valence; Unexpected = degree of unexpectedness; *SE* = standard error.

Table 14

Model Coefficients for the Moderated Moderation of Conformity Orientations Effect on Responding Avoidantly based on the Degree of Unexpectedness and Perceived Positive Valence

		Coeff.	*SE*	*t*	*p*
R_2 = .0622, *MSE* =1.55					
Constant	i_y	3.04	0.07	46.67	.0000
Conform.	b_1	-0.16	0.07	-2.11	.0357
Pos. Val.	b_2	-0.04	0.06	-0.74	.4542
Unexpected	b_3	-0.01	0.06	-0.20	.8407
Conform. x Pos. Val.	b_4	-0.05	0.06	-0.85	.3947
Conform. x Unexpected	b_5	-0.06	0.06	-1.13	.2603
Unexpected x Pos. Val.	b_6	0.09	0.03	2.72	.0069
Conform. x Unexpected x Pos. Val.	b_7	-0.06	0.03	-2.34	.0191

Note. Conform. = conformity orientation; Pos. Val. = positive valence; Unexpected = degree of unexpectedness; *SE* = standard error.

Table 15

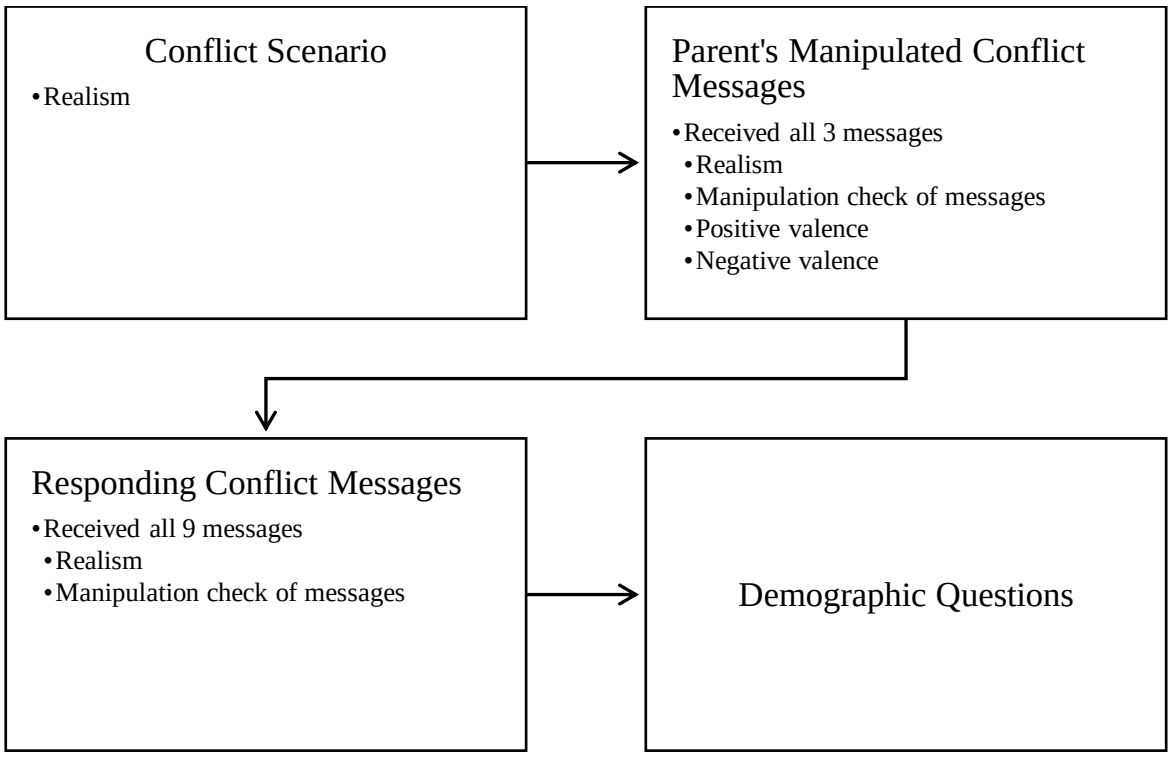
Model Coefficients for the Moderated Moderation of Conformity Orientations Effect on Responding Constructively based on the Degree of Unexpectedness and Perceived Positive Valence

		Coeff.	*SE*	*t*	*p*
R_2 = .0971, *MSE* =1.17					
Constant	i_y	5.06	0.06	94.39	.0000
Conform.	b_1	0.20	0.06	3.16	.0017
Pos. Val.	b_2	0.05	0.04	1.05	.2962
Unexpected	b_3	-0.09	0.05	-1.93	.0545
Conform. x Pos. Val.	b_4	-0.01	0.03	-0.25	.7994
Conform. x Unexpected	b_5	0.15	0.05	3.35	.0009
Unexpected x Pos. Val.	b_6	-0.11	0.03	-4.07	.0001
Conform. x Unexpected x Pos. Val.	b_7	0.06	0.02	-2.64	.0086

Note. Conform. = conformity orientation; Pos. Val. = positive valence; Unexpected = degree of unexpectedness; *SE* = standard error.

