

WORKPLACE CONFLICT, EMOTIONS, AND STRAIN: A PROCESS APPROACH

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WORKPLACE CONFLICT, EMOTIONS, AND STRAIN: A PROCESS APPROACH

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
SUMMARY	ix
CHAPTER 1. Introduction	1
1.1 Workplace Conflict	4
1.1.1 Conflict Types	5
1.1.2 Strain Resulting from Conflict	9
1.1.3 Moderators of the Relationship Between Conflict and Strain	11
1.1.4 Conflict Expression and Emotions	12
1.1.5 Conflict Expressions: Empirical Evidence	20
1.2 Emotion and Emotion Regulation	22
1.2.1 Conflict and Emotions: Existing Research	24
1.2.2 Emotion Regulation and Emotional Labor	27
1.2.3 Existing Work: Emotion Regulation in Team Conflict	30
1.3 The Current Study	33
CHAPTER 2. Method	39
2.1 Mechanical Turk Pilot Study	39
2.2 Mechanical Turk Pilot Results	42
2.3 Experience Sampling Study	45
2.4 Participants	45
2.5 Procedure	46
2.6 Self-Report Measures	48
2.6.1 Event Signaled Conflict Episode Survey	49
2.6.2 Time Signaled End of Workday Survey	50
2.6.3 Time Signaled Bedtime Survey	51
2.6.4 Time Signaled Waking Time Survey	51
2.7 Additional Measures	53
2.8 Conceptual Analytic Approach	53
2.9 Multilevel Analytical Approach	56
CHAPTER 3. Results	57
3.1 Data Cleaning	57
3.2 Data Screening	58
3.3 Within and Between-Person Variation	59
3.4 Hypothesis Testing	61
3.5 Supplementary Analyses	75
3.5.1 End of Day Judgments of Conflict	77
3.5.2 Daily Conflict Averages	77

3.5.3	Momentary Analyses	79
3.5.4	Comparing Days With and Without Conflict	80
CHAPTER 4.	Discussion	82
4.1	Conflict Expressions Predicting Emotional Reactions	82
4.2	Conflict Expressions Predicting Strain	84
4.3	The Moderating Role of Emotion Regulation	87
4.4	Supplementary Analyses and Method of Aggregation	88
4.5	Theoretical Implications	90
4.6	Practical Implications	92
4.7	Limitations	93
4.8	Future Directions	95
4.9	Conclusion	97
APPENDIX.	RECRUITMENT EMAIL	98
REFERENCES		100

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	- Directness items and structure matrix	43
Table 2	- Intensity items and structure matrix	43
Table 3	- Means, standard deviations, and correlations for Mechanical Turk Pilot	44
Table 4	- Overview of daily survey schedule, organized chronologically	52
Table 5	- Descriptive Statistics for Main Variables of Interest for Full Study	59
Table 6	- Intraclass Correlation Coefficients and Within-level and Between-level Correlations for Full Study	61
Table 7	- Multilevel Regressions of Directness and Intensity Day-level Sums Predicting Daily Positive and Negative Affect Resulting from Conflict	63
Table 8	- Multilevel Regressions of Directness and Intensity Day-level Sums and Their Interaction Predicting Daily Positive and Negative Affect Resulting from Conflict	64
Table 9	- Multilevel Regressions of Day-level Conflict Directness Sum Predicting Strain Outcomes	67
Table 10	- Multilevel Regressions of Day-level Conflict Intensity Sum Predicting Strain	68
Table 11	- Multilevel Regressions of Day-level Positive Affect Sum from Conflict Predicting Daily Strain	69
Table 12	- Multilevel Regressions of Day-level Negative Affect Sum from Conflict Predicting Daily Strain	69
Table 13	- Multilevel Regressions of Day-level Negative Affect from Conflict Sum, Day-level Deep Acting During Conflict Sum, and Their Interaction Predicting Daily Strain	71
Table 14	- Multilevel Regressions of Day-level Negative Affect from Conflict Sum, Day-level Surface Acting During Conflict Sum, and Their Interaction Predicting Daily Strain	72

Table 15	- Daily Averages of Directness and Intensity Predicting Daily Averages of Positive and Negative Affect Due to Conflict	79
Table 16	- Momentary Directness and Intensity Predicting Momentary Positive and Negative Affect Due to Conflict	80

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	- Model drawn from Weingart et al. (2015) and Todorova, Bear, and Weingart (2014).Figure 1 - Model drawn from Weingart et al. (2015) and Todorova, Bear, and Weingart (2014).	14
Figure 2	- Model to be tested.	38
Figure 3	- The interaction between day-level conflict sums of directness and intensity predicting day-level sum of negative affect.	65
Figure 4	- The interaction between day-level conflict sums of directness and intensity predicting day-level sum of positive affect.	66
Figure 5	- The interaction between day-level conflict sums of negative affect and deep acting predicting emotional exhaustion.	72

SUMMARY

Organizational conflict is a context where emotions must be managed and should therefore include a process of emotion regulation. There are some investigations of emotion regulation as a moderator of conflict (e.g., Curşeu, Boroş, & Oerlemans, 2012; Jiang, Zhang, & Tjosvold, 2013; Thiel, Harvey, Courtright, & Bradley, 2017), but this work does not theoretically integrate the emotion regulation or emotional labor process perspectives to the study of conflict. I draw on recent theory of the role of emotions in conflict expression (Weingart, Behfar, Bendersky, & Jehn, 2015) and integrate theory from emotional labor to better understand the conflict process and its effects on strain. In an experience sampling study with full-time workers, I investigate how conflict expressions impact emotional reactions and strain outcomes. I find that how conflict is expressed impacts emotional reactions to conflict. Conflict intensity related to strain outcome of emotional exhaustion, but not work withdrawal or sleep quality. End of workday emotional exhaustion was most sensitive to the effects of conflict expressions and this relationship was mediated by negative affect. Further, use of deep acting emotion regulation buffered the detrimental effect of negative affect impacting emotional exhaustion. Implications for the workplace and ideas for future work are discussed.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a universal work experience and a largely inescapable part of working in a team (Coutu, 2009; Kling, 2009), but is often poorly handled. Occupational health psychology (OHP) research shows that interpersonal conflict, or the “negative interactions with others in the workplace, which can range from momentary disagreements to heated arguments and bullying” (Nixon, Mazzola, Bauer, Krueger, & Spector, 2011, p. 8), is a psychological stressor that leads to strain. Findings show that conflict at work has clear negative implications for individuals and organizations, as conflict has been linked to lower job satisfaction, lower organizational commitment, higher turnover intentions, increased counterproductive work behavior (CWB), depression, burnout, and physical health symptoms (Frone, 2000; Fox, Spector, & Miles, 2001; Penney & Spector, 2005; Nixon et al., 2011; Rainey, 1995; Spector & Jex, 1998). The annual costs of employee stress, including costs for missed wages due to absenteeism, reduced productivity, and health care costs, have been estimated to be \$200-350 billion in the United States (Miree, 2007; Nixon et al., 2011). In a study among Canadian managers, leaders were shown to spend an average of three hours of work time and four and a half hours of distraction and worry on workplace conflict every week (Gilin Oore, Leiter, & LeBlanc, 2015). There is no reason to think things are different in the United States. Clearly, workplace conflict is an important issue for workers and organizations.

Despite evidence of the straining effects of conflict, little is known regarding the *process* of how interpersonal conflict negatively impacts worker strain. This is an important oversight; without understanding the conflict mechanisms that increase strain, researchers

lack thorough knowledge of what to target in order to minimize the negative effects of conflict. Arguably, understanding how to successfully navigate conflict so that it is a positive instead of negative experience has become an increasingly important but understudied challenge.

A parallel, highly related, yet almost completely separate literature on teamwork has done an excellent job studying the conflict process in detail. This literature shows preliminary evidence that some conflict processes can be positive (de Wit, Greer, & Jehn, 2012). However, the findings of when conflict is beneficial are inconsistent, are rarely examined with strain outcomes, and have limited field validation. Despite conceptual overlap between the OHP and team areas regarding conflict, they are not thoroughly integrated. Combining these two parallel literatures could yield important theoretical and practical insights on conflict expression in the workplace. As such, this project will contribute to a more holistic and complete understanding of the conflict process and, in particular, how conflict expression impacts strain. Although teamwork researchers posit that conflict is not always negative, the conditions in which conflicts are positive are not well understood (DeChurch, Mesmer-Magnus, & Doty, 2013). Understanding the straining process of conflict and determining what causes conflict to have positive instead of negative outcomes are crucial gaps in this area. The long-term objective of this research is to better understand the straining conflict process; this is an initial step that will allow researchers to create interventions to target ways to minimize the mechanisms that increase strain.

In this dissertation, I argue that how conflict is expressed and impacts emotions are key to understanding conflict processes in the workplace. For example, imagine a coworker

commenting about one's subpar performance. Pointing fingers, making snide comments, and questioning others' abilities can antagonize others, instigate fights, and escalate disagreements. These conflict expressions are likely to engender negative emotions among coworkers and may lead to strain among employees, such as emotional exhaustion, work withdrawal, and poor sleep. Meanwhile, envision a coworker who engages in open and respectful discussion over errors. This coworker may broach the topic as constructive debate, admit to one's own mistakes, and apologize. This open communication of criticism may foster positive emotions among coworkers and contribute to an environment that allows workers to grow and develop competencies. Lastly, imagine a coworker that regulates one's emotions so much as to suppress all negative feelings and frustrations with the group. The continued and unaddressed perhaps negative emotions are likely to lead to resentment among the group. This worker is also likely to experience greater strain due to the suppression of his or her negative emotions. These examples illustrate how conflict expressions, emotional experience, and emotion regulation have crucial effects on strain outcomes.

