

INVESTIGATING FAMILY MEMBERS' PERCEPTIONS AND OBSERVED
BEHAVIORS IN TRIADIC CONFLICT INTERACTIONS

by

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(Under the Direction of Jennifer Anne Samp)

ABSTRACT

This secondary data analysis utilizes an observational coding measure and perceptual assessments reported by family triads to examine the current propositions and application of family communication patterns (FCP). This study introduces new behavioral codes, *team behavior* and *lead behavior*, in order to theoretically and methodologically extend the FCP framework. Family communication patterns and communication accommodation theory (CAT) were utilized in the development of the team and lead observational coding measures, which were then rated by third-party coders. Compilation of questionnaire items for conversation orientation, conformity orientation, parental involvement, and parental coalition indicators were drawn from the larger project. Results suggest that family members may not share similar views of communication orientation or enact behaviors consistent with conceptualized family types. Future research should test the framework of FCP, and use observational measures to expand the theory.

INDEX WORDS: *Family Communication Patterns, conflict, lead behavior, team behavior, observational coding*

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DEDICATION

This investigation of family communication is dedicated to my mother and grandmothers who have always been a source of inspiration throughout my life: Sandra Andersen, Lorene Bosch, and Marie Andersen. You taught me to read, to think, to love, to laugh, to take risks and be adventurous, but most of all you taught me to never give up. Thank you for the constant encouragement and sacrifice that helped turn my dreams into reality.

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CHAPTER 1

RATIONALE

Introduction

Families are composed of interdependent individuals with unique roles and rules that influence message production patterns both within the family system as well as in extra-familial relationships (Estlein & Theiss, 2013, Ritchie, 1997; Ledbetter, Griffin, & Sparks, 2007). Though research has demonstrated family communication orientation type affects individuals' communication patterns and behaviors within the system, past research examining family communication tends to rely on one person's perspective of the family system (Baxter & Clark, 1996) or one subsystem within the family (Dumlao & Botta, 2000). This approach becomes problematic when an individual's reported perception of the family is extended to represent all other individuals in the family, and as such some researchers have called for an assessment of multiple (or all) family members' perspectives in order to gain a more holistic understanding of family functioning (White & Klein, 2008; Cox & Paley, 1997). In response to this call, this research utilizes multiple family members' perspectives to investigate this current framework and methodology of family communication patterns theory (Ritchie, 1997) and to relate a more detailed understanding of family communication.

Furthermore, there has been limited research examining concrete behavior used in family conflict interactions (Estlein & Theiss, 2013), and to my knowledge no research has employed observable coding measures as a means to identify family communication

patterns. As parents are thought to be major contributors to the socialization of children (Youniss & Ketterlinus, 1987), family communication and conflict behavior will influence individuals' future behavior in and out of the family context such as in organizational (Ritchie, 1997) and friendship communication contexts (Ledbetter, 2009; Koesten & Anderson, 2004). Considering individuals could model family members' patterns of communication and behavior, limited research in this area makes it vital to extend this area and further examine the conflict behaviors used in family interactions. This project seeks to extend the current research by observing conflict behaviors produced during live interaction according to predictions based on the family communication patterns (FCP) (Ritchie, 1991). By using observational coding measures as potential indicators for FCP types, I am simultaneously examining the validity of the current framework and extending what is known about family communication.

This extension through observational measures is based on FCP and communication accommodation theory's (Giles & Coupland, 1991) notion of convergence, and drawing on these theories I introduce a new conceptualization of family communication conflict behaviors: team and lead behavior. Team and lead have been indirectly assessed through perceptual measures, but as of yet there is no research advances a conceptualization and observational coding method of measurement. These behaviors could be employed separately from the FCP framework, however, I also posit these behaviors should act as behavioral indicators for gauging FCP conversation and conformity orientation in interaction analysis.

Team behavior is conceptualized as the extent to which two people remain unified and separate from another individual; in this study, it is the degree to which parents unify

to separate the marital dyad from the child. *Lead behavior* refers to the extent to which an individual drives the conversation; in this study all members of the family may enact this behavior throughout the interaction. I utilized Huggins & Samp's (2014) observational measures of emotion expression (based in part on Malik & Lindhal's (2004) research on coding schemes) as a base construct to appropriately measure exhibited team and lead behavior for interaction analysis. The final measures identify and describe indicators for assessing team and lead behavior, specifically focusing on these behaviors used in family triadic interactions (Appendix A). Expansion in the use of observational measures for conflict behavior is particularly important, as there are often discrepancies between reported perceptions and enacted behavior. For example, Estlein and Theiss (2013) demonstrated mothers and fathers' reported perceptions of communication and observed enacted behavior were not congruent, such that spouses reported partners exhibited more marital control and parental responsiveness in comparison to third-party observers' assessments.

Finally, perceptual assessments categorize conflict communication as either a general approach to conflict (e.g., conflict styles) or on a micro level during a conflict episode (e.g., conflict tactics). Identifying and assessing observable behaviors occurring in conflict offers a broad-spectrum approach to research that is not confined to episodic conflict, serial conflict, general styles, or specific tactics. Behavioral codes offer a specified view of conflict interactions that permeates these constructed borders to pursue a comprehensive measure of family communication and conflict.

As lead and team behaviors are newly conceptualized, the use of a secondary data analysis seems to be an appropriate means to introduce these conflict behaviors as a

means to counteract concerns of interference from project design and launch these measures in real life situations. Using a previously collected data set tests the coders' ability to recognize the theoretical concepts in practice, and reduces concern that significant results are due to prior planning or experimental design. Also, this is an appropriate opportunity to test lead behavior and team behavior as the triadic interactions exemplify real life situations as participants enact typical behaviors used in family conflict. Within the triadic conflict interaction parents have the choice to "team" at the expense of the third party (the child) or could contend for a presence in the conversation via lead behavior.

It is important to note this research study is not a direct a test of family communication patterns, but rather seeks to examine and extend the current approach for family communication patterns and conflict research through the introduction of behavioral measures. In order to accomplish this, I draw on family communication patterns (FCP) (Ritchie, 1991) and communication accommodation theory (CAT) (Giles & Coupland, 1991) as a guide to better understand family conflict behavior and the relationship of family members' reported perspectives of communication patterns. The purpose of this project is to: 1) introduce and utilize an observational coding scheme to gauge concrete behaviors used during conflict interactions; 2) assess the relationship between family members' perceptions; 3) analyze reports of perceived behavioral patterns with observed behaviors; and 4) investigate and extend the current propositions and application of family communication patterns. In pursuing these objectives it is my aim to further inform the current research with a more nuanced understanding of family conflict communication.

Theoretical Framework

This study utilizes data from a larger project to assess the perceptions of family members and the enacted behavior observed during conflict interactions. *Conflict* occurs when an individual perceives s/he has incompatible goals with a relational partner over scarce resources, as well as a perceived threat of interference in goal achievement (Roloff & Soule, 2002). When a conflict remains unresolved after the initial discussion, the topic may continue to recur in subsequent episodes and establishing a pattern of conflict surrounding a single issue, known as *serial conflict* (Bevan, Finan, & Kaminsky, 2008). Family members in this study were asked to discuss a recent problem or topic of conflict, but it is not possible to determine whether the discussion acted as the initial conflict episode or if the conflict topic had been discussed previously. Families engaged in these conflict episodes could shift the conversation between multiple distinct topics during the allotted time. The freedom in discussion limits the ability to accurately determine whether the families were engaged in serial conflict or isolated episodes. As research seems to demonstrate that serial conflict can demonstrate a recurrence of topic and a repetitive pattern of produced communication behavior (Bevan et al., 2008; Malis & Roloff, 2006), for the purposes of this study it seems appropriate to categorize topics as distinct episodes and rather than attempt to delineate between serial and isolated discussions.

The observed family triads are composed of two types of dyadic subsystems: marital and parental. In this study the marital subsystem is composed of spouses or committed, unmarried relational partners identifying as having a mother or father figure role. An individual acting in the capacity of a parent or guardian is part of a parental

subsystem, which focuses on the parent's relationship with the child or children (Broderick, 1993; Minuchin & Fishman, 1981). Family communication patterns (FCP) theory proposes that family members perceive and operate under similar patterns of communication measured by dimensions of conversation and conformity orientation (Keating, Russell, Cornacchione, & Smith, 2013), as family systems have stable beliefs and expectations developed over time (Dumlao & Botta, 2000; Baxter & Clark, 1996).

Following this line of reasoning, parents and children should all share a similar orientation to open conversation and conformity within the system, and enact comparable behaviors accordingly. Although it is likely there could be a general environment for the family, the position that all family members will share a similar communication pattern and related behaviors seems somewhat flawed. A person's role and experience will not only uniquely influence his/her own individual schema (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002), but will then in turn individualize the communication patterns and behaviors used in future interactions. For example, past research has demonstrated a possible difference regarding how men and women rate family communication patterns, such that men tend to report their family higher in conformity orientation and lower in conversation orientation in comparison to women (Ritchie, 1997). This difference could be partially due to the individual differences in socialization of men and women in families, and in turn could lead differences in concrete behaviors used in communication interactions.

It is also possible individuals' varied perceptions about appropriate communication or expected behavior could alter the performance in an interaction. For example, a father might have a distinct approach when communicating with a child that is different from the mother's expectation of appropriate parent-child behavior. Therefore,

though research using one person's perception is informative, it is also important to investigate to what extent family members' perspectives and orientations to family communication are related. Utilizing survey assessments from family triads I examine FCP's proposition that family members have a shared perspective or orientation to the system, where support would result in a positive relationship between the reports of fathers, mothers, and children.

Family conformity orientation. Family communication patterns (FCP) (Ritchie, 1991) measures a family's orientation towards open communication and adherence to family norms through the measures of conformity orientation and conversation orientation. *Conformity orientation* is the extent to which a family system stresses homogeneity of attitudes, beliefs, and an adherence to a hierarchical structure (Schrodt, Witt, & Messersmith, 2008; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). Families that have high conformity orientation are expected to have a strong deference to authority and a goal of converging to established family norms. In contrast to this, low conformity orientation families are less likely to have rigid family norms and values as the goal is for family members to develop autonomous viewpoints (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006; Ritchie, 1997). Therefore, children should demonstrate greater deviation from parents when the goal of autonomy is promoted in the family system.

Communication accommodation theory (CAT) (Giles & Coupland, 1991) describes this deviation as divergent behavior, which occurs when an individual increases psychological distance and establishes independence from the conversational partner's expectations (Ayoko, Härtel, & Callan, 2002; Harwood, 2000). When considering CAT in conjunction with FCP, divergent behavior might not result in a lack of psychological

closeness, but would instead assert autonomy from a family member and the overall system. As a result, the family's level of conformity orientation should motivate convergent or divergent behavior (e.g., team behavior, lead behavior) during conflict interactions.

Consistent with high conformity orientation, parents that promote a strong hierarchy will be motivated to converge together as a means of supporting parental authority. One way of demonstrating high conformity orientation would be to exhibit team behavior in order to demonstrate unity and constancy of the structure. If team behavior indicates convergence consistent with high conformity orientation, this action would also signal a goal of maintaining structure and a system-wide expectation for the child to adhere through convergent behavior. Therefore, family conformity orientation should also be indicated by child lead behavior, such that a child faced with team behavior (indicating higher conformity orientation) will be more likely to submit to his/her perceived role in the structure and reduce the amount of lead behavior that could be seen as disruptive to the structure and parental power.

In contrast to this, a low conformity orientation family would pursue a goal of autonomy and a promotion of variance in individuals' values and attitudes within the system (Shrodt et al., 2008). Since the goal of the family is autonomy rather than family connectedness and obedience to norms, the marital couple will not rely on team behavior to support joint parental authority, rather it will be established by each individual. Therefore, instead of demonstrating convergence through team behavior, the marital couple would be more likely to show divergence and autonomy. Lead behavior is one way in which individuals can show autonomy or control in a conversation, and multiple

individuals enacting lead behavior during conflict indicates there is a lower level of desired conformity in the system. In particular, a child leading during a conflict would demonstrate a lower expectation for adherence to the parental authority (or a higher desire for the child to be autonomous), and therefore child lead behavior might act as one indicator of low conformity orientation.

Family conversation orientation. FCP also measures the dimension of *conversation orientation*. This measure describes the degree to which a family prioritizes a goal or expectation of open expression and discussion between family members (Schrodt et al., 2008). Individuals from high conversation orientation families have a greater tendency to engage in direct, open discussion and are more likely to disclose thoughts and feelings with other family members (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). For example, Dumlao & Botta (2000) reported sons reporting to be from high conversation orientation families were more likely to use collaborating and compromising behavior in father-son conflict. Since high orientation families promote open discussion and are more likely to collaborate, individuals using higher levels of lead behavior in conflict interactions should indicate higher conversation orientation in the family.

Whereas high conversation orientation should be indicated by increased use of lead behavior, individuals from low conversation orientation families will not readily lead in conflict. Low conversation orientation families are reported as being less likely to freely disclose personal thoughts or emotions, are more likely to keep conversation surface level, and report being avoidant in conflict (Keating et al., 2013; Dumlao & Botta, 2000). Since a low conversation orientation family system prioritizes minimal emotional expression, individuals will be more avoidant in conflict and less likely to

drive the conversation through lead behavior. Therefore, the degree to which family members' utilize lead behavior during the conflict interactions will distinguish the level of conversation orientation in the family.