Figure 1

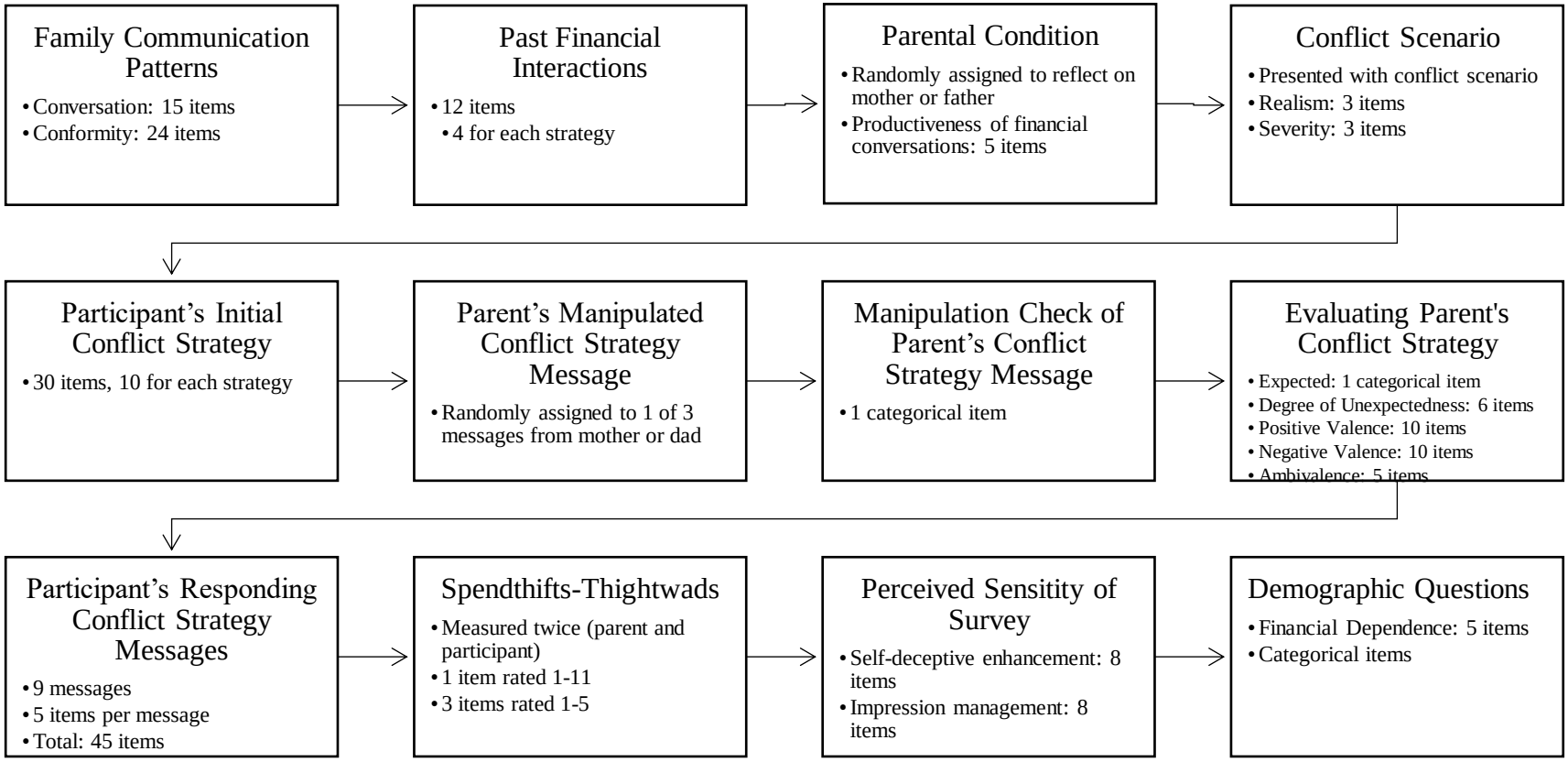
Survey Flow of Pilot Study



Note. The scales used are located as bullet points under the phase they were tested in on the survey. All items rated 1-7 with higher degrees indicate greater degrees of the construct of interest, unless otherwise mentioned.

Figure 2

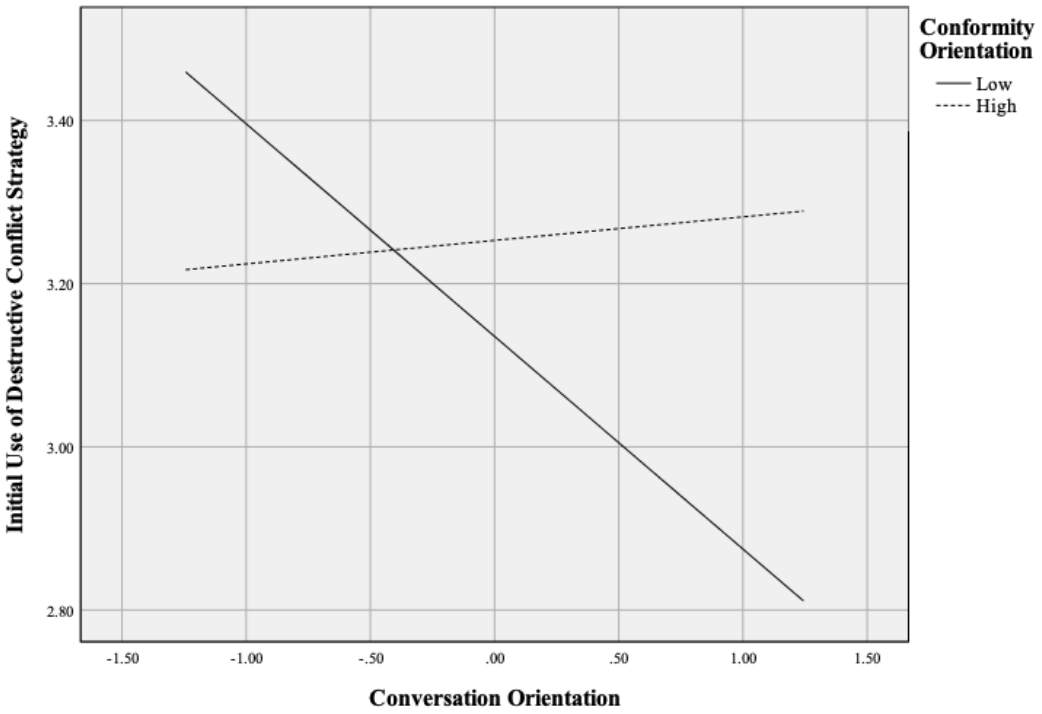
Survey Flow of Main Study



Note. The scales used are located as bullet points under the phase they were tested in on the survey. All items rated 1-7 with higher degrees indicate greater degrees of the construct of interest, unless otherwise mentioned.