Although emotions and conflict are literatures that have not been thoroughly integrated, I am not alone in recognizing their connection. Jones and Botker (2001) note that "Rather than seeing emotion as a side effect of a conflict, [researchers] need to view emotion as a framer of the conflict, as a social construction through which the disputant defines the conflict reality" (p. 223). Despite these words being published nearly two decades ago, the team conflict and emotion literatures are still largely unconnected. There is some research on the role of emotion in conflict, but most of the empirical research is actually focused on negotiation (see van Kleef & Côté, 2017 for a review). Other

researchers demonstrate that conflict is related to negative affect (e.g., Bruk-Lee & Spector, 2006; Fox et al., 2001; Volmer, 2015), but there is currently no investigation of ways to reduce the experience of negative affect from conflict. Lastly, another relevant but underexplored area is emotion regulation in the conflict process. Emotion regulation has been examined as a moderator of conflict, buffering detrimental effects, in a small handful of team conflict studies (e.g., Curşeu, Boroş, & Oerlemans, 2012; Jiang, Zhang, & Tjosvold, 2013; Thiel, Harvey, Courtright, & Bradley, 2017) and one recent OHP study (Hagemeister & Volmer, 2018). However, conflict research has not strongly integrated emotion regulation literature theoretically. In this dissertation, I focus on emotional experience and emotion regulation as key aspects of the conflict process. I utilize theory and research from occupational health psychology, team conflict, emotions, and emotional labor to hypothesize how workplace conflict affects strain.

1.1 Workplace Conflict

Conflict, defined as an awareness of discrepancies, incompatible desires, or clashing aims between two or more people (Boulding, 1963; Jehn & Mannix, 2001), is perhaps an inescapable part of work. Conflict may stem from real or perceived differences, but often creates a challenge for maximizing workplace effectiveness. Conflict is a large area of research in the teams' space. Within this area, conflict is expected to interfere with team performance and team satisfaction because it can produce tension and antagonism within the team (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). However, a long-held notion argues that some types of conflict can be beneficial, as team members can gain different perspectives and acquire information relevant to the task. The majority of existing research on team conflict has focused on how different conflict *types* may have different consequences.

Although conflict type is not the focus of the current study, it provides contextual background on why a new perspective on conflict expression rather than conflict type is warranted. I review this research on conflict types now.

1.1.1 Conflict Types

Conflict in the teams' literature to date has largely focused on three types of conflict: task, relationship, and process (Bradley, Anderson, Baur, & Klotz, 2015; DeChurch, Masmer-Magnus, & Doty, 2013; O'Neill & McLarnon, 2017). Task conflict occurs when group members disagree, debate, and argue about the content and substance of the group task (Jehn, 1997). This type of conflict occurs when members have different viewpoints and opinions pertaining to their team assignment, which may lead to lively discussions and debates (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Relationship conflict is a clash between people and personalities, such as disagreements regarding personal taste, values, and interpersonal style. Relationship conflict involves personal issues, often accompanied by feelings of annoyance, frustration, and irritation (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). The final type of conflict, process conflict, is less often studied. It refers to conflict of how task accomplishment should proceed in the group, who is responsible for what tasks, and how responsibilities should be delegated (Jehn, 1997). Although these three types of conflict are separate categories, they are not entirely independent. The intercorrelation between task and relationship conflict is moderate, ranging from 0.47 to 0.54 (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; de Wit, Greer, & Jehn, 2012; Simons & Peterson, 2000). It may be that when task conflict is handled poorly by team members, it can exacerbate into relationship conflict (Yang & Mossholder, 2004). Conflict management, or the process by which conflict is treated and handled in a team (DeChurch & Marks, 2001), is therefore critical.

As mentioned previously, team conflict research to date has mainly focused on different types of conflict states, specifically task, relationship, and process conflict (Bradley et al., 2015; O'Neill, Allen, & Hastings, 2013). Theory suggests that task conflict can benefit team performance due to discussion and exploration of differing perspectives, which can stimulate more creative ideas and alternative courses of action (Jehn, 1997; O'Neill & McLarnon, 2017). Meanwhile, relationship conflict and process conflict are expected to harm team performance (Jehn, 1997; Shah & Jehn, 1993). Conflict researchers draw on information processing theory (e.g., Pelled, 1996) to suggest that perceived threat will increase cognitive load, which draws resources away from the critical analysis and perspective processing (O'Neill, McLarnon, Hoffart, Woodley, & Allen, 2015). However, results are not necessarily consistent with these expectations. Although relationship conflict is consistently detrimental for teams (e.g., Amason, 1996; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; van Woerkom & van Engen, 2009), findings regarding task conflict are mixed: some studies show it is positive for group performance, other show it is negative (e.g., DeChurch & Marks, 2001; de Jong, Song, & Song, 2013; de Wit et al., 2012; Lu, Zhou, Leung, 2011).

Over the last several decades, over 100 empirical studies have been conducted on conflict. As such, several meta-analyses have been conducted on the topic, which are useful to summarize the existing research. I review these meta-analyses in the chronological order in which they were published. The first meta-analysis, conducted by De Dreu and Weingart (2003), showed task and relationship conflict *both* led to lower satisfaction and performance. Their finding regarding task conflict was a serious blow to the prevailing idea of “productive” conflict. They examined task type as a moderator and found the negative effect of task conflict was only weakened by production tasks. This suggested that conflict

interferes less with the execution of simple, well-learned tasks than with more complex, non-routine tasks. Generally, this finding supports the information processing perspective that conflict interferes with information processing capacity and thereby hinders task performance, particularly when tasks are complex and are cognitively demanding (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003).

Second, Hulsheger, Anderson, and Salgado (2009) investigated the relationship between conflict and innovation. They expected team innovation would have a positive relationship with task conflict but a negative relationship with relationship conflict. Although the corrected correlations were in the expected direction, they were weak and non-significant for both task and relationship conflict. This suggested no linear connection between conflict and innovation. However, it may be that there is a curvilinear relationship between task conflict and information sharing, with the benefits of task conflict only appearing at moderate levels (De Dreu, 2006). This notion has yet to be explored.

Next, de Wit, Greer, and Jehn (2012) conducted another meta-analysis finding that team performance had negative relationships to relationship conflict and process conflict, but no relationship with task conflict. When examining moderators, they found that task conflict had positive relationships among top management teams or when examining the outcome of decision-making performance. This supported the notion of “productive” conflict, but only in certain contexts.

DeChurch, Mesmer-Magnus, and Doty (2013) instead examined conflict states (task and relationship) in combination with conflict management processes (collaborating, competing, avoiding, and openness). While task and relationship conflict both significantly

predicted lower team outcomes, the conflict management processes that teams used were more important for explaining variance in team performance and team affective outcomes. This suggests that how conflict is managed is more important than the conflict type (task or relationship).

Most recently, O'Neil, Allen, and Hastings (2013) investigated other potential moderators and integrated process conflict. In decision-making teams, they found a positive relationship between task conflict and team performance. However, among all team types, they too found an overall slight negative relationship between task conflict and performance. They also found no relationships between all three types of conflict and innovation, which challenges the idea that task conflict can stimulate information sharing and learning. Lastly, they found consistent negative effects of relationship and process conflict.

In sum, these five meta-analyses indicate that both relationship and process conflict are harmful for teams and inhibit constructive approaches to executing team endeavors. Whether task conflict is helpful rather than harmful seems to be dependent on moderators, most commonly whether the conflict involves decision-making. However, this finding is not entirely consistent. It could be that conflict types should be studied together rather than separately, as a recent study using latent profiles shows that task conflict is beneficial when teams also have low relationship and process conflict (O'Neill et al., 2015). On the whole, the conditions in which conflict are beneficial for a team are not yet fully understood or even identified. This suggests that examining conflict type may not be the best approach to understanding workplace conflict.

1.1.2 *Strain Resulting from Conflict*

Despite the extensive research that has been done on team conflict, teams' researchers rarely examine the impact of conflict on strain outcomes (De Dreu, Dierendonck, & Dijkstra, 2004). A great deal of cross-sectional research, mainly from OHP, shows that higher amounts of workplace conflict relate to greater strain, poorer health, and reduced well-being outcomes. This includes lower job satisfaction, as well as higher stress, burnout, psychological strain, exhaustion, insomnia, and physical health symptoms (Constantin & Teodora, 2016; Dijkstra, Beersma, & Evers, 2011; Dijkstra, De Dreu, Evers, & van Dierendonck, 2009; Frone, 2000; Fox et al., 2011; Fujiwara, Tsukishima, Tsutsumi, Kawakami, & Kishi, 2003; Inoue & Kawakami, 2010; Jaramillo, Mulki, & Boles, 2011; Liu, Spector, & Shi, 2007; Penney & Spector, 2005; Mulki, Jaramillo, & Locander, 2008; Neckles-Charles, 2018; Nixon et al., 2011; Römer, Rispens, Giebels, & Euwema, 2012; Sakurai, Nakata, Ikeda, Otsuka, & Kawahito, 2014; Spector & Jex, 1998). Interpersonal conflict has also been linked to biomarkers of stress (Girardi et al., 2015). Further, one study examined stress specifically due to conflict and found it positively related to emotional exhaustion, absenteeism, and turnover intentions, even after controlling for task and relationship conflict (Giebel & Janssen, 2005).

However, *all* of this aforementioned research has been conducted in a cross-sectional manner. This does not allow the inference of causality, as it may be that those who are already strained are more likely to have interpersonal conflicts or that there is a third variable that can explain the effects. This possibility was tested by Spector, Chen, and O'Connell (2000), who controlled for negative affectivity and strains at Time 1 (while participants were students) in examining the relationship between job stressors and strains

at Time 2 (after participants graduated and began working). There was no substantial change in the results when negative affectivity and Time 1 strains were controlled for, supporting that job stressors such as interpersonal conflict impact strain, rather than the other way around or due to trait negative affectivity. Furthermore, additional longitudinal studies suggest conflict with coworkers and supervisors can predict health outcomes one year later (De Raeye, Jansen, Van den Brandt, Vasse, & Kant, 2009) as well as depression approximately three years later (Stoetzer et al., 2009). Although not specific to the workplace, research on close romantic relationships find a link between interpersonal conflict and physiological outcomes, including health (for reviews see Kiecolt-Glaser, Gouin, & Hantsoo, 2010 and Wright & Loving, 2011).