Based on the FCP framework, it is possible for team and lead behavior to indicate the level of conversation and conformity orientation in the system. In addition to these behavioral measures, surveys were used to assess family members' perceptions of communication behavior in the family. The Revised Family Communication Patterns (RFCP) (Ritchie, 1991) questionnaire was not among the assessments of the original data collection; however, other questionnaire measures previously collected were reviewed and selected to act as indicators of family members' perceptions of conversation orientation, conformity orientation, and parents' involvement (indicating lead behavior and team behavior).

For this project I advance predictions about survey measures and observed behaviors using these conversation and conformity indicators, taking into account the current proposition that family members share a similar perspective of family communication orientation. Results indicating distinctly varied perceptions would suggest potential issues with the FCP framework and the current application in research that proposes one person's view may represent that of other family members in the system. In addition, using communication accommodation theory and family communication patterns inform my predictions regarding the behavior used in the family triadic interactions. Observed team behavior, lead behavior, topic depth, and topic breadth are expected to relate as indicators of the level of family conversation and conformity orientation.

Lead Behavior

There are a variety of approaches to identify and measure conflict communication, such as assessing demand-withdraw behavior (Siffert & Schwarz, 2011; Caughlin & Huston, 2006), conflict tactics (i.e., integrative, distributive, avoidant; Sillars, Coletti, Parry, & Rogers, 1982), and conflict management styles (i.e., collaborating, competing, compromising, accommodating, avoiding; Dumlao & Botta, 2000). Largely these have been assessed through survey measures, and though these studies have been informative, the measures limit the implications to understanding the *perception* of approaches to conflict. As behaviors have been reported to affect perceptions (Carrere, Buehlman, Gottman, Coan, & Ruckstuhl, 2000; Gottman, 2000), it is likely the observable behaviors enacted in conflict will shape the schema and orientation of relational partners/family members. Additionally, whereas these perceptual measures are often limited to assessments of a habitual approach or discrete episodes, observational coding methods may bridge the gap between recognizing a recurring orientation to conflict with the tactics measuring perceived in conflict episodes. Therefore, this study utilizes current knowledge from the family conflict literature to introduce and investigate observable behavior produced during conflict that may be linked to, but still distinctive from, current conflict measures.

Conflict management styles and conflict tactics share similarities in conceptualization, such that constructive conflict behaviors (e.g., integrative tactics, collaborating/compromising strategies) are verbally cooperative messages that promote mutually beneficial conflict resolutions, whereas avoidant tactics (e.g., avoiding, withdrawing from conflict) conceal feelings and thoughts in order to evade, limit, or end

the conflict interaction (Sillars et al., 1982). Additionally, cooperativeness and empathy have been linked with decreased destructive demand-withdraw behavior in marriages (Caughlin & Huston, 2006). Based on prior research, I advance two constructs for examining conflict behaviors in parent-child interactions: *team behavior* and *lead behavior*. Lead behavior is conceptualized to be communicatively constructive between relational partners, similar to integrative conflict tactics or collaborating/compromising conflict style. Integrative tactics are described as direct, verbally cooperative behaviors or messages that promote mutually beneficial outcomes, and related to higher levels of perceived disclosiveness in comparison to avoidant tactics (Sillars et al., 1982). Sillars and colleagues' (1982) operational description for integrative conflict tactics included indicators such as nonevaluative descriptions, soliciting information and complaints about conflict-related events, offering empathy and problem-solving messages.

There is some overlap in the description of observational assessments used with integrative tactics and lead behavior, such that lead behavior includes verbal displays of attempting to engage others and active participation could relate to “soliciting information” and/or “problem-solving” in conflict. However, the focus of this concept is to identify the manner in which an individual will drive a conversation (e.g., difficult discussion, conflict interaction) by engaging others, steering the choice in topic, and offering cues to regulate individuals turn-taking during the interaction. Lead behavior is different from constructive problem solving in conflict as it encompasses taking charge of and driving the conversation, being openly expressive, and encouraging others to participate. Finally, whereas integrative tactics measure cooperative messages used in conflict, lead behavior more broadly includes the use verbal and nonverbal supportive

statements used during communication interactions in order for lead behavior to be used in wider variety of contexts.

Lead behavior is conceptualized as a constructive conflict behavior exhibited when an individual directs the conversation through active participation, attempts to engage others, and/or regulate the turn taking through verbal or nonverbal messages (detailed in Appendix A). Leading during the interaction is used to engage others cooperatively in the discussion, through demonstrating self-expression and promoting openness from others. It is important to note, the conceptualization of lead behavior is based largely on the activity of the participant, which means an individual passively answering questions would not qualify as lead behavior regardless of the amount of time a person speaks during a conversation. Instead, individuals enacting lead behavior should demonstrate varied levels of activity and engagement in the discourse.

According to FCP, high conversation orientation family members are socialized to be openly expressive and so should also have minimal uneasiness directly engaging in conflict interactions (Schrodt et al., 2008). Research has supported this notion as conversation orientation demonstrated an inverse relationship with communication apprehension, such that individuals scoring higher in conversation orientation were less likely to report being apprehensive in interpersonal and group contexts (Elwood & Shrader, 1998). Additionally, conversation orientation is positively linked with reported rates of self-disclosure and a negative relationship with shyness (Huang, 1999). Considering lead behavior should be enacted through actively participating and being engaged in conversation (e.g., conflict), one would assume a person demonstrating high levels of *lead behavior* would have limited apprehension when participating in the

conflict interaction. *Child lead behavior* could be linked to conversation orientation, such that children from should from high conversation orientation families should demonstrate activity and engagement in the conversation consistent with the idealized promotion of expression between family members. Therefore, conversation orientation should have a positive relationship with lead behavior, child lead behavior in particular.

Conformity orientation has not been significantly linked with an individual's desire to contribute in a conversation (Elwood & Shrader, 1998), and so it is unclear whether the level of perceived family control and conformity would predict the use of lead behavior. For example, Miller and Lane (1991) noted adolescents may use control attempts to create a more symmetrical distribution of power in the parent-child subsystem. The parent(s)-child power distance relates to the rigidity of the hierarchical structure in the family, such that less rigid or conforming families may allow a child the ability to question parental figures. Additionally, Estlein & Theiss (2013) noted the marital power dynamic affects communication in multiple subsystems such that a partner can demonstrate authority similarly towards both marital partner and child. A family member enacting lead behavior demonstrates s/he maintains some level of authority to actively engage or direct the conversation. Research has demonstrated a high-power partner has the ability to control what occurs within a conversation with the family (Christensen & Heavey, 1990). Extending this to the family triad, implications of these results suggest *any* individual in the family that is able to control the conversation relates some form of power. Therefore, family members enacting lead behavior will do so to directly engage with others in the conflict episode, but also indicate or reinforce the nature of the family structure. Though lead behavior is not assessed as a power move or

attempt at negotiation, the conceptualization of indicators may inherently connect to an individual's desire for or demonstration of dominance in the conversation. Therefore, since low conformity orientation families are more likely to promote autonomy, it is likely higher rates of child lead behavior to diverge from parents and establish a presence in conflict would relate to lower levels of conformity orientation.

Team Behavior

Family coalitions are formed by subsystems within the family, such as a parent-child (intergenerational) coalition or a parent (marital couple) coalition. Researchers have examined these relationships in the context of dysfunctional parent-child coalitions (Penn, 1983), cooperative communication and co-parenting in stepfamilies (Braithwaite, McBride, & Schrodt, 2003), and parent (marital couple) coalitions with effective problem solving in a family triad (Vuchinich, Wood, & Vuchinich, 1994). Strong parent teams have been linked with ineffective problem solving with children (in triads) and reports of greater marital satisfaction and adjustment (Vuchinich et al., 1994; Penn, 1983). Family coalitions indicate the level of interdependence and unity in the subsystem; and as families are resistant to change it is likely team behavior and family coalitions are a recurring performance similar to serial conflict (Bevan et al., 2008; Penn, 1983). To my knowledge there is no research on examining the observed behavior used by dyadic coalitions, specifically team behavior enacted by the marital dyad. This behavioral measure then is an extension to the current measures employed to assess coalition.

Team behavior occurs when conversational or relational partners demonstrate verbal and/or nonverbal support and affirmation towards one another, separating from a third party (detailed in Appendix A). This study focuses on the extent to which mothers

and fathers (parent coalition) produce messages of support and encouragement during the interaction, and separate the marital couple from the child. *Team behavior* is exhibited by: taking the side of the marital partner or backing the partner's argument, offering verbally supportive statements or accommodating to one individual by separating from the other (e.g., a mother supports a father's message, unifying parents against the child).

Research suggests the use of parental coalitions might be useful in promoting positive relational and health outcomes between parent(s) and children, yet other studies show strong parental teaming relates to decreased problem solving (Vuchinich & Angelelli, 1995, Minuchin, 1974). The decreased problem-solving influenced by parent coalitions could relate to the family expectation of child obedience, as there is less need for joint problem-solving between in the parent(s)-child subsystem if the child is socialized to follow family norms and rules. This notion is further strengthened as solidarity and support between individuals is signaled through convergence during the conversation (Ayoko, Härtel, & Callan, 2002). This convergence should reinforce the separation between the marital couple and child within the hierarchy, particularly as a control strategy to subjugate the child, and manage possible discrepancies in power (Williams, 1999). If parents perceive child engagement in conflict as a threat to the established power dynamic, it is likely the parents will converge through team behavior as a strategy to maintain the hierarchy and diverge from the child. Since convergence bridges the distance and reduces distinction between individuals (Ayoko et al., 2002), team behavior should result in less negative conflict strategies and outcomes and promote unity for the marital partners.

Divergent strategies through decreased team behavior should promote distance between individuals, potentially aggravating conflict and promoting negative conflict management strategies (Ayoko et al., 2002). Convergence of marital partners to establish and/or reinforce parent coalitions could stifle the child's participation in the conflict interaction. In turn, this would also inhibit cooperative resolution, as the child will react defensively by withdrawal, competition, or deviation in the conversation (Vuchinich et al., 1994). It is likely the use of team behavior relates to the unity and interdependence in the marital dyad demonstrated through acts of convergence, and adherence to the family hierarchy in order to reinforce family members' roles. High conformity orientation families push this adherence to family norms and interdependence of marital couples according to the family hierarchy. Therefore, parents should demonstrate higher levels of team behavior when family members report higher levels of conformity orientation.

Topic Breadth and Depth

Keating and colleagues' (2013) examination of family communication patterns' influence on engaging in difficult discussions reported families high in conversation orientation (based on questionnaire assessment) converse with more depth and breadth (rated by third-party coders). Drawing from this research I infer that low conversation orientation families are more likely to discuss superficial topics for a shorter period of time, thus demonstrate greater topic breadth and less topic depth. Since there is a seven (7) minute time constraint on the recorded family triadic interactions used in this study, low conversation orientation families are more likely to discuss three or more topics for a shorter period of time.

These results also suggest high conversation orientation families are more accustomed to directly confronting a wider variety of difficult topics at a more in depth level. Translating this to the 7-minute interaction time, it is likely high conversation orientation families will discuss one or two topics for a longer period of time on average, showing greater topic depth and less topic breadth. Taking more time for each topic should give family members the opportunity to actively engage by expressing thoughts or feelings about the topic of conflict. Therefore, the topic depth observed during the triadic interactions should act as an additional indicator of high conversation orientation in the family, and in turn relate to other behaviors indicating high conversation orientation. Note that breadth according to Keating et al. (2013) referred to the variety of topic type, whereas this examination of family communication considers breadth as the breadth as the number of topics discussed.

Hypotheses

Self-report measures were narrowed to items that would theoretically indicate FCP's conformity and conversation orientations, and used to compare family members' perceptions. I have identified behaviors to be coded from family interactions conceptually linked with *topic breadth* and *depth*, *team behavior*, and *lead behavior* with *conversation orientation*, *conformity orientation*, and previously discussed perceptual indicators.

Therefore, I propose the following predictions:

Hypothesis 1: Mother, father, and child responses to *conformity orientation* will be positively related.

Hypothesis 2: Mother, father, and child responses to *conversation orientation* will be positively related.

Hypothesis 3: Participant reported *conversation orientation* will be positively related to *lead behavior* and *topic depth*, and negatively related to *topic breadth*.

Hypothesis 4: *Child lead behavior* will be negatively related to *conformity orientation* and positive relationship with *conversation orientation*.

Hypothesis 5: Reported *conformity orientation* will be positively related to higher levels of *team behavior*.

Hypothesis 6: *Mother involvement* and *father involvement* will be positively related to *mother* and *father lead behavior*.

Hypothesis 7: *Perceived team behavior* will be positively related with *team behavior*.

Hypothesis 8: Based on their predicted relationships to *conversation orientation* and *conformity orientation*, observed behaviors will be related such that:

(a) *Team behavior* will be inversely related with *child lead behavior* and positively related to *topic depth*

(b) *Lead behavior* will be positively related to *topic depth* and inversely related to *topic breadth*.