Figure 3

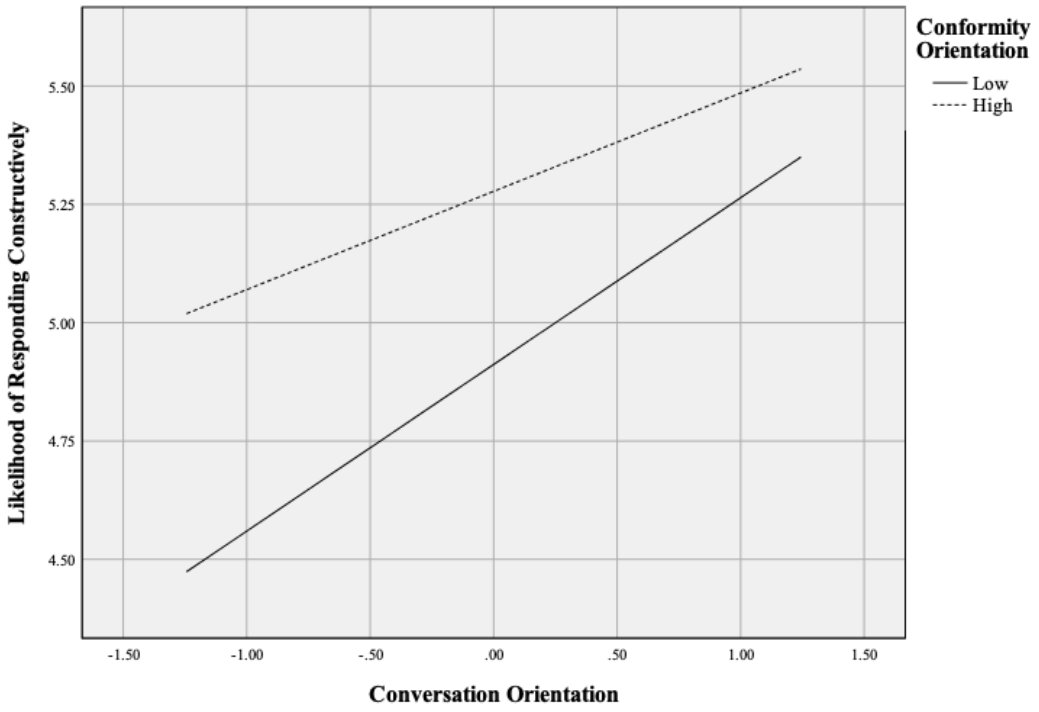
Simple Moderation of Conversation and Conformity Orientations Interaction on Initial Use of Destructive Conflict Strategy



Note. Conversation and conformity orientations were mean centered prior to analyses. Values for conversation and conformity orientations are ±1 standard deviation from the mean.

Figure 4

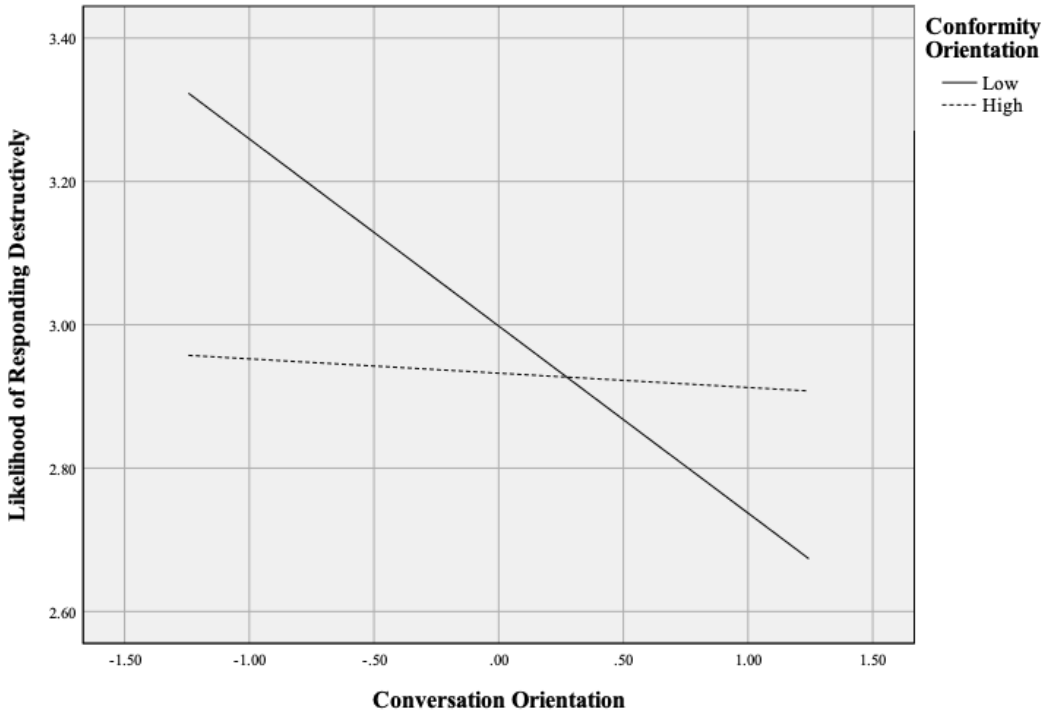
Simple Moderation of Conversation and Conformity Orientations Interaction on Responding Constructively



Note. Conversation and conformity orientations were mean centered prior to analyses. Values for conversation and conformity orientations are ±1 standard deviation from the mean.