Recently, researchers have started to utilize a within-person approach to studying the effects of interpersonal conflict at work (Ilies, Aw, & Lim, 2016). Findings suggest daily conflict with co-workers can increase feelings of job insecurity in the following days (Garrido Vásquez, Kälin, Otto, Sadlowski, & Kottwitz, 2019). Similarly, workplace conflict is shown to spillover later in one's day to conflicts with one's partner at home (Sanz-Vergel, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Nielsen, 2015) and work-life conflict experiences (Martinez-Corts, Demerouti, Bakker, & Boz, 2015). Lastly, a recent study suggests that daily conflict with coworkers impacts daily job satisfaction with coworkers (Hagemeister & Volmer, 2018). Although still growing, the research investigating the effects of daily workplace conflict on daily outcomes, measured with temporal separation, further suggest the causal link between conflict and strain.

Despite the number of studies conducted on the effects of interpersonal conflict on strain, the existing research largely ignores theory from team conflict. This is unfortunate,

as the teamwork literature is highly related and can provide theoretical reasoning for the straining process of conflict. I believe that the lack of research connecting team conflict and strain outcomes hinders the field's progress towards holistically understanding how the process of conflict impacts worker strain. As such, the present research utilizes a team conflict model to examine how conflict leads to increased strain.

1.1.3 Moderators of the Relationship Between Conflict and Strain

Although OHP research is scarce regarding investigations of the straining process of conflict, there is some existing literature on moderators of the relationship. However, this area is restricted in that it has mainly focused on concepts largely outside of individuals' control. This includes relatively stable and trait-level variables such as personality (Dijkstra, van Dierendonck, Evers, & De Dreu, 2004), trait anger (Sliter, Pui, Sliter, & Jex, 2011), trait self-control (Jimmieson, Tucker, & Campbell, 2017), internal locus of control (Dijkstra et al., 2011), core self-evaluations (Liu, Li, Fan, & Nauta, 2015; Volmer, 2015), social cynicism (Li, Zhou, & Leung, 2011), chronic depression (Meier, Semmer, & Gross, 2014), organizational-based self-esteem (Dijkstra, Beersma, & Cornelissen, 2012), optimism (Martinez-Corts et al., 2015), and resilience (Martinez-Corts et al., 2015). This also includes variables that are difficult to change oneself because they are decided by other people or the organization as a whole, such as supervisory support (Thomas, Bliese, & Jex, 2005), third-party help (Giebels & Janssen, 2005), organizational procedural justice (Volmer, 2015), and organizational culture (Guerra, Martínez, Munduate, & Medina, 2005). Although personally controllable, research demonstrating the use of psychological detachment to recover from conflict (Rispens & Demerouti, 2016; Sonnentag, Unger, & Nägel, 2013) arguably treats the negative outcomes of conflict after

it has occurred rather than proactively altering the cause. One notable exception is research investigating the use of problem-solving conflict management strategies as a moderator. However, the findings around this moderator are inconsistent; two studies found it only slightly weakened the impact of conflict (Dijkstra et al., 2011; Dijkstra et al., 2012), but one found it has no moderating effect (Dijkstra et al., 2009).

I suggest there are personally controllable skills and contextual-based behaviors that may moderate the negative effects of conflict. As I explain later in this proposal, I believe emotion regulation is likely an important moderator. There has been some investigation of emotion regulation as a moderator of conflict (e.g., Jiang, Zhang, & Tjosvold, 2013; Curseu, Boros, & Oerlemans, 2012; Thiel, Harvey, Courtright, & Bradley, 2017), but this work has not examined strain outcomes, except for job satisfaction specifically with coworkers (Hagemeister & Volmer, 2018).

1.1.4 Conflict Expression and Emotions

Although there appears to be some value in the conceptual distinctions among types of conflict, the team conflict literature is known to conflate emotion with conflict type—task and often process conflict are noted as “cognitive” conflict, while relationship conflict is known as “affective” or emotional conflict (Amason, 1996; Cosier & Rose, 1977). However, research has demonstrated that all types of conflict can elicit *both* positive and negative emotions (Jehn, 1997; Jehn, Greer, Levine, & Szulanski, 2008; Todorova, Bear, & Weingart, 2014). Further, emotions have substantial cognitive components (Russell, 2003), so any conflict eliciting emotion is in some part cognitive. To better explain when

conflict is beneficial instead of harmful, contemporary theories suggests *conflict expression* is an integral part of how conflict impacts team outcomes.

Recently, conflict research has extended beyond the notions of task, relationship, and process conflict, instead investigating how conflict is expressed. Conflict expression refers to the verbal and nonverbal communication of opposition between people (Laursen & Collins, 1994). One modern framework proposes that conflict expression varies in *directness*, or how explicitly an opposition is conveyed, and *intensity*, or how strongly an opposition is communicated (Weingart, Behfar, Bendersky, & Jehn, 2015). In this framework, the directness and intensity in expression of conflict opposition impact others' conflict perceptions. These conflict perceptions are likely to trigger emotional reactions in receivers, which affect their willingness and ability to both process and act on the information provided, affecting how the conflict continues (Weingart et al., 2015). *Conflict spirals* occur when there are exchanges of reciprocated conflict communications (Brett, Shapiro, & Lytle, 1998). They can be *escalatory*, with reciprocated negative communications, which are difficult to break and tend to lead to negative outcomes (Brett et al., 1998). Conflict spirals can also be *de-escalatory*, with reciprocated information exchange, which generally results in positive outcomes (Weingart et al., 2015). Existing negotiation research suggests that emotional reactions will affect whether receivers are cooperative or competitive in reaction (van Kleef & Côté, 2017).

Weingart's (2015) model suggests that the two dimensions of directness and intensity, both having levels of high or low, together influence how people react to conflict and how conflict unfolds. The four conditions based on these dimensions (i.e., high directness with high intensity, high directness with low intensity, low directness with high

intensity, and low directness with low intensity) are expected to predict emotional reactions, information acquisition, and conflict spirals. For example, storming out of a meeting is a high directness and high intensity conflict. In this situation, others are likely to feel strong negative emotions, such as anger, tension, shame, and guilt because of feeling threatened or at fault for the conflict. When people experience negative emotions, their emotions consume their attention and they are less willing and able to process the information provided (Beal, Weiss, Barros, & MacDermid, 2005; Merlo, Shaughnessy, & Weiss, 2018). For example, while being berated for an incorrect report, someone may not want or be able to process all the erroneous information he is being scolded for because of his emotional state. Figure 1 displays a simplified version of the theoretical model described in Weingart et al. (2015).

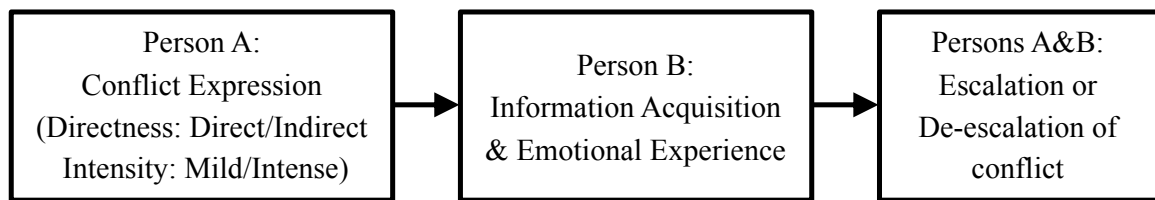


Figure 1 - Model drawn from Weingart et al. (2015) and Todorova, Bear, and Weingart (2014).

Although this theoretical framework proposes that emotional reactions affect people's willingness and ability to process information provided from the conflict, the authors do not specify how this occurs. I suggest this can be explained by the attention consuming cognitive processes that co-occur with emotional experience. Affective states redirect attentional focus from one's task to the situation surrounding the affective experience (Beal et al., 2005). One such process that redirects attentional focus is appraisal. Appraisal processes refer to the initial (primary) and continued (secondary) evaluation of

an emotional event for its self- and goal-relevance (Lazarus, 1991; Smith & Kirby, 2001). The primary appraisal is an evaluation of whether the situation is good or bad, how important the situation is, and how relevant the emotional event is to one's well-being (Lazarus & Smith, 1988; Smith & Kirby, 2001). Meanwhile, the secondary appraisal is an assessment of one's resources and options for coping in response to the emotional event (Lazarus, 1991). The secondary appraisal process also involves an assessment of who or what caused the situation, who should be held accountable, and how one will handle the emotional experience (Smith & Kirby, 2001). For example, after being insulted by a someone during a conflict episode, one is likely to feel angry. The initial primary appraisal would perhaps signal that this event is undesirable and harmful for one's well-being due to its hindrance towards one's goal of being a valued group member. Secondary appraisal may include thinking the attacker is responsible for this situation, whether one will retaliate against the teammate, as well as whether one should ignore the comment and suppress one's emotions or respond calmly. Although not labeled as appraisal specifically, theorists suggest conflict can threaten one's self-esteem and require cognitive resources to cope with the conflict situation (De Dreu et al., 2004).

Another process that redirects attention is rumination (Beal et al., 2005). Rumination refers to "a class of conscious thoughts that revolve around a common instrumental theme and that recur in the absence of immediate environmental demands requiring the thoughts" (Martin & Tesser, 1996, p. 7; Watkins, 2008). If the event remains open in the mind of the individual, then the person is likely to mull over the event and ruminate (Beal et al., 2005). The demand on attentional resources due to this cognitive

activity can explain how emotional reactions interfere with processing information provided from the conflict.