(c) *Child lead behavior* will be positively related to *mother* and *father lead behavior*.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

This project is a secondary analysis of data collected as a part of a NIH-funded project entitled “Emotional Processes in Families,” conducted by teams from the Department of Psychology and Engineering at the University of Rochester (NY) Mount Hope Family Center and the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Georgia.

Participants

Participating families, comprised of two parents and an adolescent child, were recruited from the community of Monroe County, New York. Participants were recruited in two ways: (1) posting flyers in the Monroe County community and (2) direct mailings to local school districts (i.e., Henrietta, East Irondequoit, Brockport, and Hilton). Though the investigation was open to all families in the community, efforts were made to obtain a sample of families representative of the county where data collection took place (Monroe County, NY). Representativeness was based on 2010 United States Census Data.

Families who demonstrated interest in participating were contacted via telephone to complete screening measures to ensure they met all inclusion criteria: (a) child and two coparents must have been living for the past three or four years, (b) both parent figures as well as the child must be willing to participate in the project, (c) one of the coparents must be biological or adoptive parent of the child participating in the study, (d) the child participant must be between the ages of 12-15 years old, and (e) all participants must be

fluent in English. The age range for the target child was chosen because prior research examining the parent-child relationships identifies early adolescence as a period of fluidity in relationship dynamics. Participants could not have any significant cognitive, physical, or health impairments or obvious physiological deficits that may compromise the validity of various measures throughout the course of the larger grant-funded data collection project. Families were excluded from participation if any of the above criteria were not met. If more than one child in the family met the inclusion criteria, only one child per family was able to participate.

Fifty (50) families were selected from the available data set through simple random sampling methods. Mothers identified as White (86%), Black (6%), Asian (2%), and more than one race (6%). Fathers identified as White (84%), Black (14%), and Asian (2%). The majority of mothers reported being birth parent of the child (98%), with the remainder self-identifying as a stepmother (2%). Fathers primarily reported being the birth parent (84%), with some fathers also reporting to be the stepfather (16%). Mothers reporting they were the nonbiological parent of the target child reported an average of 4 years where the child had been in their care ($SD = 0.00$), whereas nonbiological fathers reported being in the care of the child for an average of 6.13 years ($SD = 3.44$). Median family income was in the range of \$55,000 to \$74,999 with 10% of the sample reporting a household income below \$23,000. Mothers reported that couples had lived together for an average of 16.34 years ($SD = 6.18$), whereas fathers reported an average of 16.90 years ($SD = 6.17$) of living together. Based on female reports, the majority of couples were married (90%), with the remaining couples as being engaged (6%) or in a domestic partnership (4%).

Procedure

Once families were pre-screened and approved for inclusion in the investigation, families arrived at a laboratory space at the Mount Hope Family Center to complete all tasks and measures for the larger project. Upon arrival, families were provided with a tour of the facility along with an overview of what would be taking place during the visit. Immediately following the tour and overview, parents completed an informed consent process and provided permission for the child to participate. Upon providing consent, parents individually completed a demographic interview, various survey items on paper that are not included in the current study along with additional questionnaire items via MediaLab, which included the Conflict Behavior Questionnaire, Involvement with Children (Part II), Parental Control and Child Disclosure Scale.

All couples completed a ten (10) minute videotaped interaction task without their child; these were not analyzed for this study. Then they were reunited with their adolescent child to complete a seven (7) minute triadic, family interaction task. This interaction was the focus of the thesis, whereby coders reviewed and rated conversational behaviors. All three participants were instructed to discuss a problematic issue specific to their relationship as parents and child. Again, families were advised that they could choose a topic from a list of common issues that parents and children may disagree about if they had difficulty generating a conversation topic. Families were also instructed that it was important that “you each get your point across to the other” to suggest the child have an opportunity to speak. Common discussion topics included but were not limited to: school, chores/responsibilities, and siblings. Families were video and audio recorded while selecting the topic for discussion. The family conflict discussion was recorded for 7

minutes regardless of whether the discussion was completed within the time period. At the conclusion of discussion, all family members were separated to complete measures of perceived resolvability along with several other post-interaction measures specific to the larger grant project. All procedures for the laboratory session took approximately three to four hours to complete.

Observational Coding Procedure

Three coders were trained in the observational coding measure and how to use Interact (Mangold, 2010), which is a computer-based platform designed to facilitate video-based assessments of interaction behaviors. Three coders reviewed and rated behavior used in the recorded interactions, but each behavioral code was assessed by two of the three coders. For example, two of the three coders were assigned to assess team behavior; twenty-five (25) videos were assigned to each coder with one coder rating an additional overlapping ten (10) videos (20% of the overall cases) as a reliability check. This same process was repeated for the assessment of child, mother, and father lead behavior. Krippendorff's Alpha has proven to be a good method of reliability calculation with any scale of measurement and is not dependent upon a particular number of coders (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007), and was therefore used to calculate intercoder reliability for the following observational measures: *child lead behavior* ($M = 1.63, SD = 1.26, \alpha = .94$); *mother lead behavior* ($M = 2.40, SD = 0.94, \alpha = .81$); *father lead behavior* ($M = 2.00, SD = 0.92, \alpha = .84$); *team behavior* ($M = 2.60, SD = 1.05, \alpha = .82$). Cohen's Kappa is an appropriate measure for reliability of nominal data between two coders correcting for chance agreement (Cohen, 1968), and so was used to establish satisfactory intercoder reliability for *topic breadth* ($M = 2.24, SD = 1.51, max = 8; \kappa = .69$).

Variables

Demographic information. Individuals were asked to give information about the following: child's age and race, mother's age and race, father's age and race, each adults' relationship to the child in order to determine if biological or non-biological connection, mother's and father's separate income, reports on adults' living situation, and the mother's perception of relationship status and marriage or planned engagement date. Note, that if there was a discrepancy regarding couple's relationship status and child's reported race, the final answer was determined by mother's responses. The full list of questions asked to assess demographic information is located in Appendix B.

Parent conformity orientation. A compilation of items from the Conflict Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ) (Prinz, Foster, Kent, & O'Leary, 1979) acted as an indicator for parents' perceptions of family conformity orientation, as items may be conceptually linked with FCP's conformity orientation (e.g., "We argue a lot about rules"). Parents respond to questions about the child's behavior during conflict, and the child reports on conflict behavior used by his/her mother and father separately. Using these items I planned to analyze the perceptions of all three family members to gauge how individuals within the system view the level of family conformity orientation. Initial compilation of CBQ – Parent items (Appendix B) to indicate conformity orientation demonstrated poor reliability for mothers ($\alpha = .27$) and fathers ($\alpha = .62$). After review of the items, it was determined that revision was necessary to create a scale measure with a better conceptual fit to FCP conformity orientation. The second, and final, compilation of CBQ – Parent items are as follows: (1) My child is well behaved in our discussions; (2) My child says that I have no consideration for his/her feelings; (3) My child acts

impatient when I talk; (4) My child never seems to understand my side of the argument; (5) My child tells me he/she thinks I am unfair; (6) We argue a lot about rules. These items seem to be a better conceptual fit for indicating conformity orientation, and the revision altered the reliability, producing acceptable reliability for mothers ($\alpha = .70$) and fathers ($\alpha = .80$). Parents responded with either *true* or *false* to CBQ items, and answers were scored so responses linked to high conformity orientation receive a “1” and low conformity responses receive a score of “0” (e.g., “My child is well behaved in our discussions,” *true* = 1 and *false* = 0; “We argue a lot about rules,” *true* = 0 and *false* = 1). Scale items for father and mother responses demonstrated good reliability of ($M = 4.6$, $SD = 1.76$, $\alpha = .80$) and ($M = 5.06$, $SD = 1.33$, $\alpha = .70$) respectively. The sum of the response item scores creates a conformity score for each parent.

Parent conversation orientation. Initially, select items Conflict Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ) (Prinz, Foster, Kent, & O’Leary, 1979) were compiled to act as an indicator for perceived level of conversation orientation in the family for parents and children. Many items were conceptually linked with conversation orientation (e.g. “For the most part, my child likes to talk to me”). *Conversation orientation* composed from the CBQ-Parent response items projected to indicate conversation orientation yielded $\alpha = .59$ and $.60$ for mother and father reports respectively (initial compilation listed in Appendix B). Upon further review of the items, it was determined that the conceptual links in some of the items may be indicating a sense of feeling or thinking rather than a demonstration of communication patterns and were therefore dropped. For analysis, the following two items were retained and used separately to indicate conversation orientation in the family: (1) My child and I compromise during arguments (item 19); (2) For the most part, my

child likes to talk to me (item 45). Item 45 is the indicator that conceptually has the best fit with Family Communication Patterns conversation orientation, whereas item 19 may be supported as an indicator to conversation orientation as previous research demonstrated high conversation orientation families are more likely to engage in compromising or collaborating conflict strategies (Dumlao & Botta, 2000). These indicators are binary as respondents answer either *true* or *false* (*true*=1 and *false*= 0), linking “1” with high conversation orientation responses and “0” with low conversation orientation responses. Each item response was used to indicate conversation orientation from the mother (CBQ item 19 = $M = .90$, $SD = .31$; CBQ item 45 = $M = .94$, $SD = .24$) or father perspective (CBQ item 19 = $M = .74$, $SD = .44$; CBQ item 45 = $M = .08$, $SD = .27$). Though not as methodologically strong or robust as a compilation of items, this kept with the spirit of the project by using items theoretically and practically linked with conversation orientation. Item 19 is referred to as *conversation orientation 1* and item 45 is referred to as *conversation orientation 2*.

Child conformity orientation. I initially proposed certain CBQ – Adolescent items could be compiled to indicate the child’s perception of conformity orientation, and would be appropriate as parents also respond to the CBQ. However, due to poor reliability these items were dropped and only the Parental Control Scale was retained to indicate conformity orientation.¹ For the Parental Control (CDS-PCSK) (Stattin & Kerr, 2000) the child responded to six (6) items assessing their perception of the degree to which they need to follow rules or family communication norms set by the parents, which will then be used to indicate the level of family conformity orientation from this child’s perspective. Since conformity orientation scale assesses the extent to which a family

stresses deference to authority and conformity to family norms and attitudes, I posit this scale's assessment of rigidity of family rules and expectation for a child to conform acts as an indicator for conformity orientation in a family. Individuals respond with a score ranging from 1-5 (1 = Never; 5 = Very Often) to the following items: (1) Must you have your parents' permission before you go out during the weekends?; (2) If you go out on a Saturday evening, must you inform your parents beforehand about who will be along as well as where you will be going?; (3) If you have been out past curfew, do your parents require that you explain why and tell who you were with?; (4) Do your parents demand that they know where you are in the evenings, who you are going to be with, and what you are going to do? (5) Must you ask your parents before you can make plans with friends about what you will do on a Saturday night?; (6) Do your parents require that you tell them how you spend your money? Item scores were averaged together to identify an overall conformity score for the child ($M = 4.17$, $SD = .75$, $\alpha = .80$).

Child conversation orientation. Originally, I proposed *child conversation orientation* would be determined by CBQ – Adolescent response items as well as the Child Disclosure Scale, however, due to poor reliability for the CBQ items I chose to retain only the Child Disclosure Scale as an indicator. The Child Disclosure Scale (CDS-CDSK) is a portion of the Parental Control and Child Disclosure Scale (Stattin & Kerr, 2000). The scale is composed of five (5) items asking the child to separately rate the likelihood of disclosure to their mother and father (e.g., “Do you spontaneously tell this person about your friends (which friends you hang out with and how they think and feel about various things)?”), and is the indicator of a child's perception of family *conversation orientation* (mother and father separately). The assessment of disclosure

captures the essence of the FCP conversation orientation scale that represents the extent to which a family openly discusses opinions, ideas and feelings (Schrodt et al., 2008; Ritchie, 1997). Assuming children learn some communication behaviors from primary caregivers, this scale gauging the child's perceptions of family communication acts as an indicator of conversation orientation in the family unit. Furthermore, the child responds about the mother and father separately which can be used to examine the extent to which a child perceives a mother and father to have similar communication styles. Individuals respond to a series of statements with a score ranging from 1-5 (1 = Never; 5 = Very Often, R = reverse coded); the child rates mothers and fathers individually and not as a parental dyad. The following are the items used for analysis: (1) Do you spontaneously tell this person about your friends (which friends you hang out with and how they think and feel about various things)?; (2) How often do you usually want to tell this person about school (how each subject is going; your relationships with teachers)?; (3) Do you usually keep a lot of secrets from this person about what you do during your free time? R; (4) Do you hide a lot from this person about what you do during night and weekends? R; (5) Do you like to tell this person what you do and where you go during the evening? Item response scores were averaged for mother and father responses separately to create *child conversation orientation-mother* ($M = 4.05, SD = .67, \alpha = .73$) and *child conversation orientation-father* ($M = 3.76, SD = .73, \alpha = .65$). Scale items also demonstrated satisfactory reliability for the compilation of both sets of responses ($M = 3.91, SD = .66, \alpha = .83$).

Perceived lead behavior. Lead behavior was assessed through observational measures; however, I also use a questionnaire measure as an indicator of perceived lead

behavior to analyze the relationship between perception and performance. The Involvement with Children (Part II) Scale (ICS) (Ahrns & Wallisch, 1987) is a measure used to assess an individual's perception of self and partners' level of involvement with child-raising responsibilities (e.g., "Discussing problems with the children that they might be having"). Those investing time and energy in child-raising responsibilities are predicted to also take an active role in the triadic conflict interaction, indicating mothers' and fathers' perceived level of lead behavior. Self-assessments from the Involvement with Children (Part II) Scale create *mother involvement* and *father involvement*, and are used to analyze the relationship of perceived and observed lead behavior.