Figure 5

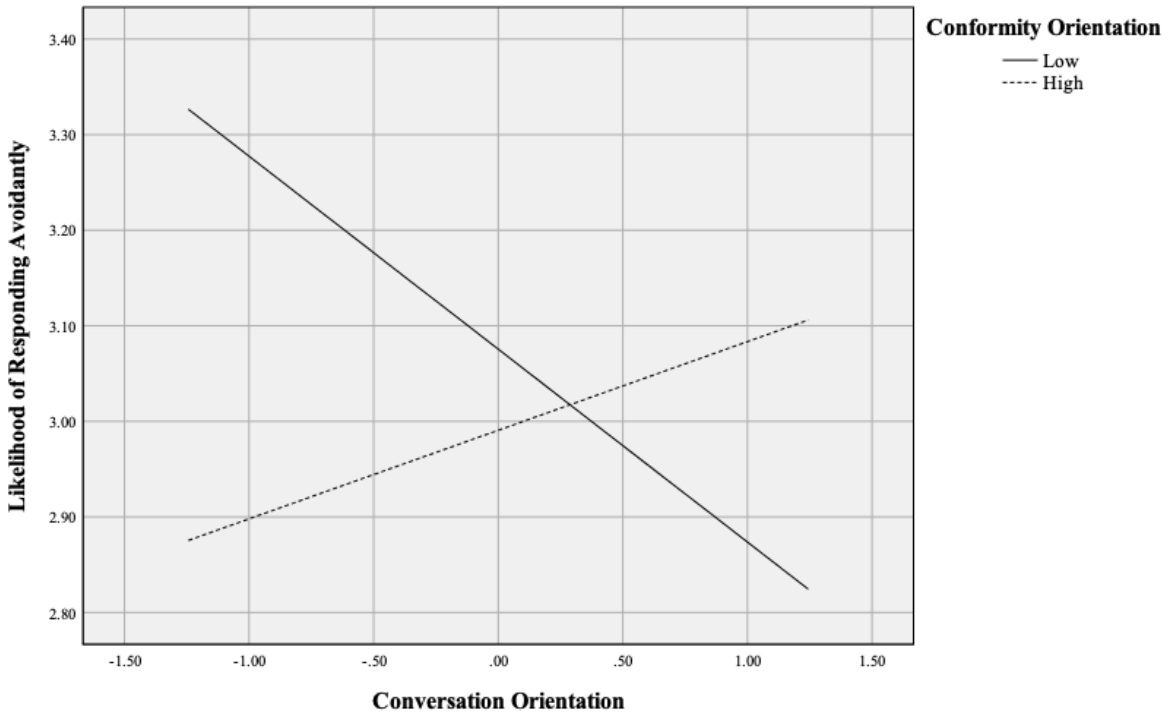
Simple Moderation of Conversation and Conformity Orientations Interaction on Responding Destructively



Note. Conversation and conformity orientations were mean centered prior to analyses. Values for conversation and conformity orientations are ±1 standard deviation from the mean.

Figure 6

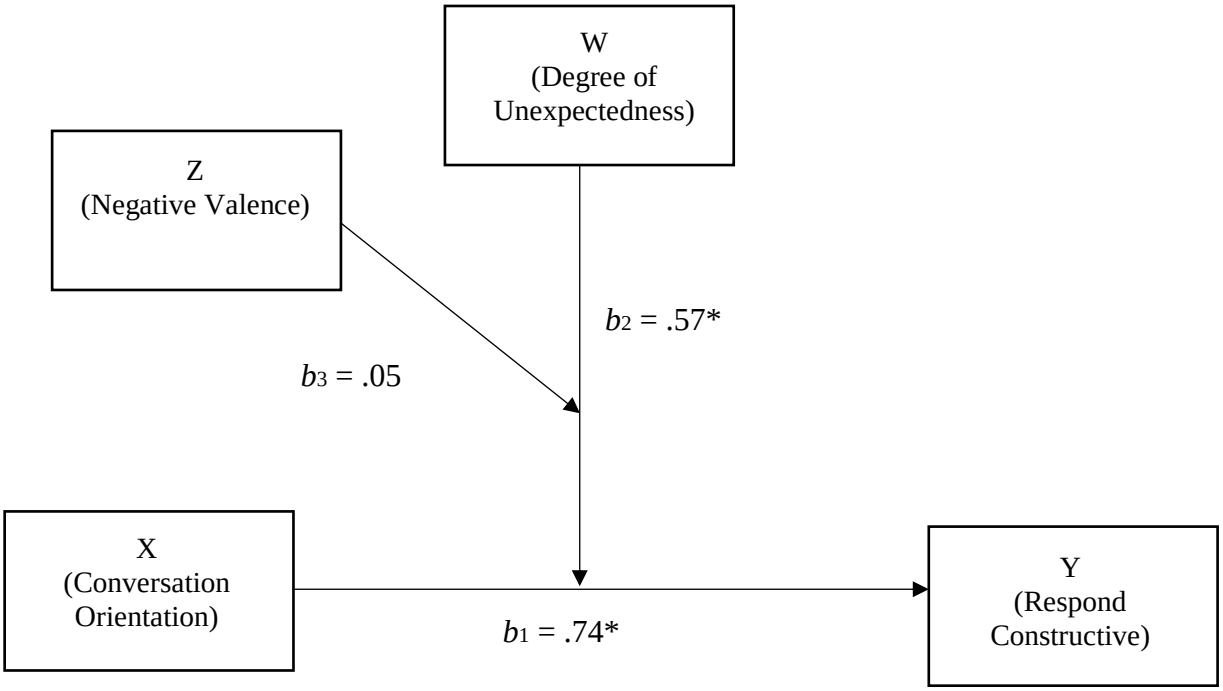
Simple Moderation of Conversation and Conformity Orientations Interaction on Responding Avoidantly



Note. Conversation and conformity orientations were mean centered prior to analyses. Values for conversation and conformity orientations are ± 1 standard deviation from the mean.