Although conflict often leads to unpleasant emotions due to conflicting interests and goals (Jehn, 1997; Jehn et al., 2008), conflict can elicit positive emotions in addition to negative emotions (Todorova et al., 2014). Conflict can engender positive emotions if it is appraised as positive. For example, imagine a coworker that expresses opposition towards one's idea but suggests something better. While this may lead to unpleasant emotions due to conflicting aims, it could be appraised as helpful and supportive of one's goals. This appraisal may lead the receiver to feel positive emotions such as interest. However, experiencing mixed emotions can create a duality that causes tension within receivers (Hong & Lee, 2010; Newby-Clark, McGregor, & Zanna, 2002; Oceja & Carrera, 2009; Williams & Aaker, 2002). This is similar to the discomfort caused by the inconsistency of cognitions, known as cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). This aversive state motivates individuals to alleviate dissonance (Elliot & Devine, 1994; Festinger, 1957). In the context of conflict, dissonance can be reduced by considering the information provided in the opposition. Weingart and her colleagues' framework (2015) posits the uncomfortable state of experiencing mixed (both negative and positive) emotions can motivate receivers to seek or consider new information to alleviate their discomfort (Festinger, 1957). Seeking new information is expected to lead to de-escalatory conflict cycles (Weingart et al., 2015). Said differently, conflict expressions that prompt *both* positive and negative emotions cause feelings of dissonance, which are expected to lead to information acquisition and de-escalatory spirals. Based on this model, determining ways

to elicit positive emotions during conflict may be a crucial component to inspire information exchange and promote positive conflict outcomes.

Applying Weingart's conflict expression model one step further, I suggest conflict expressions and the resulting emotional reactions will induce strain. I draw from Conservation of Resources (COR; Hobfall, 1989) to explain how conflict leads to strain outcomes. According to COR, people strive to retain, protect, and build resources, which are defined as objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued or can help individuals attain resources (Hobfall, 1989). Psychological stress is a reaction to one's loss of resources, threat of resources loss, or a lack of resource gain, which can result in outcomes such as emotional exhaustion. Researchers suggest conflict can threaten one's self-esteem and require cognitive resources to cope with the conflict situation (De Dreu et al., 2004). In applying COR to the conflict context, I suggest that dealing with workplace conflict requires the use of one's resources which can lead to straining outcomes, such as emotional exhaustion, work withdrawal, and poor sleep. Furthermore, emotions can be viewed as "energies" in the COR model. I suggest that positive emotion resulting from appraisal processes can be a resource gain, which should help buffer the effect of conflict leading to strain outcomes. Conversely, negative emotion resulting from appraisal would signal a loss of resources or a lack of resource gain, which should lead to further strain. In this way, daily conflict leads to strain and can be buffered or exacerbated by emotional reactions. In the following paragraphs, I provide examples of each of the four conditions of conflict expression to illustrate how they are each expected to impact emotional reactions, conflict spirals, and strain.

First, consider the example of a debate. This kind of conflict is expressed with high directness and with low intensity, which provides clear information about the opposition combined with low threat. Debates prompt both positive and negative emotions, for example frustration and interest, leading to information acquisition and a de-escalatory spiral (Weingart et al., 2015). Although there are mixed emotions that result from high directness and low intensity conflict, I expect that this type of conflict will have a negative relationship with strain due to the positive emotions that one experiences in this type of conflict.

Debates are placed in contrast with conflict expressions such as shouting or storming out during a meeting. Although these are also expressed with high directness, they are expressed with high intensity. Others in the conflict episode would appraise these conflicts as threatening well-being and hindering goal attainment. Receivers of this type of conflict would experience only negative emotions as a result, such as anger and stress. Again, these strong negative emotions are expected to interfere with the receivers' ability and willingness to use information from the conflict constructively, which is expected to lead to further conflict. I expect this type of conflict would lead to strain due to the negative emotions experienced.

Conflict can also be expressed indirectly. With conflict expression that is low in directness, the conflict is not clear, which can be confusing for others. When conflict is indirect combined with low intensity, such as teasing, withholding information, or being noncommittal, the opposition is ambiguous. Passive aggressive behaviors like this create a difficult situation for receivers, as they experience opposition without knowledge of what to attribute it to or how to respond (Weingart et al., 2015). This type of conflict expression

is likely to lead to unpleasant emotions, such as irritation and guilt, as well as confusion as receivers try to make sense of the expressions (McIluff & Coghlan, 2000; Weingart et al., 2015). Because of the avoidance of conflict, it is unclear how low directness and low intensity expressions may affect conflict spirals. The authors do not posit escalatory or de-escalatory spirals regarding this group of conflict expressions. Arguably, this may depend on how the appraisal of the conflict; if it appraised as a harmful and is coped with negatively, it may lead to escalatory spirals. If it is not seen as harmful and instead conflict is continually avoided, it may not affect conflict spirals. However, I suggest low directness and low intensity conflict will relate to higher strain for receivers due to the elicited negative emotions.

Lastly, conflict can also be expressed with low directness and with high intensity, for example back-stabbing or mean-spirited teasing. In this kind of conflict expression, threat is salient, but the reasons behind the conflict are unclear to receivers. This kind of conflict should be appraised as harmful and lead to strain. This is expected to lead to unpleasant emotions of both low and high activation, such as anxiety, anger, contempt, humiliation, and sadness. Information acquisition should be low, as receivers will focus on interpreting others' actions, trying to recover face, and protecting their interests, rather than working to solve the problem (Weingart et al., 2015). This will lead to escalatory conflict spirals where unpleasant emotions are accompanied by sensemaking about conflict, as well as increased strain.

It is important to note that the way conflict is expressed creates variance in interpretations by receivers. Weingart and colleagues (2015) recognize that cultural context influences how conflict will be experienced in terms of directness and intensity.

Specifically, they explain that normative scripts provide expectations and act like filters which they differentially perceive and interpret the behavior of others. Cultural norms, organizational norms, and group norms will affect the emotional reactions of receivers.

Overall, this model proposes that conflict expression stems from the directness of opposition and the oppositional intensity, but conflict is also largely dependent on how the expression is understood. A conflict spiral begins when the sender initiates conflict expression and the receiver forms a perception of that message, which triggers an emotional reaction. The receiver expresses reactions back to the sender and a process of escalation or de-escalation of conflict results. Unfortunately, escalated conflict spirals have momentum that make them difficult to end (Brett et al., 1998).

1.1.5 Conflict Expressions: Empirical Evidence

Considering the recency of conflict expression theory, the empirical work is quite limited. An initial study using two surveys taken two months apart from 232 employees in a health care organization found that mild task conflict expression led to greater information acquisition, while intense task conflict expression hindered information acquisition (Todorova, Bear, & Weingart, 2014). Gaining information led to positive active emotions, such as feeling more active, energized, interested, and excited, which predicted job satisfaction (Todorova et al., 2014). The authors from this initial study speculate that perhaps positive emotions elicited by task conflict is a missing puzzle piece that explains when task conflict is sometimes helpful and sometimes harmful. However, this study did not investigate the role of directness of conflict expressions, nor did they explore outcomes of conflict beyond job satisfaction.

Conversely, another paper reports that emotions experienced during conflict expressions do not differ based on intensity. Tsai and Bendersky (2016) conducted a series of four studies and found that when conflicts are expressed as debates rather than disagreements, there was greater information sharing. In only their first study, they included measures of positive and negative emotions as alternative dependent variables. They did not include this measure in the following studies because they did not find significant differences in emotions by their study conditions. However, it is worth noting that the effect for positive emotions was marginally significant at $p = .07$ (negative emotions, $p = .11$) and this study had a small sample of only 87 using a between-subjects design with two conditions. Considering this one study had a small sample and given the evidence in the Todorova, Bear, and Weingart's (2014) study that found the importance of positive emotions, it is clear that examining the role of emotions in conflict expressions warrants future research.

While further investigation of the role of emotions in conflict expressions is still needed, this early work exploring positive emotions as a mechanism in the conflict process is an exciting new avenue for research. However, teams research on conflict would arguably benefit from a more thorough understanding of emotions. Both senders and receivers have an ability to mitigate a conflict spiral using emotion regulation. This is acknowledged in the model, but largely unexplained.

In the conflict process, after a sender expresses opposition, the receiver must attend to and interpret the conflict expression by registering and appraising the expression as well as the meaning conveyed (Weingart et al., 2015). The receiver must then process one's own emotional reaction to the opposition, acquire information about the problem, and

decide how to regulate his or her reactions (Weingart et al., 2015). Although the authors recognize that receivers' emotional reactions can be regulated, the framework lacks any exploration or integration of how emotion regulation is used in this process. This is an oversight because emotional experience is a key antecedent of the receivers' willingness and ability to process and act on the information provided in the conflict expression. Therefore, being able to reappraise one's experience as a receiver, or being able to suppress negative emotions in reaction to a sender, can alter the pattern of the conflict spiral.

In sum, I argue that receivers' emotional reactions and use of emotion regulation in response to conflict expression are crucial parts of how conflict can be escalated or de-escalated. However, this is currently underexplored both theoretically and empirically. I suggest the vast emotion regulation and emotional labor literatures can contribute a great deal to this area. I argue that understanding how emotion regulation is used in response to conflict expression is a crucial part of how conflict can be escalated or de-escalated. I discuss theory and research on emotion and emotion regulation in the next section.

1.2 Emotion and Emotion Regulation

Conflict research is beginning to integrate emotional experience into the understanding of conflict. Many terms are used to describe emotional experience (Barsade & Gibson, 2007). *Affect* is considered an umbrella term for individual experience such as feeling states, or momentary, short-term affective experiences. *Emotions* are elicited by a specific cause, can disrupt thinking, are relatively intense, but are short-lived (Barsade & Gibson, 2007). *Discrete emotions* refer to the specific labels of emotional states such as fear, anger, and disgust, as well as self-referent emotions such as guilt, shame, and pride.

Meanwhile, *mood* is more diffuse, less intense, tend not be focused on a cause, and is often longer lasting (Frijda, 1993). Mood is often thought of in terms of a global positive/pleasant or negative/unpleasant feeling (Barsade & Gibson, 2007), often generalized into positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA). There is some debate whether PA and NA are separate or exist on a continuum of valence/pleasantness (Frijda, 1993). On the group level, *group affect* (also referred to as *group affective tone*) is an emergent state defined as the “consistent or homogenous affective reactions within a group” (George, 1990, p. 108). However, group affect is often used as an umbrella term for group-level phenomena that are combinations of individuals’ dispositional or trait affect, discrete emotions, and state moods (Barsade & Gibson, 2012).