Additionally, adjusting the score to account for Partner A's self-assessment and Partner B's partner-assessment (and vice versa) should account for the level of discrepancy of viewpoints. The sum of the Partner A self-assessment and Partner B partner-assessment scores creates a variable indicating the joint perception of mother's and fathers' level of involvement (i.e., *mother involvement- couple perception* and *father involvement-couple perception*) in parenting responsibilities. Accounting for both partners' perceptions will examine whether multiple perspectives give a more accurate depiction of behavior through a stronger association with observed lead behavior.

Mother involvement (MI) and father involvement (FI). The Involvement with Children Scale (Part II) is used as a measure of a person's perception of self and partner's level of involvement or engagement in their child's life, and is to be used as a means to judge the level of perception of involvement with the level of actual involvement in the triadic interaction. *Mother involvement* and *father involvement* is indicated using the Involvement with Children Part II scale. Mothers and fathers separately rated the extent

to which they and their partner were involved in their children's lives through the following statements: (1) Disciplining the children; (2) Running errands for/with the children; (3) Taking the children for recreational activities (e.g., sports); (4) Attending school or church-related functions; (5) Discussing problems with the children that they might be having; (6) Helping children with schoolwork; (7) Discussing children's social activities (e.g., friendships, dating, parties, over-nights); (8) Planning for the children's futures (e.g., education, career, marriage). Self-assessment scores were averaged together to represent fathers' and mothers' perceived involvement with child-raising responsibilities. Reliability was established for mother involvement ($M = 4.21$, $SD = .54$, $\alpha = .73$) and father involvement ($M = 3.82$, $SD = .70$, $\alpha = .84$).

Mother involvement-couple perception (MICP) and father involvement-couple perception (FICP). *Mother involvement-couple perception and father involvement-couple perception* also utilized the Involvement with Children (Part II) Scale, however, using both self- and partner-assessments. An add score of Partner A's self-assessment and Partner B's partner-assessment was calculated, altering the score to account for both partners' perspectives on level of involvement. As previously stated, reliability established for mother and father self-assessment yielded $\alpha = .73$ and $\alpha = .84$ respectively. Reported partner assessments also showed good reliability for mothers ($M = 4.18$, $SD = .59$, $\alpha = .76$) and fathers ($M = 4.27$, $SD = .64$, $\alpha = .87$). Adding the average for Partner A's self-assessment and Partner B's partner-assessment (of Partner A) yielded the following results: mother involvement-couple perception ($M = 8.48$, $SD = .84$, $min. = 5.63$, $max. = 10.00$); father involvement-couple perception ($M = 8.00$, $SD = .99$, $min. = 5.75$, $max. = 9.63$).

Perceived team involvement. The Involvement with Children (Part II) is a measure of parents' perceptions of self and partner involvement in child-raising responsibilities. Since each person assesses self and partner, it allows for separate examination of mothers and fathers' views of perceived team behavior in the marital dyad, labeled *perceived team involvement*. I calculated the difference score between Partner A (and B) self- and partner-assessments, and then transformed the score to represent the absolute value to reflect the degree to which the perceived level of discrepancy in child-raising responsibilities. The absolute value of the difference score creates *perceived team involvement-mother* (PTB-M) and *perceived team involvement-father* (PTB-F), both of which are used to investigate the relationship between the individual's perception of their own and their partner's involvement with team behavior. Lower levels of discrepancy (i.e., scores closer to 0.00) shows the parent perceives a level of equality between the partners in child-raising responsibilities. Reliabilities for both self-assessments and partner-assessments have been established, and using a difference score from the Partner A self- partner-assessment showed the following: mothers' perception of team involvement ($M = 0.61$, $SD = 0.56$, $min = 0.00$, $max = 2.50$); fathers' perception of team involvement ($M = 0.72$, $SD = 0.58$, $min = 0.00$, $max = 3.13$).

Team behavior. Team behavior is the extent to which mother and father display a unified front when discussing recent problems or conflicts with their child. Coders rated marital couples in the videos using an observational coding measure. Team behavior is the observational measure to represent the actual behaviors used during the 7-minute interaction. Coders reviewed videos for verbal affirmations or statements of support communicated between the marital partners, particularly when it was at the expense of or

separate from the child. They also looked for nonverbal cues of close physical proximity of partners, face and body orientation, and body lean towards one another to indicate team behavior. Additionally, parents arguing or contradicting one another in discussion, leaning or orienting face and body away from each other acted as a counterindicator for *team behavior*. Coders trained to recognize this behavior demonstrated good reliability ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 1.17$, $\alpha = .82$).

Lead behavior. *Lead behavior* assessed the following: mother lead behavior, father lead behavior, and child lead behavior. Using an observational coding measure, coders viewed the 7-minute interaction and noted a score for an individual's use of leading during the conversation. Coders were trained to recognize and score each family member according to the use of lead behavior in the interaction. Verbal indicators of lead behavior included controlling topic choice, attempting to engage other or all family members in the discussion, actively participating or adding to the conversation, and regulating who speaks or when the conversation is over. Nonverbal cues of lead behavior include hand gestures to regulate turn taking in the discussion (e.g., pointing to someone, motioning to stop talking) or body orientation toward other family members to show engagement (Appendix A). Coders demonstrated good reliability for mother ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 0.94$, $\alpha = .81$), father ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 0.92$, $\alpha = .84$), and child lead behavior ($M = 1.63$, $SD = 1.26$, $\alpha = .94$).

Topic breadth. *Topic breadth* was measured as the number of different topics within the 7-minute interaction. Coders were trained to recognize when there were breaks or shifts in the conversation in order to count the number of different topics ($M = 2.24$, $SD = 1.51$, $max = 8$; $\kappa = .69$). Shifts were noted when there was a substantial shift in the

subject of the conversation marked by statements such like “let’s move on” or “I think we’ve talked about this enough.” It is important to note that if a topic was discussed, conversation drifted towards a different topic, and then later changed back to the first topic, coders were instructed to note them as separate topics. As serial conflict is the repetition of a conflict episode over time (Bevan et al., 2008), it seems important to note that these interactions were thought of as separate episodes and did not count them as one continuous argument. This is particularly appropriate as family members were instructed to discuss a recent problem, issue, or topic of conflict and it is extremely likely that these family members had interacted in serial conflict episodes related to similar topics in the recent past.

Topic depth. *Topic depth* is measured in this study as the length of time on average for a topic within the 7-minute interaction, which should indicate the length of time that might be typical when families discuss topics of conflict. Using the shift markers of *topic breadth*, I was able to calculate the time in seconds for each topic discussed during the interaction, and averaging the time for each triad. The overall mean for *topic depth* is approximately four minutes, thirteen seconds ($M = 253.34s$, $SD = 136.67s$, $\alpha = .83$).

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Analysis & Results

Hypothesis 1. Mother, father, and child reports of conformity orientation were projected to positively relate. Results supporting this hypothesis would demonstrate consistency with FCP's proposition of family members sharing similar perceptions of communication patterns. Mother conformity positively related to father conformity ($r = .29$; $p < .05$), signifying when mothers reported higher levels of child conformity fathers were also more likely to do so. However, there were no significant relationships between child conformity and father conformity ($r = .04$; $p = .40$) or mother conformity ($r = -.07$; $p = .32$), shown in Table 1. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 received partial support.

Table 1

Conformity Orientation Correlation Table

	1	2	3
1. Mother Conformity	--	.29*	-.07
2. Father Conformity	.29*	--	.04
3. Child Conformity	-.07	.04	--

* $p < .05$, one-tailed

Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 2 predicted mother, father, and child reports of conversation orientation would be positively related to support the assumption of family

members having similar perceptions. Mothers reported conversation orientation did not significantly relate to father conversation orientation 1 (i.e., item 19: “My child and I compromise during arguments”) ($r = .12; p = .20$) were not significant. Additionally, mother and father conversation orientation 2 (i.e., item 45: “For the most part my child likes to talk to me”) ($r = .08; p = .30$) were not significantly related, indicating there may not be a similarity of perception between parents regarding child compromising and disclosing behavior. Analysis of children’s reports showed there was a significant, positive relationship between child conversation orientation-mother and child conversation orientation-father ($r = .78, p < .001$), suggesting children perceive disclosing at similar levels to each parent.

A one-way ANOVA analysis indicated there was a significant difference between mothers reporting high conversation orientation ($M = 4.16, SD = 0.69$) versus low conversation orientation ($M = 3.40, SD = 0.62$) (mother conversation orientation 1) with child’s reported level of disclosure, $F(1, 40) = 5.38, p = .03$ (child conversation orientation-mother). This signifies mothers reporting the use of compromise strategies in mother-child conflict were more likely to have a child report disclosing at higher levels to the mother. Mother conversation orientation 2 showed no significant difference between high and low conversation orientation groups with the child’s reported level of disclosure to the mother (child conversation orientation-mother), $F(1, 41) = .10, p = .76$. Similarly, high and low conversation orientation indicated by father conversation orientation 1 and 2 showed no significant differences with the level of child disclosure to the father (child conversation orientation-father), respectively $F(1, 50) = 1.52, p = .23$, and $F(1, 50) = 1.64, p = .21$. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 3. Next I analyzed the relationship between perception and behavior in family triadic interactions using compiled item measures and observational codes. Mother and father lead behavior, topic depth, and topic breadth were predicted to significantly differ according to family perceived conversation orientation, such that high conformity orientation should relate to higher levels of mother and father lead behavior, topic depth, and lower levels of topic breadth (Hypothesis 3). First, topic depth was correlated with child conversation orientation-mother ($r = -.12, p = .22$) and child conversation orientation-father ($r = -.21, p = .09$). There were no significant associations between topic breadth and child conversation orientation-mother ($r = .08, p = .32$) and child conversation orientation-father ($r = .16, p = .16$). High and low conversation orientation mothers, indicated by mother conversation orientation 1, did not demonstrate a significant difference with measured topic depth, $F(1, 48) = .36, p = .55$, or topic breadth, $F(1, 48) = .001, p = .97$. High and low conversation orientation, indicated by mother conversation orientation 2, did not significantly differ in the number of topics discussed during the interaction, $F(1, 49) = 2.22, p = .14$. However, there was a significant difference between high and low conversation orientation mothers (mother conversation 2) and the observed level of topic depth $F(1, 49) = 3.89, p < .05$, such that a mother reporting that her child liked to talk to her was more likely to discuss one topic for a longer period of time on average. Father conversation orientation 1 and 2 showed no significant difference between high and low conversation orientation fathers with the level of topic depth (father conversation orientation 1 = $F(1, 49) = .005, p = .95$; father conversation orientation 2 = $F(1, 49) = .69, p = .41$, or topic breadth during conflict

(father conversation orientation 1 = $F(1, 49) = .45, p = .51$; father conversation orientation 2 = $F(1, 49) = .11, p = .74$).

The correlation between conversation orientation and parent lead behavior was examined via mother, father, and child conversation orientation indicators. Results did not demonstrate a significant association between child conversation orientation-mother and mother lead behavior ($r = .20, p = .10$). Additionally, high and low conversation orientation mothers according to mother conversation orientation 1 (compromise) and mother conversation orientation 2 (report children like to talk to the parent) did not significantly differ with the level of exhibited mother lead behavior, respectively $F(1, 49) = 2.25, p = .14$ and $F(1, 48) = .39, p = .54$. However, child conversation orientation-father significantly correlated with father lead behavior ($r = .29, p < .05$). Meaning higher levels of reported child disclosure to the father related to greater use of father lead behavior during conflict. Using father reports of conversation orientation, high and low conversation orientation fathers indicated by father conversation 1 did not significantly differ with the use of father lead behavior, $F(1, 49) = .45, p = .51$. Using father conversation orientation 2, there was a significant difference between high and low conversation orientation groups, $F(1, 49) = 6.02, p < .05$. High conversation orientation fathers ($M = 0.75, SD = 0.96$) exhibited higher levels of father lead behavior, whereas low conversation orientation fathers ($M = 2.24, SD = 1.18$) exhibited lower levels observed father lead behavior. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 4. Child lead behavior was predicted to have a negative relationship with conformity orientation and a positive relationship with conversation orientation. Results partially supported this supposition as child lead behavior showed a significant

negative relationship with father conformity orientation ($r = -.26, p < .05$) and mother conformity orientation ($r = -.30, p < .05$), demonstrating higher levels of parent-reported conformity orientation significantly related to lower levels of child lead behavior. Child conformity orientation did not relate to child lead behavior ($r = .24, p = .07$). Overall, results listed in Table 2 appear to show partial support for the prediction of an inverse relationship between family conformity and child lead behavior.

Table 2

Conformity Orientation, Team and Lead Behavior Correlations

	Team	Father Lead	Mother Lead	Child Lead
Father Conformity	-.11	.02	-.11	-.26*
Mother Conformity	-.11	-.14	.16	-.30*
Child Conformity	.21	.25	.11	.24

* $p < .05$ (one-tailed).