Figure 7

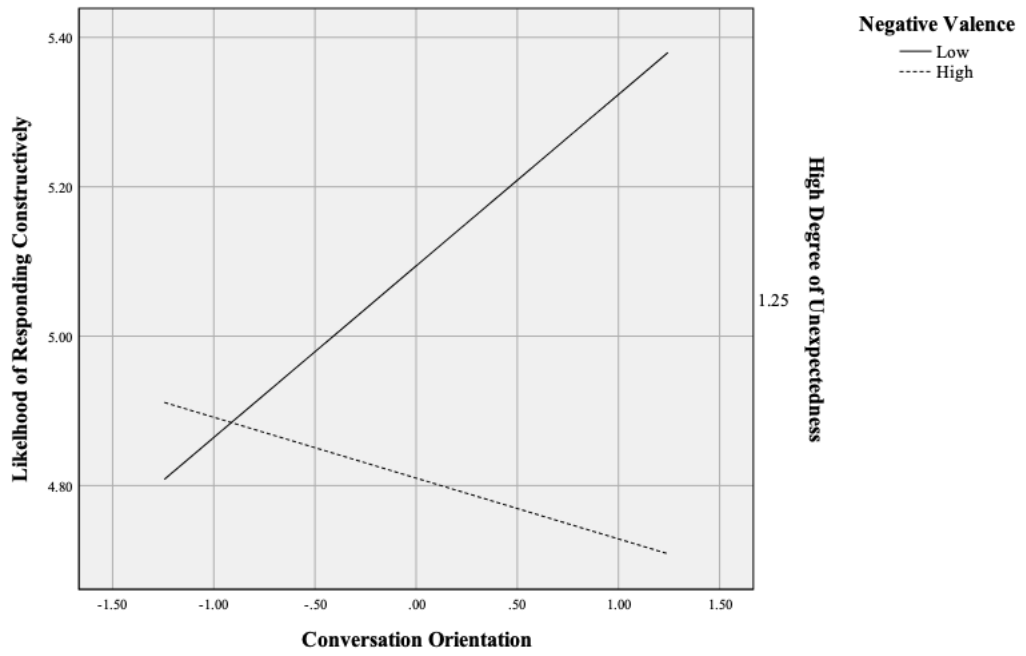
Simple Effects for the Moderated Moderation of Conversation Orientations Effect on Responding Constructively based on the Degree of Unexpectedness and Perceived Negative Valence



Note. Ambivalence was a covariate; *significant at the 0.05 level.

Figure 8

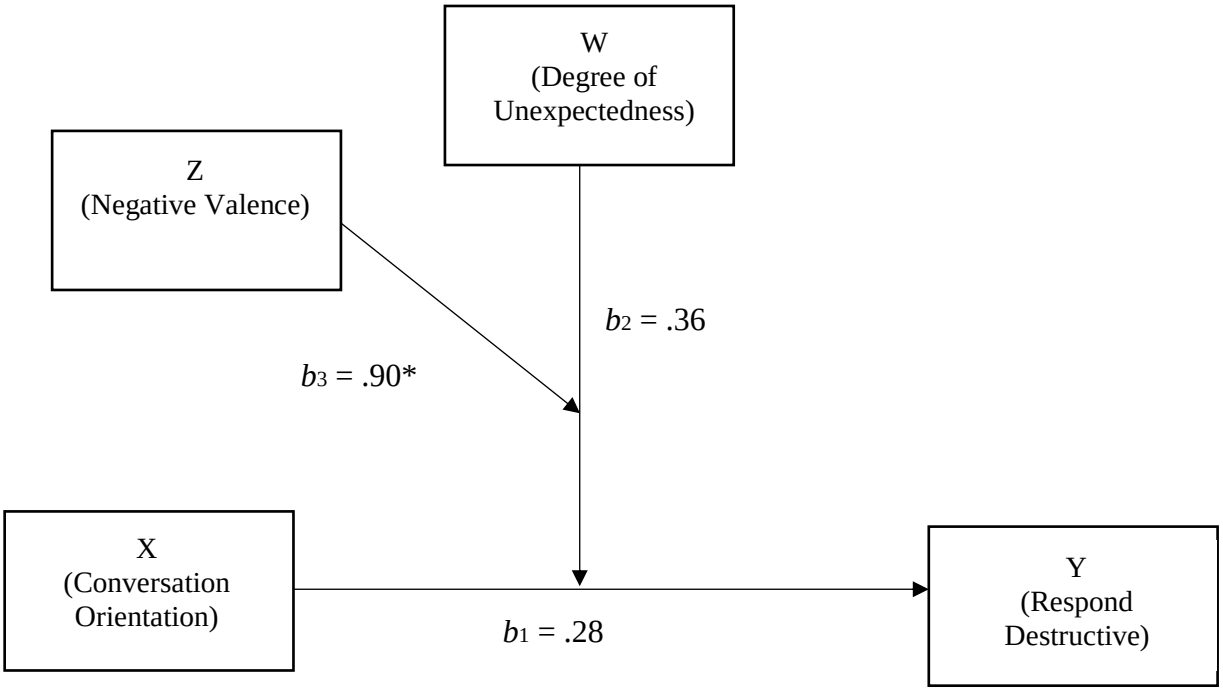
Data Visualizing the Conditional Effects of Highly Unexpected Messages on the Effect of Conversation Orientation on Strength of Responding Constructively based on the Perceived Negative Valence of the Violating Behavior



Note. Conversation orientation, degree of unexpectedness, and negative valence scales were mean centered prior to analysis. Values for conversation orientation and negative valence are ± 1 standard deviation from the mean. High degree of unexpectedness = +1 standard deviation from mean for variable labeled degree of unexpectedness. Ambivalence was a covariate.