There are several conceptualizations of emotional experience. One perspective by Russell and Barrett (1999) proposes that affective experiences can be differentiated into core affect and emotion episodes. *Core affect* is the “most elementary consciously accessible affective feelings” (Russell & Barrett, 1999, p. 806) that describe a single moment’s subjective experience. Core affect is always present, even when in a neutral state. Core affect may be a salient part of conscious experience or it can fade in to the background. Core affect changes across time in response to *emotion episodes* (Russell, 2009; Russell & Barrett, 1999), or external events that occur (e.g., being rear-ended in traffic or receiving praise from a supervisor), as well as unconscious influences (e.g., diurnal cycles, memories of events, chemical changes, etc.; Russell, 2009, Russell & Barrett, 1999).

One’s momentary core affect state can best be captured by the two independent dimensions of valence and arousal (Russell, 1980). One can experience a core affective

state ranging from high to low valence combined with high to low arousal. For example, someone could experience a core affective state that is high in both valence and arousal (e.g., excited), high in valence but low in arousal (e.g., calm), low in both valence and arousal (e.g., gloomy), or low in valence but high in arousal (e.g., angry). Regardless of the specific label of experience (e.g., happy, proud, frustrated, etc.), or even without a specific label, core affect can be categorized by levels of valence and arousal.

While core affect is always present, emotion episodes are not. Emotion episodes are more intense, “pop-up” affective experiences layered on top of core affect (Frijda, 1993; Russell, 2003). While core affect is a continuous and free-floating experience that responds to a continuous flow of events and information, emotion episodes are caused by an event. The external event’s affective quality (e.g., anger or pride) is a perceptual evaluation of the event’s ability to change core affect (e.g., from neutral valence and arousal to high valence and high arousal). An emotion episode is psychologically constructed, leading to a host of cognitive processes such as emotional attributions, appraisals, metacognitive judgments, and emotion regulation (Russell, 2003). Although core affect is underlying, these psychological properties accompanying emotion episodes are not reducible to simply valence and arousal (Russell, 2003). For example, anger and stress may be closely related on the valence and arousal dimensions (low valence and high arousal) but are associated with different cognitive processes and are discrete emotional experiences. In the workplace, conflict is likely to cause emotion episodes, particularly if it is expressed with high intensity.

1.2.1 Conflict and Emotions: Existing Research

A handful of studies have investigated the relationship between conflict and emotion. A two-week experience sampling study by Ilies, Johnson, Judge, and Keeney (2011) showed that daily interpersonal workplace conflict led to daily negative affect. This effect was especially strong when individuals had low social support or were high in agreeableness, but there was no investigation of how the strain of conflict affected workers beyond negative affect. Similarly, daily workplace conflicts with one's supervisor is shown to relate to negative affect at bedtime the same day (Volmer, 2015). Similarly, although outside the context of the workplace, studies of married couples show that daily conflict explains a good deal of variance in daily negative mood (Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, & Schilling, 1989).

Emotion has also been demonstrated as a mediator between conflict and various outcomes. For example, on the individual level, studies have found that negative emotion mediates the relationship between conflict and CWBs (Bruk-Lee & Spector, 2006; Fox et al., 2001). Similar research has found that negative affect mediates the relationship between process conflict and group performance (Greer & Jehn, 2007). However, each of these studies were cross-sectional using one-time surveys.

Experience sampling and daily diary studies can provide a better test of the relationship between conflict and emotion, as they can examine within-person relationships. In several studies, day-level negative affect was able to explain the negative effects of daily conflict. For example, daily relationship and process conflict were found to be positively related to daily negative emotions, which explained effects on performance the following day (Rispens & Demerouti, 2016). Similarly, social conflicts with customers at work are related to employees' state negative affect, which mediated the relationship

between conflict and nonwork experiences (i.e., psychological detachment from work and negative work reflection at home) on a daily level (Volmer, Binnewies, Sonnentag, & Niessen, 2012). Another study found that daily task and relationship conflict related to momentary angry mood, which had slight positive, but significant, relationships with momentary somatic complaints (Meier, Gross, Spector, & Semmer, 2013).

On the team level, a handful of studies have investigated how group affect can act as a mediator between conflict and team outcomes. For example, a recent study (Hjerto & Kuvaas, 2017) of 36 teams with a total of 193 team members collected data on team mood valence (i.e., single item “How would you rate the general mood in the team during this period?” 1 = *Very negative*, 5 = *Very positive*) and found that team mood valence explained team performance better than cognitive task conflict alone. Further, in this study the relationship between emotional relationship conflict and task satisfaction was fully mediated by mood valence (Hjerto & Kuvaas, 2017). Although this study used a different theoretical approach to conflict (breaking up into four dimensions of cognitive versus emotional combined with task versus relationship), it found that ratings of team valence explained variance in the effects of conflict on both team satisfaction and performance. Similarly, Chen and Ayoko (2012) suggested that conflict can lead to trust, and this relationship is mediated by emotions. Specifically, they investigated positive arousal emotions (enthusiasm and excitement) and self-conscious emotions (guilt and shame) and found both mediated the positive relationship between conflict and trust (Chen & Ayoko, 2012).

Other teams studies have focused specifically on negative affect in conflict. In a longitudinal study, task conflict negatively predicted team performance six months later

and job satisfaction one year later (Gonzalez-Roma & Hernandez, 2016). Interestingly, both of these relationships were explained by team negative emotions. Relatedly, the negative effect of relationship conflict on project performance were fully explained by ratings of negative emotions (Zhang & Huo, 2015). Overall, these studies point to the importance and explanatory power of the negative emotion that arises in conflict.

1.2.2 Emotion Regulation and Emotional Labor

Although emotional experience is an important part of team conflict, we should not assume that the emotions people experience are the same as the emotions they express during conflict episodes (Bodtker & Jameson, 2001). While individuals differ both in their ability to correctly express emotions and correctly interpret emotions, emotions are also often strategically expressed or displayed during conflict (Bodtker & Jameson, 2001; Jones & Bodtker, 2001). *Emotion regulation* generally refers to the modification of emotions, in terms of feelings or expressions. Gilin Oore, Leither, and LeBlanc (2015)'s review of promoting successful conflict suggests that "emotion regulation skills help contain the toxicity of negative emotions in response to conflict" (p. 304), but that work is needed to apply emotion regulation interventions to workplace conflict.

There are two main areas of emotion regulation research in psychology: emotion regulation and emotional labor. Emotion regulation from the social psychology perspective is largely based on Gross's (1998) process model of emotion regulation. Emotional labor, or regulating emotion as part of one's work role, is a popular and important area of study in I-O (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). There is some conceptual overlap between Gross's process model of emotion regulation and emotional labor strategies. Grandey (2000)

connected these two research areas, suggesting that emotional labor is emotion regulation in the context of the workplace. Because of my emphasis on conflict in the workplace, I focus on emotional labor from the I-O literature in this proposal.

While traditionally emotional labor has been studied in customer-facing roles such as nurses (Diefendorff, Erickson, Grandey, & Dahling, 2011), servers (Beal, Trougakos, Weiss, & Dalal, 2013), and call-center workers (Totterdell & Holman, 2003), emotional labor can arguably be examined in any workplace context. The process of emotional labor begins with job-based emotional display requirements, as they are considered a central precursor for succeeding regulation, emotional display, and outcomes for the employee (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). These emotion requirements are referred to as *display rules*, formally defined as the organizational expectations of the emotions that should or should not be displayed as part of one's work role (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Diefendorff & Greguras, 2009). Display rules can be implicit or explicit and are often socially conveyed (Zapf, 2002). However, display rules are often viewed as formal job requirements, even among non-service occupations (Diefendorff, Richard, & Croyle, 2006). Researchers normally describe display rules as *integrative* (Wharton & Erickson, 1993), to both express positive emotions and suppress negative emotions, as these demands are most common in service jobs. Emotional requirements can also involve neutral or negative displays (e.g., bill collectors; Sutton, 1991), but these are less commonly studied. Further, different discrete emotions may have different display rules (Diefendorff & Greguras, 2009). For example, the display rules for anger may be different than sadness, even though they are both negative valence emotions.

In emotional labor models, display rules lead to emotion regulation. Emotional labor research has primarily focused on two main regulation strategies: surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting refers to putting on an emotional mask, such as smiling despite what one is feeling and suppressing true emotions. Deep acting refers to trying to genuinely feel the emotions one is expressing (Grandey, 2000). Although different, these strategies may be used simultaneously (Gabriel & Diefendorff, 2015).

One emotional labor perspective draws on control theory (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2004). With this outlook, display rules are conceptualized as the reference point standard in a negative feedback loop. Workers compare self-perceptions of their emotional display to the display rule standard. If there is a discrepancy, individuals can either regulate their emotions or adopt a different standard for emotional expression. According to several theoretical perspectives, emotion regulation draws on a limited store of personal resources, such as attention and energy (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; Hobfoll, 1989). Repeated use of these resources can result in depletion of self-regulatory resources and lead to negative outcomes such as emotional exhaustion (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002).

Additionally, emotional dissonance is expected to play a role in the emotional labor process. Emotional dissonance refers to the discrepancy between felt emotion and displayed emotions to meet display rules (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987), similar to Festinger's (1957) concept of cognitive dissonance. Similar to cognitive dissonance, emotional dissonance is likely to lead to stress and alienation when dissonance threatens the self-concept (Pugh, Groth, & Hennig-Thurau, 2010). Hochschild (1983) argued that emotional labor is detrimental for employees because it requires one to be incongruent with the self.

This sense of being inauthentic can lead to feelings of tension. Research using an incongruence framework finds strong associations of inauthenticity with burnout, job dissatisfaction, and depressed mood (Erickson & Wharton, 1997; Pugh et al., 2010; Mesmer-Magnus, DeChurch, & Wax, 2012).