Though I predicted child lead behavior would positively associated with conversation orientation, it did not significantly relate to child conversation-father ($r = -.05, p = .37$) or child conversation-mother ($r = -.17, p = .14$). High and low conversation orientation mothers (mother conversation orientation 1) did not significantly differ in relation to child's use of lead behavior during the interaction, $F(1, 49) = .04, p = .84$. Similarly, high and low conversation orientation mothers via mother conversation orientation 2 did not significantly differ in predicting observed child lead behavior, $F(1, 49) = .11, p = .74$. Fathers' reports of high and low conversation orientation did not significantly differ in the child's use of lead behavior during the interaction for father

conversation orientation 1 and 2, respectively $F(1, 49) = .52, p = .47$ and $F(1, 49) = 2.70, p = .11$. Child's level of willingness to disclose, parents' reports of compromising in parent-child conflict, and believing the child likes to talk to him/her did not significantly predict the level of child lead behavior. Therefore, results did not support Hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 5. Reported conformity orientation was posited to be associated with higher levels of team behavior. First, mother conformity ($r = -.11, p = .22$) and father conformity ($r = -.11, p = .22$) were not significantly related with team behavior. The relationship of child conformity orientation and team behavior was also not significant ($r = .21, p = .09$). Results from these correlations suggest parents enacting behavior to show they are united during conflict does not associate with family conformity. Thus, results did not support Hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 6. Hypothesis 6 predicted level of involvement (i.e., MI, FI, MICP, FICP) would significantly relate to mother and father lead behavior. Mother involvement did not significantly relate to mother lead behavior ($r = -.04, p = .80$). The relationship of father involvement and father lead behavior was also not significant ($r = .12, p = .41$). These results do not support a link between the individual's perception of engagement and the enactment of this behavior. I posited by adjusting the variable to use both partners' perceptions of one individual's level of involvement (Partner A self-assessment and Partner B's partner assessment) I could create a more accurate representation of the individual's level of involvement. However, results did not support this prediction as adjusted scores of mother involvement-couple perception (MICP) and father involvement- couple perception (FICP) did not significantly relate to mothers' ($r = -.10, p$

= .24) and fathers' ($r = .16, p = .13$) use of lead behavior. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 was not supported.

Hypothesis 7. Team behavior was predicted to have positive relationship with perceived team behavior (Hypothesis 7). First, team behavior did not significantly relate to mothers reports of child-raising responsibility distribution (perceived team behavior-mother: $r = -.19, p = .10$). Similarly team behavior during the conflict interaction did not significantly relate to perceived team behavior-father ($r = -.23, p = .06$). Therefore, Hypothesis 7 was not supported.

Hypothesis 8a. Team behavior was predicted to be inversely related with child lead behavior and positively related to topic depth (Hypothesis 8a). Team behavior yielded a significant positive association with topic depth ($r = .38, p < .01$), suggesting the use of team behavior promoted a longer length of time on one topic during the conflict interaction. Team behavior and child lead behavior were not significantly related ($r = -.09, p = .26$). Thus, Hypothesis 8a only received partial support (listed in Table 3).

Hypothesis 8b. Lead behavior was predicted to be positively related with topic depth and inversely related with topic breadth (Hypothesis 8b). Mother lead behavior yielded a positive relationship with topic depth ($r = .35, p < .01$) and a negative relationship with topic breadth ($r = -.24, p < .05$) consistent with predictions. However, father lead behavior did not significantly relate to topic depth ($r = -.12, p = .21$) and topic breadth ($r = .18, p = .10$). Child lead behavior demonstrated relationships consistent with results of father lead behavior, however child lead behavior significantly related to both topic depth ($r = -.32, p < .05$) and topic breadth ($r = .32, p < .05$). Therefore, Hypothesis 8b received partial support (correlations listed in Table 3).

Hypothesis 8c. Child lead behavior was predicted to positively associate with mother and father lead behavior, as higher levels of lead behavior would indicate higher levels of conversation orientation. First, I analyzed the relationships between mother, father, and child lead behavior, listed in Table 3. Results showed mother lead behavior has a significant, inverse relationship with father lead behavior ($r = -.38, p < .01$) and child lead behavior ($r = -.32, p < .05$). Father lead behavior did not significantly relate to child lead behavior ($r = .10, p = .24$). Therefore, results do not support Hypothesis 8c.

Table 3

Observational Behavior Correlation Table

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Team Behavior	--	-.01	.01	-.09	-.46**	.38*
2. Father Lead Behavior	-.01	--	-.38**	.10	-.12	.18
3. Mother Lead Behavior	.01	-.38**	--	-.32*	.35*	-.24*
4. Child Lead Behavior	-.09	.10	-.32*	--	-.32*	.32*
5. Topic Depth	-.46**	-.12	.35*	-.32*	--	-.81**
6. Topic Breadth	.38*	.18	-.24*	.32*	-.81**	--

** $p < .001$ (one-tailed); * $p < .05$ (one-tailed).

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

This secondary analysis examined the current assumptions of family communication research, introduced newly conceptualized behavioral codes, and investigated the relationship between perceptions and enacted behavior in family conflict using FCP indicators. Though predictions conceptually connected to family communication patterns were largely unsupported, results offer insight as to the direction of future research.

Perceptions of Conformity and Conversation Orientation

Perceptions of conformity orientation. One aim of this project was to examine family members' perspectives of conformity and conversation orientation to test the assumptions of family theory. Results for Hypothesis 1 and 2 demonstrated some discrepancy in perceptions, only partially supporting FCP assumption that family members share similar views of family communication. Specifically, mothers and fathers' reports of conformity orientation were positively related, indicating when one parent reported higher levels of conformity orientation the other parent did as well. However, father-child and mother-child reports were not significantly, positively related as previously predicted.

Indicators did not utilize the same item composites, yet the items were chosen due to the conceptual connection with FCP measures and were therefore expected to yield significant relationships. First, it is possible child's perceptions of parental rules and

expectations (i.e., child conformity) do not correspond with parents' perspectives of the way in which the actually engages in conflict (i.e., mother conformity, father conformity). Parent measures of the child's behavior included items such as "We almost never seem to agree," and "My child usually listens to what I tell him/her," which significantly relate to child's perception of parent-enforced rule rigidity. Though parents may be perceived as expecting a high level of control over the child, it does not necessarily indicate the child will act consistently with set expectations. Additionally, since high conformity orientation families often report higher levels of conflict avoidance (Dumlao & Botta, 2000), it could lead to many unresolved issues in the family. Conflict avoidance compounded with multiple unresolved issues could lead to venting (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2003). It is possible children will engage in venting or avoiding behavior and lead to parents' varying reports of their child's behavior. Furthermore, FCP predicts children will adhere to the expectations and rules of the hierarchy (Schrodt et al., 2008), however, these results suggest a family's rigidity in rules for children does not indicate the child will not consistently demonstrate deference to parents. Consequently, implications from this would suggest revisiting the conceptualization and application of the family communication patterns framework, which measures a broad picture of the family and loses the nuances of family interactions.

Perceptions of conversation orientation. Results from analysis of mother-father, father-child, and mother-child perspectives of conversation orientation yielded partial support for Hypothesis 2. First, child conversation orientation-mother was positively related to the child conversation orientation-father, such that a child who reports a willingness to discuss personal information with his/her mother reported a willingness to

disclose to the father as well. These results suggest the child may view parents similarly when deciding whether to disclose personal information. Child disclosure levels representing conversation orientation in the mother-child and father-child were significant, yet other conversation orientation indicators did not show support for Hypothesis 2. Analysis of parent and child reports of conversation orientation were largely not significant, with only mother conversation orientation 1 demonstrating a significant difference between high and low conversation orientation groups. This seems to relate when mothers use compromising conflict strategies in parent-child conflict (high conversation orientation), children are more likely to report a willingness to disclose. In isolation, implications of this relationship suggest mothers and children perceive the level of direct, open expression similarly, which is characteristic of high conversation orientation. However, when attending to the overall results between family members' reports of the perceived level of openness and direct communication, the results seem to alter the implications. Mothers and fathers respective significant and not significant relationships with child conversation orientation suggest a reported difference between mothers and fathers' use of compromise behavior in parent-child conflict interactions. This seems consistent with past research demonstrating women are more likely than men to report higher levels of open expression and lower levels of perceived family conformity (Ritchie, 1997). Specifically, since mother conversation orientation 1 gauged whether the mother compromised with the child in conflict. Since compromising and collaborating strategies require more direct communication from both participants (Dumlao & Botta, 2000), it is possible women are more accustomed to directly engaging

with a family member, whereas men are often socialized to be less expressive and expect children to adhere to the rules.

Also, counter to the supposition that family members share a similar orientation to family communication, this difference suggests there is a possible discrepancy in child-raising strategies between mothers and fathers. In fact, examinations of mothers and fathers' parenting approaches demonstrated that differences in approaches yielded more marital discord (Estlein & Theiss, 2012). These differences in mother father responses could also be the result of communication variation due to family relationship and roles, as research has shown that in comparison to sons, daughters are more likely to received positive communication from fathers (Miller & Lane, 1991). Though this does not directly answer the question of why mothers' and not fathers' responses significantly related to child reports, it does indicate the communication orientation could be influenced by role or relationship within the family.

Assessing the relationships of perceived conformity and conversation orientation demonstrates partial support for FCP's assumption of one broad communication pattern in the family system, yet also leaves room for extension of the theoretical framework. Significant, positive results demonstrated by mother and father conformity, child conversation orientation-father and mother, and mother conversation orientation 1-child conversation orientation-mother relationships offer support in confirming the assumption of shared perspectives of family communication suggested by FCP. All perceptual assessments were not positively related as predicted, which indicates there is some discrepancy of family members' reported conformity and conversation orientation level. Though FCP assumes the family operates under similar perceptions of appropriate

communication determined by set levels of conversation and conformity orientation, research has shown there are differences in individuals' reports of behavior exhibited in the family (Miller & Lane, 1991; Youniss & Ketterlinus, 1987). Results of this study seem to offer support for this, counter to predictions. Overall, these results do not fully support the assumption of FCP predicting a shared orientation to communication across family members. Future research using the FCP framework should measure multiple family members' perceptions to directly test the assumption(s) of the theory and expand accordingly.

Perceptions of Conflict Communication and Observed Behavior

A second goal of the study was to utilize an observational coding scheme and questionnaire assessments to investigate the relationship between perception and conceptually related behavior. Results from this study demonstrate perceptual indicators may not fully indicate use of the behavioral counterpart, which substantiates advocating for researchers to utilize both perceptual assessments and observational coding measures. Since questionnaire assessments did not directly inquire about the perceived use of team and lead behavior from family members, I proposed certain self- and partner-assessments could act as indicators for the measure of perceived team and lead behavior.

Overall, predictions linking observed behaviors with the behavior indicators were largely not significant, suggesting 1) perceptions are not reliable indicators of enacted behavior or 2) the behaviors are not tied to FCP or involvement indicators as predicted, but could be related to other communication patterns and processes.

Conversation orientation predicting topic depth and breadth. Conversation orientation was predicted to positively relate to topic depth and negatively relate to topic

breadth (Hypothesis 3). The hypothesis was not supported, as conversation orientation did not predict the average amount of time spent on a topic (i.e., topic depth) nor the number of topics discussed (i.e., topic breadth). These results seem counterintuitive as the conversation orientation indicators (e.g., willingness to disclose and compromising in conflict) relate to a level of comfort with direct engagement, and family members should therefore be expected to converse in depth or for longer periods of time (Keating et al., 2013). Although results do not support the prediction, it does seem to show some consistency with previous research. For example, Keating et al. (2013) demonstrated that regardless of the level of conversation or conformity orientation, family members engaged in discussing difficult topics. As families participating in this study were asked to discuss a recent problem or topic of conflict, it is possible these discussions were seen as necessary difficult discussions uninfluenced by the level of conversation orientation the family reports.

These results also offer insight into the nature of families communication, specifically regarding the nature of discussions in relation to the conversation orientation. Conversation orientation did not significantly relate to topic depth and topic breadth, suggesting families high in conversation orientation may feel comfortable expressing openly and discussing various sides of an issue (Schrodt et al., 2008), yet do not always need long periods of time to engage in the discussion. Meaning, though conversation orientation predicts a likelihood of more engagement and interaction, it does not necessarily relate to how long a topic is discussed, rather that it was discussed and how much expression of thought or emotion was involved. However, the current measure assumes the length of time on one topic indicates the level of superficial or in depth

conversation, such that less time would limit the degree to which a family is able to discuss a topic in depth. These observational measures could be a limitation, as topic depth and topic breadth does not necessarily indicate an elaboration of views or the allowance for multiple individuals to offer perspectives regarding the conflict. Instead, an addition to the measure could include an assessment of the degree to which families are perceived to discuss an issue from multiple sides or in depth, which could possibly yield a better observational code to relate to conversation orientation.