Figure 9

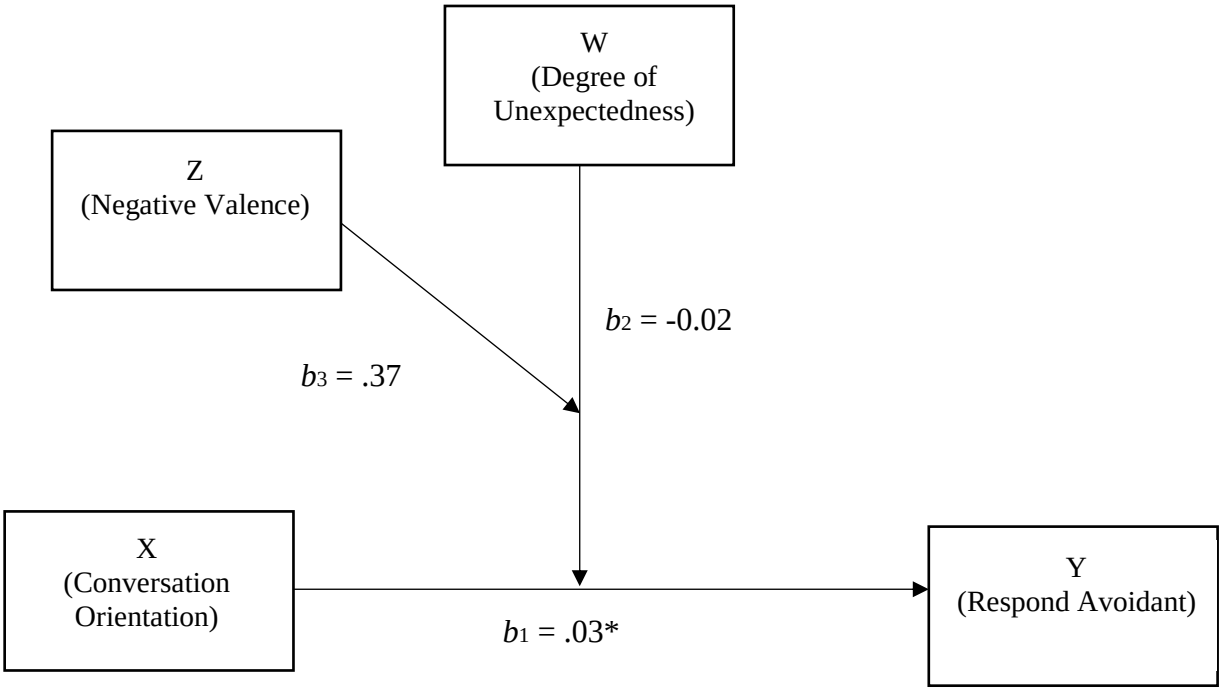
Simple Effects for the Moderated Moderation of Conversation Orientations Effect on Responding Destructively based on the Degree of Unexpectedness and Perceived Negative Valence



Note. Ambivalence was a covariate; *significant at the 0.05 level.

Figure 10

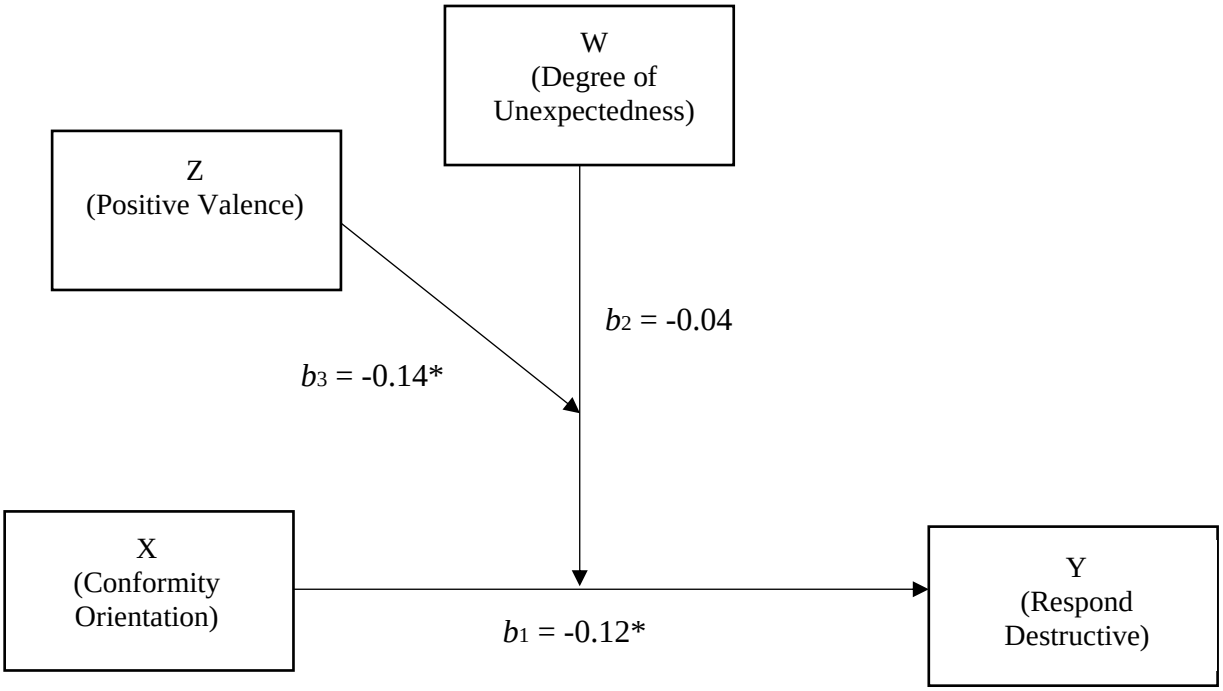
Simple Effects for the Moderated Moderation of Conversation Orientations Effect on Responding Avoidantly based on the Degree of Unexpectedness and Perceived Negative Valence



Note. Ambivalence was a covariate; *significant at the 0.05 level.