Several meta-analyses suggest that emotional labor is quite taxing, leading to reduced well-being (Bono & Vey, 2005; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012). However, different emotion regulation strategies have different outcomes. Surface acting has negative relationships with job satisfaction and positive relationships with stress and exhaustion (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013), while deep acting has no relationship or a weak negative relationship with these outcomes and appears to be less taxing over time (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Experience sampling studies, which benefit from being able to examine constructs in real time, further support these findings. Results suggest daily emotion regulation, particularly surface acting, relates to daily negative mood (Scott & Barnes, 2011), fatigue (Beal et al., 2013), emotional exhaustion (Totterdell & Holman, 2003), job dissatisfaction (Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009), work-family conflict, and insomnia (Wagner, Barnes, & Scott, 2014).

1.2.3 Existing Work: Emotion Regulation in Team Conflict

There is some existing research on emotion regulation in teams, but it is considerably restricted. The predominant amount of existing research is on emotional intelligence in teams (e.g., Ayoko, Callan, & Hartel, 2008; Barczak, Lassk, & Mulki, 2010; Curşeu, Pluut, Boroş, & Meslec, 2015; Jordan & Troth, 2004; Pitts, Wright, & Harkabus, 2012). Emotional intelligence is defined as an individual's ability to monitor one's own

and others' feelings, discriminate the positive and negative effects of emotion, and use them to guide one's thinking and actions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Existing studies generally find that team members' average levels emotional intelligence benefits team performance, viability, and trust (e.g., Barczak et al., 2010; Curşeu et al., 2015; Jordan & Troth, 2004; Pitts et al., 2012). Although being aware of and controlling one's own emotions as well as affecting others' emotions are components of emotional intelligence (Jordan & Lawrence, 2009), which are clearly related to emotion regulation, this construct is criticized in the I-O literature because emotional intelligence fails to provide much incremental validity beyond general intelligence and personality (Schulte, Ree, & Carretta, 2004; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). However, the emotional intelligence validity debate is ongoing.

There are a limited number of studies on emotion regulation and conflict. Although Jiang, Zhang, and Tjosvold (2013) suggest person-level emotion regulation ability moderates the relationship between conflict and performance on the individual and team level, this study measured emotion regulation ability with an emotional intelligence scale. Curşeu, Boroş, and Oerlemans (2012) examined the use of emotion regulation in student teams and found that emotion regulation in a group affects whether task conflict will lead to relationship conflict. Specifically, they found that in long-term groups (i.e., groups that worked together over a semester) that regulated their emotions, compared to one-time (i.e., one lecture period) groups that engaged in emotion regulation, there were lower levels of relationship conflict even when task conflict was high. Of particular interest to the present research is a recent study by Hagemeister and Volmer (2018), which hypothesized emotion regulation ability would moderate the relationship between social conflicts with coworkers

on job satisfaction with coworkers. Using an experience sampling design, the researchers found emotion regulation ability buffered the negative association between noon-time reports of social conflicts with coworkers on end of day evaluations of job satisfaction with coworkers (Hagemeister & Volmer, 2018).

Other studies have investigated the usefulness of specific regulation strategies in teamwork. For example, the emotion regulation strategy of cognitive reappraisal helps team rebound from early-stage relationship conflict (Thiel, Harvey, Courtright, & Bradley, 2017). An experimental study found that inducing the distraction strategy of emotion regulation improved group performance and cohesion compared to cognitive reappraisal or no regulation (Giffith, Connelly, & Thiel, 2014). Generally, these studies suggest that the use of emotion regulation can be helpful during conflict. However, none of this research has investigated how emotion regulation may moderate the effect of conflict on strain outcomes; The closest is job satisfaction with coworkers (Hagemeister & Volmer, 2018), which is arguably not very generalizable to strain overall.

Although handling team conflict likely requires a degree of emotional labor, there are only two published studies to date on emotional labor in a team context. One recent paper exploring emotional labor among coworkers found that interpersonal conflict (task, relationship, and non-task organizational conflicts) led to surface acting, which mediated the relationship between interpersonal conflict and employee outcomes like depression, physical symptoms, and performance (Nixon, Bruk-Lee, & Spector, 2016). Gender also might be an important factor to consider. One study found that women were more emotionally exhausted due to the negative emotions evoked from relationship conflict compared to men (Bear, Weingart, & Todorova, 2014). Findings show that this was

partially because women tended to avoid conflict and suppress their negative emotions. With only two studies to date connecting conflict and emotional labor, there are many ideas worth exploring with future research.

Despite a decade old review paper of emotions and conflict by Nair (2008), little empirical work has been conducted connecting conflict, emotion, and emotion regulation literatures. This review encouraged researchers to study emotions and conflict together and offered potential areas for exploration. In this review, Nair (2008) briefly suggested that conflict could be studied in relation to emotional labor, such as the potential mediator of emotional dissonance. However, no theoretical links were proposed. This area is ripe with opportunity.

1.3 The Current Study

As stated by Jehn (1997), “Emotions are an important element of conflict. They define individuals’ subjective interpretation of reality and reactions to current situations” (p. 532). Although emotions are irrefutably an integral component of conflict, researchers have not yet tackled the challenge of thoroughly incorporating both emotions and emotion regulation into conflict theory and research. While recent theory and some initial research has begun to investigate connections, they are largely underexplored – especially with regard to emotion regulation.

Further, despite evidence of the straining effects of workplace conflict (e.g., Frone, 2000; Fox et al., 2011; Penney & Spector, 2005; Nixon et al., 2011; Spector & Jex, 1998), little is known regarding the *process* of how interpersonal conflict impacts worker strain. Without understanding the conflict mechanisms that increase strain, researchers lack

knowledge of what can be done to minimize the negative effects of conflict. Despite conceptual overlap between the OHP and team areas regarding conflict, they are not thoroughly integrated. Combining these two conceptually similar areas regarding conflict could lead to important theoretical and practical insights on conflict expression in the workplace. Utilizing theory from contemporary team conflict literature (i.e., Weingart et al., 2015), I will examine the process of how interpersonal conflict relates to increased strain on a daily level. This will be the first study, to my knowledge, to examine how conflict expressions impact strain on a daily, within-person level. This is an initial step to better integrate team conflict and OHP research. As such, this project will contribute to a more holistic and complete understanding of the conflict process and, in particular, how conflict expression impacts strain.

Using Weingart et al. (2015)'s model of conflict combined with research on emotions and emotion regulation, I present several hypotheses for this emerging area. I aim to investigate the effects of conflict expression and emotional experience on strain. First, in line with Weingart et al. (2016)'s conflict expressions theory, I propose that conflict expressions will relate to emotional reactions. Namely, I suggest:

Hypothesis 1: Conflict directness will a) negatively relate to negative affect and b) positively relate to positive affect.

Hypothesis 2: Conflict intensity will a) positively relate to negative affect and b) negatively relate to positive affect.

Hypothesis 3: Conflict directness and intensity will interact, with intensity strengthening the effect of directness when intensity is low and weakening the effect of directness when intensity is high for both a) negative affect and b) positive affect.

Furthermore, I suggest that conflict expression will have a direct effect on strain. I examine *emotional exhaustion*, *work withdrawal*, and *poor sleep quality* as measures of strain. I chose these outcomes because they are likely to vary day-to-day and be affected by an acute event. Supporting this notion, existing research finds day-to-day variability in emotional exhaustion (e.g., Hülshager, Alberts, Feinholdt, & Lang, 2012; Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009; Liu, Wang, Chang, Shi, Zhou, & Shao, 2014; Teuchmann, Totterdell, & Parker, 1999; Wagner, Barnes, & Scott, 2014), work withdrawal (e.g., Scott & Barnes, 2011; Scott, Barnes, & Wagner, 2012; Totterdel & Holman, 2003), and sleep quality (e.g., Diestel, Rivkin, & Schmidt, 2015; Scott & Judge, 2006; Sonnentag, Binnewies, & Mojza, 2008; Wagner et al., 2014).

Hypothesis 4: Conflict directness will negatively relate to strain, specifically having a negative relationship with a) emotional exhaustion, b) work withdrawal, and c) poor sleep quality.

Hypothesis 5: Conflict intensity will positively relate to strain, specifically having a positive relationship with a) emotional exhaustion, b) work withdrawal, and c) poor sleep quality.

Hypothesis 6: Conflict directness and intensity will interact, with intensity strengthening the relationship of directness and a) emotional exhaustion, b) work

withdrawal, and c) poor sleep quality when intensity is low, and weakening the relationship when intensity is high.

Further, I suggest the emotional reactions elicited by conflict will relate to daily strain and mediate the relationship between conflict and strain.

Hypothesis 7: Emotional reactions of positive affect will negatively relate to strain, specifically having a negative relationship with a) emotional exhaustion, b) work withdrawal, and c) poor sleep quality.

Hypothesis 8: Emotional reactions of negative affect will positively relate to strain, specifically having a positive relationship with a) emotional exhaustion, b) work withdrawal, and c) poor sleep quality.

Hypothesis 9: Positive affect will mediate the relationship between conflict and strain.

Hypothesis 10: Negative affect will mediate the relationship between conflict and strain.

I have reviewed the existing research that has examined how emotion regulation buffers the effect between conflict and detrimental outcomes (e.g., Curşeu et al., 2012; Thiel et al., 2017). Instead of proposing emotion regulation as a moderator of the relationship between conflict type and outcomes, I suggest emotion regulation more directly relates to handling one's emotional reactions to conflict. Connecting emotion regulation and conflict expressions theory, I propose that emotion regulation will moderate the effects of negative emotional reactions on the outcomes of interest. More specifically,

I believe that when people engage in deep acting emotion regulation, the negative effects of emotional experience will be attenuated (i.e., weaker effect on strain outcomes).

Hypothesis 11: Deep acting emotion regulation will moderate the relationship between emotional reactions and strain, with deep acting reducing the positive relationship between negative affect and strain.

However, not all types of emotion regulation are advantageous. As discussed earlier, emotional labor required from interpersonal conflict may be an explanatory variable in predicting strain outcomes. Although emotional labor constructs are rarely applied to the conflict context, surface acting should lead to more strain due to emotional dissonance. Supporting this notion, surface acting mediated the relationship between interpersonal conflict with coworkers and employee depression and physical symptoms (Nixon et al., 2016). I propose the ingenuity of surface acting in reaction to conflict will lead to greater strain.