Conversation orientation predicting parent lead behavior. In this study, I advanced newly conceptualized team and lead behavior observational measures, which were predicted to relate to conversation orientation and/or conformity orientation. In addition to predicting links with topic depth, and topic breadth, conversation orientation was predicted to positively relate to mother and father lead behavior (Hypothesis 3). Consistent with this hypothesis child conversation orientation-father was positively associated with father lead behavior, indicating higher levels of child disclosure (to the father) positively predicted fathers use of lead behavior during the conflict interaction. In contrast, child conversation orientation-mother and mother lead behavior did not yield a significant relationship. When considering these relationships and the significant relationship between conversation orientation-mother and father, it would seem children's willingness to disclose is similar with mothers and fathers, yet parents' behaviors differ during family interactions. FCP asserts the level of conversation orientation determines the level of openness and expression in families (Keating et al., 2012; Schrodts et al., 2008); however, parents then seem to be using different behaviors to promote an open channel in parent-child communication. Though child response

indicators showed partial support, parent conversation orientation indicators did not significantly predict parent lead behavior as proposed. High conversation orientation fathers significantly differed from low conversation orientation fathers in the use of father lead behavior, such that a father reporting a belief that his child liked to talk to him was more likely to exhibit directing or regulating behavior during the conflict interaction. Significant differences were not seen in high and low conversation orientation groups using mother conversation orientation 1, mother conversation orientation 2, or father conversation orientation 1 in the level of observed mother or father lead behavior.

Fathers exhibiting lead behavior were significantly related with child conversation orientation-father and father conversation orientation 2, however mother lead behavior did not demonstrate significant associations with conversation orientation indicators. This seems to suggest when fathers take control of the discussion are possibly seen as more approachable, and perhaps father lead behavior is a form of relational maintenance behavior to signal closeness in the relationship. Additionally it is possible, mothers utilize alternative behavior to signal social availability with children, but with similar end results in the parent-child relationship. Ledbetter (2009) determined FCP dimensions were related to individual's use of relational maintenance behavior, such that face-to-face maintenance positively related to conversation orientation. However, since this study only examined lead behavior and team behavior it is possible mothers may utilize other forms of behaviors to signal openness in the mother-child relationship. Though it offers insight into the communication behaviors and patterns in the family, these results do not support the notion that parent lead behavior is predicted by level of conversation orientation. Since this study only utilized indicators, examination of the relationship

using Ritchie's (1991) RFCP measures could produce different results for this relationship, such that conversation or conformity orientation could predict the use of mother and father lead behavior in discussions.

Conversation and conformity orientation predicting child lead behavior.

Child lead behavior was predicted to demonstrate an inverse relationship with reports of conformity orientation and a positive relationship with conversation orientation indicators (Hypothesis 4). Mother and father conformity orientation were negatively related to child lead behavior, signifying children were more likely to use lead behavior when parents reported lower levels of child conformity during parent-child conflict interactions.

This similarity in mother and father perceptions of child-exhibited behavior demonstrates some shared perspective of parent-child conflict interactions. At first glance, this would suggest consistency with the family communication patterns framework, as FCP predicts (1) a shared family orientation to communication and (2) children will conform to the expectations of the hierarchy (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2003). However, when examining the results from all conformity orientation indicators, this support seems to be diminished. Child reports of conformity orientation demonstrated no significant relationship with child lead behavior as predicted; meaning, children's reports of higher rigidity in expectations or rules did not predict conformity via behavior while engaging in a conflict interaction. Since FCP determines parents in high conformity orientation families hold more power and authority (Schrodt et al., 2008; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2003), this authority and expectation of authority should theoretically minimize a child's use of regulating behavior in a conversation. Therefore, it is possible the significant results mark a similarity in perception of children's past behavior of conforming, rather

than indicating a relationship to the expectation of conformity in the family. Since behaviors have been shown to affect the perceptions (Carrere et al., 2000; Gottman, 2000), this relationship suggests children's past behavior are linked with exhibition of behavior in the present. However, additional examination of conformity orientation's influence on child lead behavior using RFCP measures is needed to more accurately demonstrate the extent to which conformity orientation predicts child lead behavior.

Child lead behavior was predicted to positively relate to reports of conversation orientation, such that a child from a high conversation orientation family would be more likely to exhibit child lead behavior. However, child lead behavior did not significantly associate with mother, father, or child conversation orientation indicators, demonstrating a child's willingness to disclose, and assumed comfort with the process, did not relate to the child leading the conversation during the conflict interaction. In addition to this, mothers' and fathers' reports of constructive relational communication (i.e., compromising with child, child likes to talk with parent) was not indicative of a conflict environment in which children were likely to use lead behavior. However, conformity orientation was a better predictor of child lead behavior, suggesting children will perceive some level of freedom to directly engage the ruling hierarchy in order to feel comfortable with enacting lead behavior. Therefore, children with the ability to demonstrate individuation from the marital dyad are more likely to enact lead behavior regardless of the level of constructive, open communication reported by family members. Laursen and Collins (2004) report adolescence in the stages of puberty and early adolescence are more likely to be motivated by the need to enact behaviors to promote ego identity and individuation from parents, rather than practicing those of impulse control. Therefore,

child enacted lead behavior could be utilized as a tool to promote goals of autonomy from parents, rather than as a tool for constructive, open dialogue with family members.

Implications suggest the perceived level of conformity is a motivating force to determine when a child may take a more active role in conflict interactions, somewhat consistent with Dumlao and Botta's (2000) results showing lower conformity orientation and higher conversation sons were more likely to report using direct conflict styles with fathers. It is also possible children in early adolescent stages looking to deviate and promote own ego identity will affect the overall perceived level of family conformity. Additionally, it is important to note measures were conceptually linked with conversation and conformity orientation, but were not a direct test of the dimensions. Future research using FCP measures and lead behavioral measures may find results more consistent with previous research examining conflict communication styles and FCP conformity and conversation orientation (e.g., Dumlao & Botta, 2000), such that lead behavior will indicate direct constructive communication related to high conversation and/or low conformity orientation.

Conformity orientation predicting observed team behavior. Conformity orientation was also predicted to relate to the level of enacted team behavior enacted by the marital dyad (Hypothesis 5). Results did not support this prediction, as conformity orientation did not significantly relate to team behavior. Drawing from this, team behavior will be used by families reporting high or low levels of perceived family conformity. Implications suggest unity in the marital dyad is not derived through a strict hierarchy, but rather could be a product or indicator of other relationally constructive processes. For example, Carrere and colleagues (2000) advance the notion that newly

married couples might feel more instability as they have not had time develop a relational identity or sense of unity in comparison to individuals who have been married for a longer period of time. Individuals demonstrating a stronger marital bond operated as a unit during interviews; marital stability positively related to a couples' marital bond and perceived global perception of the marriage, and predicted longer lasting marriages (Carrere et al., 2000). Gottman (2000) also reported validating couples are more likely to view the couple as a team instead of as individuals, and are therefore more likely value companionship. The lack of association between team behavior and conformity orientation could instead be explained by a more unified partnership stemming from a strong marital bond and a positive global impression of the relationship.

Family coalitions are also indicative of a high level of interdependence and unity in the dyad (Penn, 1983); however, levels of interdependence in the dyad may not indicate level of rigidity in the overall family structure. For example, high conversation-low conformity orientation families use open communication to connect the family unit (Dumlao & Botta, 2000), and as result, interdependence is reached without a high level of family conformity. As families are characterized as systems composed of interdependent individuals (Estlein & Theiss, 2013), families inherently have some level of interdependence among individuals. Therefore, the level of interdependence on a dyadic level could be a more important predictor of team behavior than the level of conformity and/or interdependence on a systemic level. Future research of team behavior in the marital dyad should determine whether a strong marital bond, positive global impressions, or high levels of relationship satisfaction predict the use of team behavior during parent(s)-child conflict interactions. Additionally, future research examining

family relationships may show the level of interdependence (whether functional or dysfunctional) positively predicts the extent to which a family dyad forms a coalition and engages in team behavior, both in the marital dyad and in parent-child relationships.

Perceptions of involvement predicting parent lead behavior. Lead and team behavior were conceptually linked with FCP conversation and conformity orientations, however, results largely did not support the predictions. Observed behaviors were also hypothesized to relate to scale measure indicators representing perceived lead behavior and perceived team behavior. The perceived lead behavior indicator was derived from questionnaire measures assessing one's own and partner's level of perceived parental involvement in child-raising responsibilities (Involvement with Children, Part II). Using the perceived lead behavior indicator, I examined the relationship between perceived and observed lead behavior, predicting a positive association between perception and enacted behavior (Hypothesis 6). The hypothesis was unsupported, such that perceived level of involvement in child-raising responsibilities for self and partner (i.e., MI, FI, MICP, FICP) did not positively relate to mothers or fathers' use of lead behavior used in the triadic conflict interactions. One explanation is an individual's perception is not congruent with exhibited behavior. Estlein & Theiss (2012) reported discrepancies between third party observers ratings of participant behavior and participants' reports of self and partner behavior. Additionally, Carrere et al. (2000) report marital partners often utilize global perceptions as a means of assessing a partner's behavior, and therefore perceptions of an event can be skewed positively or negatively by general perceptions in the process. Therefore, the use of lead behavior during the conflict, showing engagement in discussion-based child-raising responsibilities, may not be representative of the general

behavior of the parent(s). Additionally, the assessment of self and partner's roles in child-raising may be affected by global perceptions of the partner's past behavior.

An alternative explanation to the lack of support for Hypothesis 6 is due to the method of measurement of perceived lead behavior, as the scale was not created as an indicator for perceived lead behavior. The scale assesses task and discussion types of child-raising responsibilities, however, the level of support demonstrated through these responsibilities will not necessarily indicate the parent will also be quick to direct or regulate the conversation. Instead, an individual could allow or rely on the marital partner to take over during conflict episodes, which is consistent with the findings of this paper as mothers' and fathers' use of lead behavior was inversely related (discussed below). Also, mother and father involvement created by the ICS gauges tasks through more general questions (i.e., "Discussing problems with the children that they might be having") rather than asking for retrospective accounts of a particular enactment of the task or related interaction. Since global perceptions affect the perception of a particular event (Carrere et al., 2000), future study using more focused questions regarding the specific interaction and/or specific observable behavior could act as a better perceptual indicator of lead behavior used in conflict interactions. Therefore, future research examining reported perceptions and observations of lead behavior should directly assess the perceived level of regulation or engagement during conversation (event and globally) instead of using abstract (albeit conceptually linked) indicators. This will offer more definitive support as to whether the perceptions of family members are reliable in assessing behavior used in conflict interactions (during a singular event and use of the behavior in general).

Perceptions of team behavior predicting observed team behavior. Using the Involvement with Children (Part II) Scale (ICS) to gauge the perceived level of teamwork in the marital dyad, I predicted perceived team behavior would positively relate to the level of observed team behavior used during the interaction (Hypothesis 7). Results did not support this prediction, as mothers and fathers' team behavior did not significantly relate to perceived team behavior-mother and perceived team behavior-father respectively. Similar to results described in for Hypothesis 6, a nonsignificant relationship between perceived and observed team behavior could be due to the method of measurement for perceived team behavior using ICS as an indicator. Using items targeted to gauge perceived team behavior in a conflict or coalition behavior on a more global level could more accurately predict the use of observed team behavior in family communication interactions. Since family coalitions can act as functional support for the included individuals and/or may result in negative communication outcomes for family members (Vuchinich et al., 1994; Penn, 1983), it is important to understand the forms of behaviors used in the family in order to understand how perceptions might be formed and affected by behaviors. Examining the behaviors and perceptions of family teams will offer a more nuanced understanding of family dyadic relationships and communication patterns.

Observed Behavior Codes in Family Conflict Interactions

In addition to examining the relationships between family members' perceptions and perceptual-behavioral connections, I was also concerned with identifying associations between exhibited behaviors used in the family interaction (i.e., connections between behaviors). Hypothesis 8 was separated into three parts: (a) team behavior will

positively relate to topic depth and inversely relate to child lead behavior, consistent with ties to conversation and conformity orientation; (b) lead behavior would demonstrate a positive relationship with topic depth and an inverse relationship with topic breadth, consistent with conceptual ties to conversation orientation; and (c) mother, father, and child lead behavior would positively associate, showing consistency with ties to conversation orientation.

Team behavior predicting child lead behavior and topic depth. First, team behavior was predicted to relate positively to topic depth and negatively associate with child lead behavior (Hypothesis 8a). Previous predictions connected team behavior with conformity orientation (though unsupported), thus, it was also predicted team behavior would relate to decreased likelihood of child lead behavior during the conflict. This hypothesis only received partial support as team behavior positively related to topic depth, yet did not yield a significant, negative relationship with child lead behavior. Therefore, the more parents appeared united during the conflict (team behavior) the more amount of time was spent on a topic (on average), but did not significantly predict the degree to which a child will directly engage in or drive the conversation. Since parent coalitions have been reported to relate to ineffective problem solving with children (Vuchinich et al., 1994), results showing team behavior did not significantly predict a decrease in child lead behavior suggests the relationship between coalitions and constructive parent-child conflict should be further examined. Child lead behavior was conceptualized as an assessment of direct engagement and regulation, but did not delineate between agreement and contradiction with parents. Refining the measures of team and lead behavior could strengthen the connection; specifically if child lead

behavior is adjusted to reflect contradiction it is more likely higher use of parent team behavior will result in a decline of child (contradicting) lead behavior, consistent with reports of parent coalitions being dominant in the conversation (Vuchinich et al., 1994). Also, since team behavior and topic depth demonstrated a positive relationship, the reported relationship seems consistent with Vuchinich and colleagues' (1994) reports of ineffective problem solving from the child as a result of parent dominance in the decision making process. Overall, results suggest parent dominance via parent team and child lead behavior does not seem to indicate a specific family communication pattern type or style, rather could be indicative of other influences or processes such as a strong marital bond acting as a unit (Carrere et al., 2000) or individuation from parents respectively. However, future studies assessing FCP longitudinally could determine how family styles affect family, specifically child, development and determine the extent to which FCP can predict child individuation and parent dominance via team behavior.