Figure 11

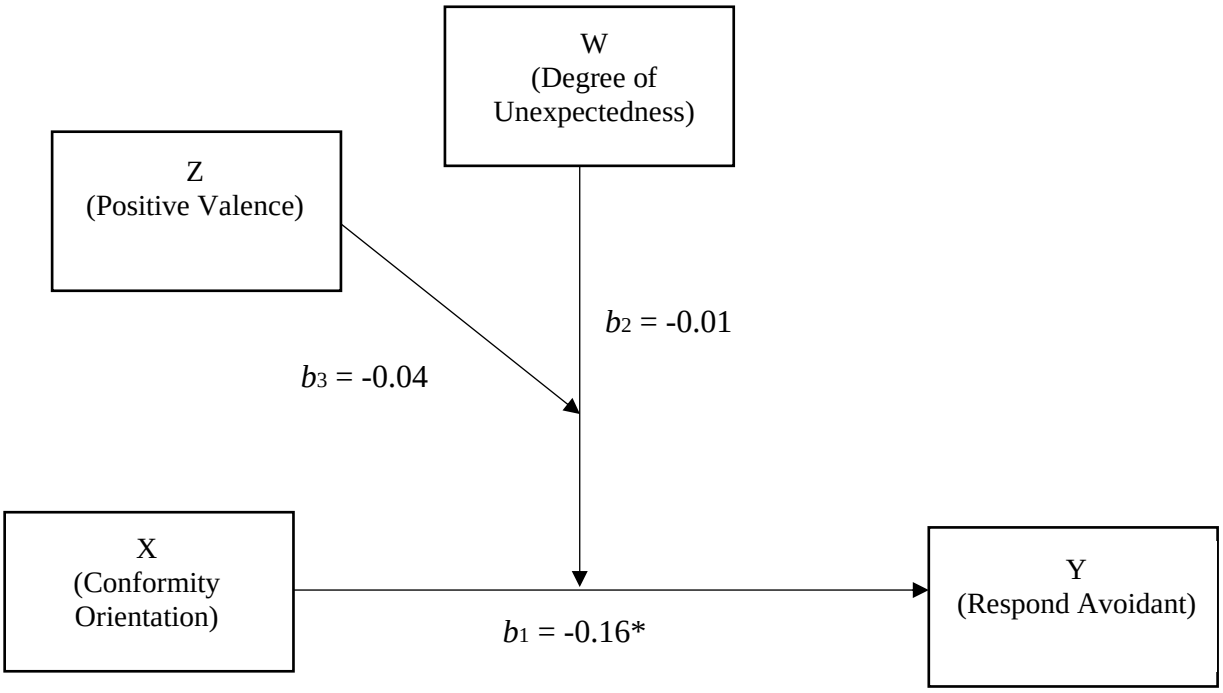
Simple Effects for Moderated Moderation Between Conformity Orientation Effect on Responding Destructively based on the Degree of Unexpectedness and Perceived Positive Valence



Note. Ambivalence was a covariate; *significant at the 0.05 level.

Figure 12

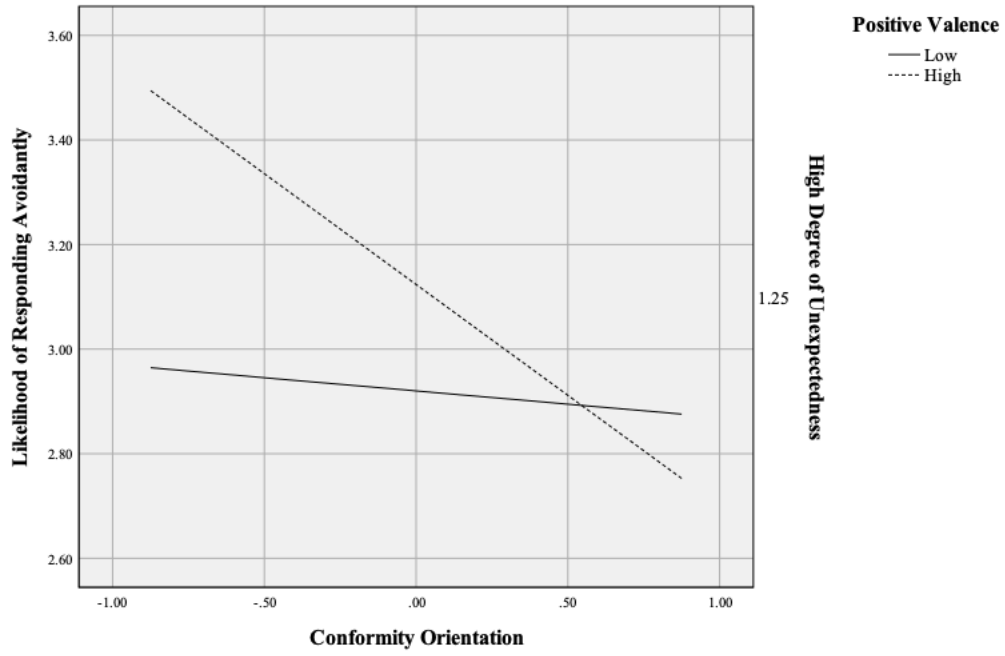
Simple Effects for the Moderated Moderation of Conformity Orientations Effect on Responding Avoidantly based on the Degree of Unexpectedness and Perceived Positive Valence



Note. Ambivalence was a covariate; *significant at the 0.05 level.