Hypothesis 12: Surface acting emotion regulation will moderate the relationship between emotional reactions and strain, with surface acting increasing the positive relationship between negative affect and strain.

Finally, I hypothesize that emotion regulation will moderate the mediated relationship between conflict and strain through emotional reactions. Specifically, I suggest deep acting will buffer the mediated relationship between conflict and strain, while surface acting will worsen the effect of conflict leading to strain. A visualization of all hypotheses of interest are displayed in Figure 2.

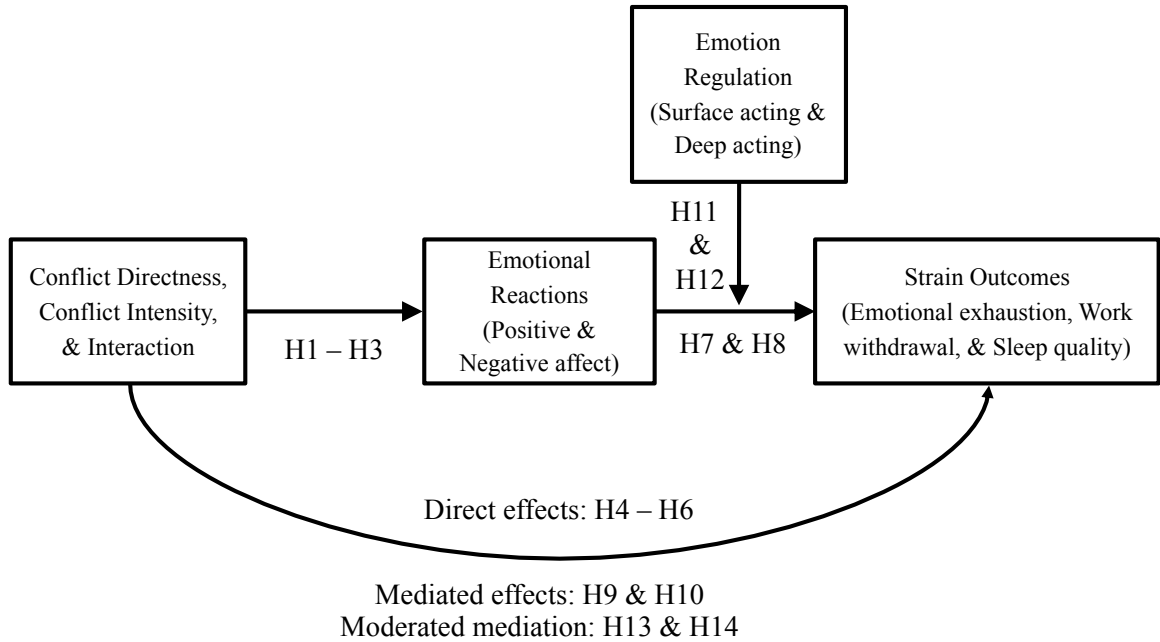


Figure 2 - Model to be tested.

Hypothesis 13: Deep acting emotion regulation will moderate the strength of the mediated relationship between conflict and strain, such that the mediated relationship will be weaker with high deep acting compared to low deep acting.

Hypothesis 14: Surface acting emotion regulation will moderate the strength of the mediated relationship between conflict and strain, such that the mediated relationship will be stronger with high surface acting compared to low surface acting.

CHAPTER 2. METHOD

2.1 Mechanical Turk Pilot Study

Directness and intensity of conflict expression have no existing measure to date that can capture these two dimensions directly. While the DICE measure (Behfar et al., 2017) measures directness and intensity of a conflict event, it does so by independently examining each of the four quadrants of conflict expression. Aggregating multiple conflicts to day levels of directness and intensity does not make logical sense with the categorical quadrant approach. This is problematic for the present study, as I am interested in examining levels of directness and intensity throughout the workday. Instead of quantifying directness and intensity based on the four quadrants, I created measures of directness and intensity.

Items were created using Weingart et al. (2015)'s explanation of the model and conceptualization of directness and intensity. The directness of a conflict expression is defined as the "degree to which the sender explicitly versus implicitly conveys his or her opposition" (Weingart et al., 2015, p. 237). Directness is conceptualized to be explicitly identified, rather than implied, as well as between the parties involved and does not involve third parties (Weingart et al., 2015). Therefore, items focused on behaviors that explicitly identified there was a conflict, such as "made it clear ... that a conflict exists", "explicated stated our stance", "clearly stated what the conflict is". Items also included implied behaviors which were considered low directness and therefore reverse coded, such as "avoiding making each other aware we had a problem" and "discussed the conflict with others not involved with the conflict". Finally, I also included items that referenced understanding the conflict and simply reflecting the directness of conflict, such as "I

understood what this conflict was about” and “this was a direct conflict”. Table 1 lists all of the created items for directness.

Items were also created for intensity. The intensity of conflict expressions refers to the “degree of strength, force, or energy with which the sender conveys opposition during a given conflict event” (Weingart et al., 2015, p. 240). Intensity is characterized by entrenchment in a position and subversiveness of one’s actions. More specifically, entrenchment reflects behaviors that are aimed to protect one’s position that signal the strength and force of conflict. This includes behaviors such as defending one’s own opinions, with items such as “We defended our positions against the other individual(s) involved in the conflict” and “We were committed to our positions regarding the conflict”. Meanwhile, subversiveness reflects the degree to which people behave in ways to overturn, overthrow, or undermine each other. Therefore, items were focused on these behaviors, such as “we undermined each other’s positions regarding the conflict”. Conversely, an item was created for a potential low-intensity behavior, specifically “We considered each other’s position to reach a compromise”. Additionally, one item was created about passive aggressive behavior, “We reacted to the other individual(s) involved in the conflict with passive aggression”. Finally, I included a simple face-valid item about the intensity of conflict, “This conflict was intense”. Table 2 lists all of the created items for intensity.

After creating these items, I ran a validation study using 100 people from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Participants were full-time (at least 30 hours per week) working adults (48% female, 83% White, $M_{Age} = 37.33$, $SD_{Age} = 11.01$, $M_{Hours/Week} = 41.10$, $SD_{Hours/Week} = 6.24$, $M_{Tenure} = 5.58$, $SD_{Tenure} = 4.70$). The directness and intensity of conflict was self-reported using 8 items which were created and validated in a pilot study conducted

on MTurk. Participants received \$2.00 to complete a Qualtrics survey. After agreeing to the informed consent document, participants were asked to report their demographics. As stated in the informed consent, participants were only eligible if they worked at least 30 hours a week, were at least 18 years old, and had a direct supervisor (e.g., not self-employed). If they responded to demographic items in ways that did not confirm this, they were removed from the study. Further, participants were required to pass five attention checks in order to receive compensation.

Participants were instructed to describe “a recent conflict you had in your current workplace. In your writing, please provide details about who you interacted with, how you interacted, the topic/s of your interaction, as well as your emotions, thoughts, and behaviors.” Participants were required to respond with at least 250 characters. They were also provided a definition of conflict, specifically “an awareness of discrepancies, incompatible desires, or clashing aims with at least one other, which can range from momentary disagreements to heated arguments and bullying. Despite the negative connotation of the word ‘conflict’, please keep in mind conflict can actually be positive, such as a constructive debate about a project that leads to a better outcome.”

After describing this conflict, participants responded to Likert-type items about this workplace conflict, specifically my self-recreated directness and intensity of expression items, the DICE measure, task and relationship conflict, workplace conflict norms, and personal conflict management. Task conflict, relationship conflict, and conflict norms were measured using items from Jehn (1995). Conflict management was measured with the updated version of Dutch Test for Conflict Handling (De Dreu, Evers, Beersma, Kluwer,

& Nauta, 2001), which measures five conflict management strategies of forcing, problem solving, yielding, avoiding, and compromising.

2.2 Mechanical Turk Pilot Results

Using the directness and intensity items I created, I ran two exploratory factor analyses with oblimin rotation. Items, factor loadings of rotated solutions, eigenvalues, proportion of variance accounted for, and descriptive statistics are reported in Tables 1 and 2. Because experience sampling studies require the use of short scales, I selected the top highest factor loading items from each of these scales. Using the cutoff of .55 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), there were six items that loaded highly on the first factor for directness, but only three items that loaded highly on the first factor for intensity. With the interest of using short scales, I therefore selected the top four items for directness. This resulted in four items for directness and three for intensity, as my scales for the experience sampling study. I ensured these items had acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .85$ for directness, $\alpha = .67$ for intensity). I then examined correlations with DICE and my other conflict measures for validation. Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals can be found in Table 3.