Lead behavior predicting topic depth and topic breadth. Next, I predicted lead behavior would positively relate to topic depth and negatively relate to topic breadth (Hypothesis 8b); however, results did not fully support Hypothesis 8b. Though mother lead behavior demonstrated a positive association with topic depth and negative relationship with topic breadth, father and child lead behavior did not achieve the same results. Counter to predictions, child lead behavior was significantly associated with decreased time spent on average per topic during the 7-minute interaction (topic depth), whereas father lead behavior did not significantly predict topic depth.

These results seem to indicate the purpose of enacting lead behavior could vary according to the role or goals of the involved individuals. Individuals pursuing self-

interested goals were more likely to use distributive tactics, whereas individuals attempting to achieve pro-relational goals were more likely to use integrative tactics in conflict (Canary et al., 1988). Keck and Samp (2007) extend this to show when an individual possessing identity-relationship goal combination or other identity goals were more likely to utilize integrative tactics, and those focused on achieving self-instrumental goal combination more often reported using distributive tactics. As lead behavior is conceptually similar to demand behavior in terms of conversational directness, goal formation and pursuit could significantly influence the use of lead behavior in conflict. For example, topic depth positively related with mother lead behavior and negatively related to child lead behavior, suggesting mothers and children use of lead behavior result in different outcomes, and possibly are motivated by different goal pursuits. Women are more likely to discuss a wider variety of topics at a more in depth level (Youniss & Ketterlinus, 1987), and tend to fill the role of peacemaker in the family (Laursen & Collins, 2004; Vuchinich, 1987). Therefore, mothers may be more comfortable with discussing topics in depth with the family in order to settle a dispute, particularly if the mother identifies as the peacekeeper in family conflict. Consistent with this line of reasoning, families demonstrated greater topic depth when mothers enacted lead behavior, which suggests mothers' utilize lead behavior may do so to promote a more thorough discussion or influence others to stay on topic. This would also inform results showing father lead behavior and topic depth did not significantly relate, such that fathers' identified roles and goal pursuit may alter the enacted behavior in the conflict episode. Instead, the role of the father may lend itself to other behaviors where the frequency or level of lead behavior is unimportant, but rather other behaviors or the

impact of a single moment of lead behavior is more relationally and instrumentally important for the conflict resolution.

The influence or role and goal pursuit can be further extended to understand the inverse relationship between child lead behavior and topic depth. Results of this study showed the more a child enacted lead behavior in the conflict interaction, the less likely a family would spend an extended period of time on a single issue (on average). Since demand behavior predicts both partner and own withdraw behavior (Siffert & Schwarz, 2011) and tactics may shift with goal formation and pursuit (Keck & Samp, 2007), it is possible children would use lead behavior to engage in the conflict as a tactic to shift the conversation to a goal that is perceived as more important to the child or as a means to change the subject in order to withdraw from the conflict in general. Also, as adolescents are more likely to enact behaviors that will promote individuation from parents (Laursen & Collins, 2004), it is possible the goal of children enacting lead behavior and/or withdrawing from conflict could be a means to demonstrate autonomy from parents, and a lack of willingness to openly discuss the topic. Though it seems counterintuitive that a person would engage in order to disengage, lead behavior may act similar to demand behavior as a predictor of withdrawal when the goal is to demonstrate autonomy or separation from other family members. Further investigation of lead behavior could show lead behavior as a tactic, neither inherently constructive nor destructive, rather a tool leading to various outcomes depending on the goals of the individual. This is particularly necessary as the implications are additionally complicated when accounting for the resultant associations of family members' enacted lead behavior during the conflict interaction.

Exhibiting lead behavior. Based on a predicted relationship with conversation and conformity orientation, I predicted child, mother, and father lead behavior would be positively associated (Hypothesis 8c). Results did not support this as mother lead behavior demonstrated a negative relationship with child lead behavior (significant) and father lead behavior (not significant), and child lead behavior was positively related with father lead behavior (significant). First, the negative relationship of mother lead behavior and child lead behavior seems to suggest that during the conflict interaction a mother might be regulating the current topic to stay on task, but an adolescent child might use the behavior in the hopes of directing the conversation away from the current order of business. As previously stated, it is possible the child is engaging in lead behavior to demonstrate autonomy from the parents and/or utilize the direct engagement as a tool to steer the conversation away so that he/she might once again withdraw from the conflict. However, this issue is complicated when identifying the inverse relationship of mother lead behavior and child lead behavior. Results from Hypothesis 8c, would suggest the mother is not promoting conversational engagement with the child or father, but rather is driving the conversation in such a manner that the child is less likely to directly respond to the mother in conflict. Identifying higher levels of child lead behavior as relating to lower levels of mother lead behavior seems consistent with current notions of parent-child conflict, such that children are reported to renegotiate roles in the family via conflict that reduces mothers' authority in the relationship (Lausen & Collins, 2004; Steinberg, 1981). However, these reports also suggest that the negotiation of roles affects the father less than the mother (Lausen & Collins, 2004; Steinberg, 1981). This would explain the positive relationship between father lead behavior and child lead behavior,

such that the father would not be impacted by a child's use of lead behavior if it is being used as a tactic to demonstrate autonomy from the parents.

Overall, results suggest lead behavior may be used differently depending on the goal and role of the individual, specifically in the case of mothers and adolescents. An alternative explanation is that mothers may act as a reinforcement of rules and/or children are modeling behavior (specifically those enacted by the father). Elwood and Shrader (1998) noted the possibility of modeling or reinforcement as two distinct explanations for children's behavior, such that children could be imitating adults or following set rules. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2009) states an individual will imitate behavior if the perceived outcomes are evaluated as positive (Segrin, Taylor, & Altman, 2005). Children may determine using lead behavior in the interaction results in more autonomy and therefore is pursued as a means of promoting individuation. This could be further promoted in families when the child perceives modeling the behavior will be consistent with expectations or will not result in negative consequences. Though it is unclear if the possibility of modeling varies according to family structure or type, it is possible children using lead behavior in conflict are modeling behaviors of family members that are in turn being reinforced during the interaction. It is possible then with further study whether the roles of parents determine whether a child could be modeling behavior or acting in response to reinforcement strategies via lead behavior.

An additional factor that could potentially affect a family members' use of lead behavior is the perceived power in the relationship. Family members' use control attempts to create a more equitable distribution of power, particularly adolescents engaging in parent-child interactions (Miller & Lane, 1991). Predictions for this study

accounted for a power differential according to rigidity of the family hierarchy and openness of expression as described in FCP (Ritchie, 1997). Power afforded through hierarchy (without factoring in conversation orientation) would suggest decreased levels of child lead behavior when fathers and/or mothers lead behavior were at higher levels. However, this was not the case as father and child lead behavior was positively related, and mother and child lead behavior were negatively related. Therefore, power given through a general view of the hierarchical structure described by FCP may not predict the use of lead behavior; rather it takes a more nuanced assessment of relational power to predict conflict behavior.

For example, dyadic power theory (DPT) (Dunbar, 2004) states power and dominance are associated in relationships such that individuals with a lower power differential are more likely to enact power plays through dominance behaviors. Dunbar & Abra (2010) reported that individuals who were more vocally expressive and argumentative were more likely to be rated as dominant by both participants and third party coders. The nature of this theory is such that the focus is on the interacting dyad (Dunbar & Abra, 2010; Dunbar, 2004), however, extension of the theory could inform the nature of power and attempts of dominance in family conflict interactions. First, it is possible marital partners will be more likely to use lead behavior when engaged in a dyadic conflict than when the child is included in the discussion. However, since an individual can exhibit acts of authority similarly towards a marital partner and a child (Estlein & Theiss, 2013), marital partners may show acts of authority over both the partner and the child simultaneously. Therefore, future research should determine specifically what or whom the conversation topic is targeting (e.g., partner, child, family),

demonstrating whether an individual is attempting to regulate partner, child, or partner and child concurrently. It is also possible for multiple people to drive or regulate the conversation, but not probable as research shows a high-power partner can control what occurs within a family conversation (Christensen & Heavey, 1990). However, it is important to determine when and if parents will act as a team when exerting power over a child, or whether one or both parents will attempt to exert power over multiple (in this case two) family members at once. Though lead behavior is conceptualized as a constructive behavior, enacting the behavior may be used as a tool of demonstrating power and authority and therefore could be investigated as a conflict tactics or attempt to gain power during a discussion. Overall, there are several possible explanations and directions for future research concerning lead behavior. Though it was conceptualized as a tool for constructive communication, these results suggest that it works as neither constructive nor destructive inherently, rather may be explained through individuals' goals formation and pursuit, role, or relational power. Therefore, future research is necessary to understand the function of lead behavior and the resulting relational outcomes.

Limitations

Conceptually related indicators of conversation and conformity orientation dimensions were used to demonstrate a possible relationship among family members' perceptions. I predicted family members' perceptions would positively relate, however results demonstrated that perceptions of conversation and conformity orientation did not significantly relate overall. Results suggest family members may have different

perceptions and expectations for communication and behavior within the system, counter to current theoretical assumptions of family communication patterns.

It is important to note implications of these results are limited due to the nature of the secondary data analysis. It is primarily the best course of action to use direct measures (i.e., conversation orientation, conformity orientation), however, in order to work within the confines of the secondary data analysis I needed to use conceptually related indicators. Results suggest potential issues with the theoretical assumptions, but this method limited the project as parent and child indicators were derived from different measures. For example, reports of conformity orientation consisted of a compilation of items from the CBQ scale for parents and items from the Parental Control Scale to indicate the child's perception. Theoretically these concepts should relate to conformity orientation and so relate to each other, however, it reduces the impact of conclusions. In addition to this, the conversation orientation indicators derived from the CBQ scale also posed a unique challenge for this project. Using single items as indicators does not provide a strong or robust measure of conversation orientation, and using a reliable scale could provide different results in support of the current framework. However, the targeted items kept within the spirit of the project in testing the reported perceptions of family members, and overall results do seem to confirm there could be areas of the theoretical framework that should be more closely examined.

Team and lead behavior are newly conceptualized behavioral codes introduced in this study, which produced informative results for future expansion for communication research in family and romantic relationship contexts. These behaviors were not strongly predicted by family members' expectations of conformity or conversational openness

(i.e., indicators of conversation orientation and conformity orientation); however, as previously discussed, it is likely these behaviors relate to other communication processes not examined in this study. First, team behavior did not relate to conformity orientation as predicted, but could instead be a function of a strong marital dyad consistent with perceptual assessments of family coalitions in previous research (Vuchinich et al., 1994; Penn, 1983).

Second, family members' enacted lead behavior demonstrated varied relationships with perceptual measures and other observational measures, counter to predictions. Lead behavior could instead be related to a number of other communication-related processes, such as goal formation and pursuit, individual's identified family role, or the relational power dynamic. Specifically, the difference in family members' roles could better explain why there was a positive relationship between topic depth and mother lead behavior and a negative relationship with topic depth and child lead behavior. This relationship seems to suggest that during the conflict interaction, a mother might be directing or regulating the existing conversation in order to stay on topic, but that a child might be attempting to direct the conversation away from the current order of business. Adolescents are more likely to directly engage in conversations when they are attempting to assert independence and fight against their parents' wishes (Laursen & Collins, 2004).

This project's focus on using an observational coding scheme did not yield results consistent with predictions, yet the introduction of measures and results lay the groundwork to better understand how these behaviors relate to communication processes through future research. The lack of significant relationships could be influenced by the

measures themselves. Observational measures were determined to be sufficiently reliable, however research should investigate the validity of the observational coding measure for additional support. It is possible the conceptual and methodological definition was too broad, and coders are rating behavior that could be classified as another concept. As this is the first time testing these concepts, future research should focus on narrowing the definition and measure of the behavior to increase precision of the concept.

Conclusion

Overall, results from this study support the notion that further research is necessary to expand current family theory. Family members' perceptions of conversation and conformity orientation did not significantly relate, supporting the notion that further research examining and expanding current family theory is necessary. This study further examined the role of FCP types in predicting conflict behaviors assessed through an observational coding measure, however, the behaviors and perceptual assessments largely did not relate. As perceptual measures did not significantly predict the use of behavior in a conflict interaction, as well as varied use of behavior contradictory to expectations based on FCP, these results demonstrate the importance of utilizing observational coding measures in conjunction with survey methods when investigating family communication. Research focusing on expanding and developing lead and team behavior, as well as other conflict behaviors, will offer insight into the processes and patterns of conflict communication within the family that could translate into other conflict communication contexts (e.g., romantic relationship, friendship).