Figure 13

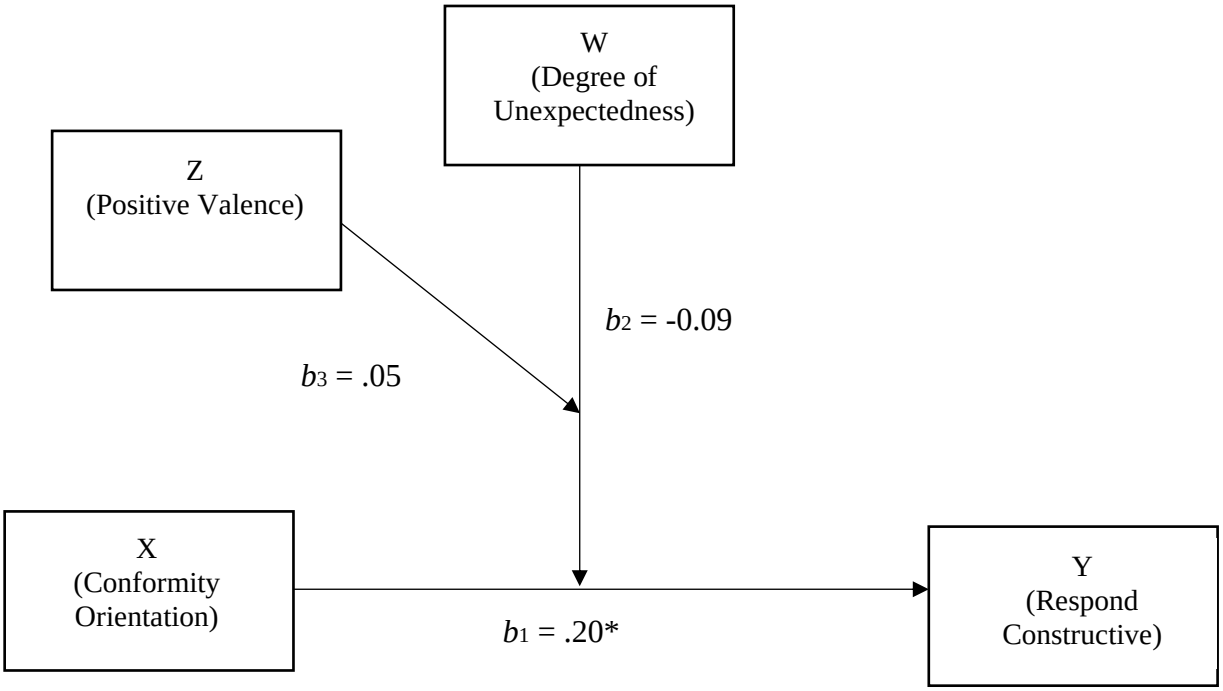
Data Visualizing the Conditional Effects of Highly Unexpected Messages on the Effect of Conformity Orientation on Strength of Responding Avoidantly based on the Perceived Positive Valence of the Violating Behavior



Note. Conformity orientation, degree of unexpectedness, and positive valence scales were mean centered prior to analysis. Values for conformity orientation and positive valence are ± 1 standard deviation from the mean. High degree of unexpectedness = +1 standard deviation from mean for variable labeled degree of unexpectedness. Ambivalence was a covariate.

Figure 14

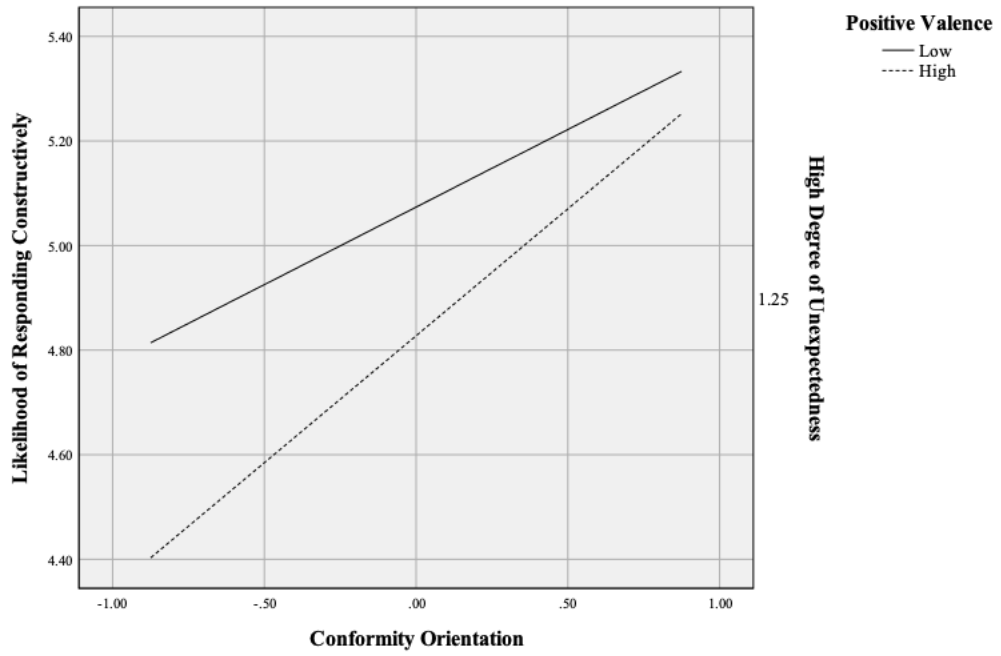
Simple Effects for the Moderated Moderation of Conformity Orientations Effect on Responding Constructively based on the Degree of Unexpectedness and Perceived Positive Valence



Note. Ambivalence was a covariate; *significant at the 0.05 level.

Figure 15

Data Visualizing the Conditional Effects of Highly Unexpected Messages on the Effect of Conformity Orientation on Strength of Responding Constructively based on the Perceived Positive Valence of the Violating Behavior



Note. Conformity orientation, degree of unexpectedness, and positive valence scales were mean centered prior to analysis. Values for conformity orientation and positive valence are ± 1 standard deviation from the mean. High degree of unexpectedness = +1 standard deviation from mean for variable labeled degree of unexpectedness. Ambivalence was a covariate.

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