The investigation of perceptual processes and behaviors may indicate whether there are positive forms of communication patterns and behavior according to conceptual

family types. Ideally, this proposed direction of research will guide further theoretical investigation, and may inform translational research for practical application purposes. This study yielded mixed results, however, those inconsistencies establish the need for theoretical expansion. It is only through additional research questioning theoretical assumptions, using assessments from multiple family members, and utilizing observational methods will offer a more in depth understanding and expansion of theory be possible.

CHAPTER 5

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APPENDIX A
OBSERVATIONAL CODING SCHEME

1. Coding Measures
 - A. Topic Breadth and Depth
 - i. Topic Breadth
 - ii. Topic Depth
 - B. Lead Behaviors
 - C. Team Behaviors

Code: Topic Breadth & Depth

(A) Breadth

Topic Breadth Explanation

Topic breadth is assessed during the 7-minute interaction through *the number of topics*, noted by the beginning and end of one topic or shift in conversation. Coders use onset coding to determine the point of the topic(s) starting and stopping point. During the interaction a family may show a substantial change in topic, whether through the decision that one topic is completed or the natural shift in discussion. For example, a shift from the issue of not completing household chores to the issue of fighting with siblings or not listening to parents.

Coding Method

Onset coding marking the start and stop points of topic(s) during the interaction.

Topic Breadth/Shift Indicators

Verbal displays

Family members might ask if the discussion is completed or state that the matter is resolved enough to move on to something more important, using phrases such as: “I think this matter is resolved,” “We seem to be finished talking about this, let’s move on,” “I would rather talk about X now...” It could also be a tangential shift in the conversation, which is indicated by the change in subject, or by an attempt to move the conversation back to a previous topic, “we have gotten off topic, I thought we were discussing...”

Topic Breadth/Shift Counterindicators

Verbal displays

Family members will try to keep the conversation on track instead of ending it by stating: “let’s wait to discuss that,” or “we need to stay on topic...”

Code: Topic Breadth & Depth

(B) Depth

Topic Depth Explanation

Conversation depth is measured by the length of time family members discuss each specific topic. The topic length then is determined by measuring the length of time between the starting and stopping point of the topic breadth onset codes, based on the assumption that discussing a topic in depth would likely yield a longer length of time in discussion. The time length is calculated to reveal to average length of time for topics within the 7-minute interaction.

Coding Method

Measurement of time between topic shift markers.

Code: Lead Behaviors

Lead Behavior Explanation

Lead behaviors are those that establish dominance in driving the conversation, taking an active role, or attempts to engage others through verbal and nonverbal displays. These behaviors are coded based on each individual's actions and will be analyzed to determine any interaction on a dyadic or triadic level. Coders were trained to recognize verbal and nonverbal displays of lead behavior (detailed below), and scored the extent to which family members separately exhibited these behaviors during the 7-minute interaction.

Coding Method

Coders will assess the overall use of lead behaviors enacted by each individual during the 7-minute interaction.

Father lead

Mother lead

Child lead

The ratings are made on a 0-4 scale. For example:

0 = no display of behavior

1 = hints of behavior, few moments of overt expression (under 25% of the time)

2 = clear use of behavior during points in the discussion, not characteristic of individual (under half the time)

3 = obvious use of behavior during the majority of the conversation, somewhat characteristic of individual (over half the time)

4 = overt use of lead behavior for the majority of the conversation, characteristic of the individual (over 80% of time)

Lead Behavior Indicators

Verbal displays

Verbal displays take the form of taking charge of driving the discussion with the other two participants in topic choice and consequent discussion of conflict, including:

Discussion topic choice: participants may take charge and pick a topic, or will lead others to choose or openly discuss which topic everyone would like to discuss with statements such as “Do you want to discuss X topic?” “We should discuss X topic,” or “You pick a topic that you would like for us to discuss.”

Attempts to engage others: individual(s) may ask questions to get other family members to participate such as “How do you feel about this?” and “What do you think about this?”

Regulation of conversation turn taking: individual(s) in the conversation can regulate turn taking by giving directions to others with statements like “Tell me how you feel about this,” “Let your mother speak” and “Let’s get back to the main issue.”

Active participation: individual(s) may verbally demonstrate a willingness to participate or interest in the conversation by asking follow up questions to an individual’s statement

Nonverbal displays

Nonverbal behaviors directing turn taking can be used in separately or in conjunction with verbal displays. Behaviors include:

Hand gestures: putting a hand up to stop a person from talking, pointing or waving to another person to start or continue speaking,

Body and face orientation: body or face turning away from or towards certain individuals to engage certain individuals or to inhibit members from speaking

Body lean: leaning forward or upright to show active engagement and participation in the conversation, even if not currently speaking.

Lead Behavior Counterindicators

Verbal displays

Phrases that seem to show passivity or lack of desire to engage in the particular topic of conversation such as, “I don’t like this topic” or “Whatever you want.”

Regulation of conversation turn taking: A person will deflect the responsibility for topic choice or conversation regulation and/or not participate in the decision-making process with statements such as “no, I don’t want to choose, you can decide...”

Inactivity in conversation: Family member will withdraw from other family members, not engage in the conversation, or allow other family members to discuss the topic. Answers to questions will be short and/or individuals may respond with “I don’t like this topic” or “whatever you want.”

Nonverbal displays

More than likely counterindicators will take the form of nonverbal displays of withdrawing or indicating passivity in the conversation. Nonverbal counterindicators of leading (or indicators of following) include:

Body lean: leaning back or leaning away from the other family members

Body and face orientation: body turned away and/or face turned away or down

Response time length: taking longer to respond and/or shorter verbal responses

Code: Team Behaviors

Team Behavior Explanation

Parents' team behavior is demonstrated by a noticeable measure of support for an individual separate from or against the third party (e.g., mother and father primarily support each other, act unified and separate from the child when engaging in conflict). Coders were trained to recognize verbal and nonverbal displays of team behavior (detailed below), and scored the extent to which a mother and father exhibited these behaviors during the 7-minute interaction.

Coding Method

Coders will assess the use of team behaviors between the mother and father during the 7-minute interaction.

Mother-Father Team

The ratings are made on a 0-4 scale. For example:

0 = no display of behavior

1 = hints of behavior, few moments of overt expression (under 25% of the time)

2 = clear use of behavior during points in the discussion, not characteristic of individual (under half the time)

3 = obvious use of behavior during the majority of the conversation, somewhat characteristic of individual (over half the time)

4 = overt use of lead behavior for the majority of the conversation, characteristic of the individual (over 80% of time)

Team Behavior Indicators

Verbal displays

Individuals enact verbal team displays by offering supportive statements (e.g., “yes, you’re right” or “your father is right”) or following up after or supplementing previous statements from another individual (e.g., “your father and I think that this is the best thing for you...”).

Nonverbal displays

Teams may not rely on verbal displays; rather teams may demonstrate unity through nonverbal behaviors such as:

Physical proximity or contact: increased special proximity (e.g., sitting close together) or physical contact (e.g., arm around the other, holding hands)

Body lean: individual(s) lean towards an individual

Body and facial orientation: orienting towards a specific person with face or body

Gestures or body movements: through nodding in agreement while another individual is talking (e.g., mother talking to a child while the father demonstrates active engagement and nodding in agreement)

Team Behavior Counterindicators

Verbal displays

Individuals may use openly verbal displays of disagreement or contradicting an individual’s statement such as “no, she doesn’t help enough” or “no, that isn’t right.”

Nonverbal displays

Individuals may be separated by others or separate from a current team using the following counterindicators of team behavior:

Physical proximity: sitting away from an individual or distancing oneself

Body orientation and lean: orienting or leaning away from an individual to increase distance

Gestures or body movements: cuing for a current team member to stop or shaking their head in disagreement

APPENDIX B
SCALE MEASURES

Demographic Information

1. Child Hispanic: Y/N
2. Child Race(s) (final answer from both adults)
3. Mother Hispanic: Y/N
4. Mother Race(s)
5. Father Hispanic: Y/N
6. Father Race(s)
7. Adult Female Relationship to Child (for non-biological parent)
8. Adult Male Relationship to Child (for non-biological parent)
9. Child Age, Years
10. Mother Report Family Income (before taxes)
11. Father Report Family Income (before taxes)
12. Mother Report of Adults Living Together
13. Father Report of Adults Living Together
14. Mother Report of Relationship Status with Partner

Conflict Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ)

CBQ – Parent

Mothers and fathers separately assess their child's behavior when engaged in conflict by responding to eight (8) items by indicating if the statements are *true* or *false*

(*true* = 1, *false* = 0; R = reverse coded). These eight items are chosen from the original twenty items of the CBQ scale to act as conversation- and conformity-orientation indicators.

Conversation Indicators (Initial Compilation)

1. (2) My child is receptive to criticism. R
2. (19) My child and I compromise during arguments. R
3. (37) My child is defensive when I talk to him/her.
4. (45) For the most part, my child likes to talk to me. R

Conformity Indicators (Initial Compilation)

5. (8) We almost never seem to agree.
6. (9) My child usually listens to what I tell him/her. R
7. (22) My child often doesn't do what I ask.
8. (47) We argue a lot about rules.

Conversation Indicators (Revised Compilation)

1. (19) My child and I compromise during arguments. R
2. (45) For the most part, my child likes to talk to me. R

Conformity Indicators (Revised Compilation)

1. (6) My child is well behaved in our discussions.
2. (17) My child says that I have no consideration for his/her feelings.
3. (26) My child acts impatient when I talk.
4. (32) My child never seems to understand my side of the argument.
5. (41) My child tells me he/she thinks I am unfair.
6. (47) We argue a lot about rules.

CBQ - Adolescent

The child responds to the following six (6) statements regarding conflict behaviors by answering *true* or *false* (*true* = 0, *false* = 1, R = reverse coded), acting as conversation- and conformity-orientation indicators. The child fills out separate assessments for his/her mother and father. Note: no CBQ – Adolescent items were retained for analysis.

Conversation Indicators

1. (18) I enjoy the talks we (mother/father) have.
2. (23) My mother/father listens when I need someone to talk to.
3. (46) My mother/father understands my point of view, even when she doesn't agree with me.

Conformity Indicators

4. (15) We (mother/father) almost never seem to agree. R
5. (19) When I state my own opinion, my mother/father gets upset. R
6. (38) My mother/father is bossy when we talk. R

Involvement with Children Part II (ICS)

Individuals' rate their marital (romantic) partner's and their own level of involvement in parenting responsibilities specifically regarding involvement with parent-child conversations. Mothers and fathers respond to the following three (3) discussion related items using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Very Often). Scores for mothers and fathers are averaged indicating the level of perceived involvement with the child. Higher levels of involvement for both individuals indicate higher levels of conversation-orientation. Actor-partner score

discrepancy indicates different levels of involvement and may relate to conversational lead behaviors, whereas similar averages relate to team behaviors.

1. Disciplining the children
2. Running errands for the children
3. Taking children for recreational activities
4. Attending school or church related functions
5. Discussing problems with the children that they might be having
6. Helping children with schoolwork
7. Discussing children's social activities (e.g., friendships, dating parties, overnights)
8. Planning for children's futures

Parental Control and Child Disclosure Scale, Parental Control (CDS-PCSK)

The child responds to the following five (5) statements regarding their perceived parental control and family conformity using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Very Often). The child responds about his/her parents jointly (assessment of both mother and father together).

1. If you go out on a Saturday evening, must you inform your parents beforehand about who will be along as well as where you will be going?
2. If you have been out past curfew, do your parents require that you explain why and tell who you were with?
3. Do your parents demand that they know where you are in the evenings, who you are going to be with, and what you are going to do?

4. Must you ask your parents before you can make plans with friends about what you will do on a Saturday night?
5. Do your parents require that you tell them how you spend your money?

Parental Control and Child Disclosure Scale, Child Disclosure (CDS-CDSK)

The child responds to the following five (5) statements regarding their family communication using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Very Often; R = reverse coded). The child fills out separate assessments for his/her mother and father.

1. Do you spontaneously tell this person about your friends (which friends you hang out with and how they think and feel about various things)?
2. How often do you usually want to tell this person about school (how each subject is going; your relationships with teachers)?
3. Do you keep a lot of secrets from this person about what you do during your free time? R
4. Do you hide a lot from this person about what you do during nights and weekends? R
5. Do you like to tell this person what you do and where you go during the evening?

ⁱ *Conformity Orientation* and *Conversation Orientation* were originally a proposed compilation of CBQ-Adolescent response items as one indicator and the child disclosure and parental control scales a second separate indicator. Initial analysis for adolescent CBQ-Adolescent items resulted in $\alpha = -.10$ for child reporting about their mother and $\alpha = .21$ where the child is reporting about the father. Since the CBQ-Parent scales were revised to ensure conceptual links with FCP scale orientations, I reviewed and revised the compilation of CBQ-Adolescent response items as well. Although revision attempted to capture the best possible conceptual link with FCP conversation and conformity orientation, scale reliabilities demonstrated the following: mother perceived conversation orientation, $\alpha = -.26$; father perceived conversation orientation, $\alpha = .62$; mother perceived conformity, $\alpha = .15$; and father perceived conformity orientation, $\alpha = .24$. Due to extremely poor reliabilities for each revised measure of CBQ-Adolescent response items, all CBQ-Adolescent revised measures were removed from further planned analyses. Instead, child disclosure and parental control scales will be used as indicators for *Conversation Orientation* and *Conformity Orientation* for analysis purposes.