Table 1 - Directness items and structure matrix

	Factor 1	Factor 2
1. We avoided making each other aware we had a problem. (RC) We made it clear to the individuals involved that a conflict	-0.40	-0.08
2. exists.	0.63	0.27
3. We explicitly stated our stance on the conflict.	0.83	0.22
4. We clearly stated what the conflict is to our teammates. We discussed the conflict with others not involved with the	0.45	0.79
5. conflict. (RC)	0.05	0.52
6. We were direct with each other during this conflict.	0.75	0.12
7. This was a direct conflict.	0.75	0.03
8. I understood what this conflict was about.	0.75	0.25
9. I understood the source of this conflict.	0.70	0.26
Eigenvalues	4.12	1.29
% of variance explained	45.76	14.37

Table 2 - Intensity items and structure matrix

	Factor 1	Factor 2
1. We were committed to our positions regarding the conflict.	0.07	0.40
2. We undermined each other's positions regarding the conflict.	0.68	0.05
3. We considered each other's position to reach a compromise. (RC) We defended our positions against the other individual(s)	-0.18	0.21
4. involved in the conflict. We reacted to the other individual(s) involved in the conflict with	0.27	0.87
5. passive aggression.	0.65	0.14
6. This conflict was intense.	0.59	0.08
Eigenvalues	2.04	1.33
% of variance explained	34.00	22.16

Table 3 - Means, standard deviations, and correlations for Mechanical Turk Pilot

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Directness	4.08	.83															
2. Intensity	2.7	1.01	-.08														
3. Conflict Norms	2.74	.63	.20*	0.14													
4. Argue	2.76	1.17	.08	.56**	0.12												
5. Debate	3.25	1.11	.39**	0.19	.27**	.41**											
6. Dismiss	2.40	1.13	-.28**	.42**	0.02	.48**	-0.04										
7. Tease	1.81	.97	-.33**	.33**	.22*	.23*	0.05	.43**									
8. Complain	2.62	1.17	-.10	.45**	0.03	.54**	0.15	.41**	.32**								
9. Disguise	2.14	1.05	-.49**	.39**	0.16	.21*	-0.09	.53**	.59**	.37**							
10. Relationship Conflict	2.16	.93	-.08	.43**	0.16	.39**	0.07	.28**	0.12	.26**	.22*						
11. Task Conflict	2.37	.82	.12	.37**	.25*	.31**	.27**	.20*	0.06	.27**	0.14	.84**					
12. Yielding	2.69	1.04	.04	-0.04	.39**	-0.01	.10	-.08	0.18	0.06	0.18	0.11	0.11				
13. Competing	3.46	1.13	.33**	-0.09	.40**	0.02	.34**	-.24*	-0.16	-0.09	-0.08	0.1	.21*	.51**			
14. Forcing	2.83	1.10	.23*	.26**	.38**	.24*	.16	0.11	0.03	0.13	0.02	.36**	.39**	0.18	0.13		
15. Problem Solving	3.65	1.13	.36**	-0.02	.33**	-0.02	.41**	-.24*	-0.12	-0.01	-0.11	0.17	.29**	.37**	.73**	.28**	
16. Avoiding	2.73	1.13	-.16	0.06	0.14	-0.02	-.27**	0.20	0.05	0.07	.29**	.31**	.26**	.37**	.23*	.04	.09

When examining Table 3, one can see that the correlations between my self-created scales with the DICE items are not perfect, but generally trend in the predicted directions. More specifically, directness was significantly positively related to debate and significantly negatively related to dismiss, tease, and disguise, as expected. Although it was expected directness would be positively correlated for argue, it was instead near zero. Similarly, I expected directness to be negatively correlated to complain, it was negative but not significant. Intensity was significantly positively related to argue, dismiss, tease, complain, and disguise, although not significantly related to debate. Although it was expected that

intensity to be negatively correlated to disguise, it is positively correlated and significant. Even though these items were not perfectly correlated with items in the DICE as expected, they mostly aligned with my expectations. I therefore decided to move forward with the ESM study using these 7 items.

2.3 Experience Sampling Study

Although my hypotheses are built upon team conflict theory, my study is focused on individual strain. Therefore, I studied the conflict process on the individual level within the context of the workplace. While the Weingart et al. (2015) model was constructed with a team context in mind, there is no reason to suggest that this framework should not apply to the individual level. As such, all of the studies within the small body of research on conflict expressions have examined conflict expressions on the individual level (i.e., Todorova et al., 2014; Tsai & Bendersky, 2016).

In this study, I investigated how daily conflict impacts experiences on the individual level. Namely, I examined how conflict experiences impact momentary emotional experience and daily strain outcomes, studied within-person. Because the emotional reactions elicited by conflict are likely to be momentary, this study utilized an experience sampling method (ESM) to minimize memory biases. ESM provides the benefit of collecting workers' reports in their natural settings and in real time. More specifically, this study utilized event sampling for capturing conflict episodes and time sampling for capturing strain outcomes.

2.4 Participants

Participants were 128 full-time working adults (68% female, 60% White, $M_{Age} = 34.41$, $SD_{Age} = 9.13$, $M_{Hours/Week} = 46.50$, $SD_{Hours/Week} = 6.06$, $M_{Tenure} = 4.48$, $SD_{Tenure} = 4.21$) from my research lab's participant database, which has been built over several years through posts to social media (e.g., Facebook) and word-of-mouth. Based on a power analysis and effect sizes found in Ilies et al. (2011), a sample of 80 participants was found to be sufficient for more than 80% power. However, I aimed to recruit at least 120 subjects to account for attrition and possible low levels of event-reported conflict. Workers had to be at least 18 years old, speak English, work at least 30 hours per week, and have access to their personal smartphone during standard working hours. Due to the topics of interest of this research, participants were required to work with others in person at least 75% of the time (i.e., could not work remotely or alone) and not be night shift or rotating shift workers (due to the interest in sleep outcomes). Participants were from a variety of occupations and industries. Job titles included civil engineer, administrative assistant, sales assistant, tax analyst, communications manager, customer service representative, registered nurse, construction operations manager, web developer, and server.

2.5 Procedure

Potential participants were recruited via email through the Work Experience Lab participant database. The email that was sent for recruitment is included in the Appendix. After participants replied and confirmed that they met the study requirements, they completed the online orientation through Qualtrics. The orientation included informed consent, person-level measures, and study instructions. Study instructions explained the time-sampling strategy, where they were notified to respond to surveys, as well as the event-sampling strategy, where participants were asked to respond to a survey on their

smartphone after they experienced a conflict at work. Conflict was defined using a combination of definitions from teams and OHP literature, with a clarification that debate or disagreement would also qualify as conflict. Participants were told,

“we define conflict as an awareness of discrepancies, incompatible desires, or clashing aims with at least one other, which can range from momentary disagreements to heated arguments and bullying. Despite the negative connotation of the word ‘conflict,’ please keep in mind conflict can actually be good. For example, you can have a productive debate, respectfully going back and forth exchanging different ideas about your work task, which can lead to a better outcome.”

To ensure full understanding of the study and definitions of conflict, participants were required to answer questions confirming their understanding of the study before the ESM portion of the study began. Participants were asked to confirm that they understood the conflict definitions and to provide an example of a conflict from their work. Participants were also asked for their normal waking time, end of workday time, and bedtime so that the daily signals could be customized to each participant’s schedule.

For each workday in a two-week period following this orientation, participants were asked to complete daily surveys through a smartphone app called MetricWire. Although in this study participants were not asked to respond to surveys on weekends, the study duration is similar to the two-week ESM period selected by Ilies et al. (2011). Two weeks was expected to offer enough observations to capture the intraindividual effect as well as to estimate individuals’ characteristic slopes reliably to predict between-individual

differences among these slopes. Each survey in the ESM portion of the study took approximately 3-5 minutes to complete. There were two types of surveys: event signaled, where participants responded after a conflict episode, and time signaled, where participants received a notification to complete a survey. Time signaled surveys occurred at the end of the workday, bedtime, and waking time.

Participants had the opportunity to earn up to \$75 (\$6 per day for 10 days, \$5 bonus for completing at least 75% of the daily surveys, and \$10 for the online orientation) for participating in this study depending on their level of participation. Participants answered questions about their daily conflict events, emotional reactions in their work life, and daily feelings of strain. I emailed participants on the first day of their study reminding them they would start receiving notifications from MetricWire. I also sent check-in emails on the second day of their study as well as on Monday starting the second week of their study to ensure they were receiving notifications and did not have any questions about the study. On the tenth day of the study, I emailed participants telling them they would be removed from the study on MetricWire the following day, told them we would count up their completed surveys for compensation, and asked for their mailing address. The following week, participants were notified of their compensation amount and were mailed a check for their participation.

2.6 Self-Report Measures

Traditional measures of reliability, such as Cronbach's alpha, separate between-person variance into reliable and unreliable error variance (Revelle & Wilt, 2019; Shrout & Lane, 2012). However, ignoring multilevel data structures can bias reliability estimates

(Gabriel et al., 2018). An alternative approach to estimate reliability is to use responses across items and across time with a generalizability theory analysis (Cranford, Shrout, Idea, Rafeli, Yip, & Bolger, 2006; Shrout & Lane, 2012). Being that my main variables of interest were on the within-person level, I calculated multilevel reliability with a generalizability theory analysis using the ‘multilevel.reliability’ function in R (Revelle & Wilt, 2019). This approach takes the nesting variable, in this case the person, and time into account when calculating internal consistency (see Shrout & Lane, 2012 for equations and further detail). For my event-sampled variables, my alpha values reflect R_{rKn} , which treats time and items as random effects. This is considered appropriate for event-contingent designs because the timing of events is random (Shrout & Lane, 2012). For my time-sampled variables, my alpha values reflect R_{rKf} , which provides the reliability of a measure across all items and times (Revelle & Wilt, 2019). This is appropriate for time-sampled constructs because items and times are fixed (Shrout & Lane, 2012).

2.6.1 Event Signaled Conflict Episode Survey

Event sampling gave participants the ability to respond whenever conflict occurred. Participants were instructed to self-initiate completion of this survey as soon as possible following a conflict experience. This survey asked participants about the conflict episode, such as who the conflict was with (e.g., supervisor, coworker/s, client/customer), when the conflict occurred, how the conflict was expressed, and personal emotional reactions. Conflict expression was measured in terms of directness and intensity. Reliabilities, calculated with time nested within people, were sufficient for directness, $\alpha = .89$, and intensity, $\alpha = .90$.

Participants were asked to complete an affect checklist consisting of positively valenced emotion words (e.g., excited, proud, happy, interested, calm, relaxed, and at ease) and negatively valenced emotion words (e.g., irritated, upset, frustrated, nervous, guilty, ashamed, and sad; Barrett & Russell, 1998). Participants rated how much they felt each given emotion during their reported conflict episode, ranging from 1 (*Not at all*) to 5 (*Extremely*). Affective checklists such as the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) have demonstrated construct validity, as both PA and NA have significant correlations with depression, anxiety, and stress scales (Crawford & Henry, 2004). Reliabilities for affect across people and occasions were satisfactory, positive affect $\alpha = .95$, negative affect $\alpha = .96$.

Surface acting and deep acting was measured with three items each, drawn from Brotheridge and Lee (1998), which have been used in several ESM studies of emotional labor (e.g., Scott & Barnes, 2011; Wagner et al., 2014). Items had a referent of “During this conflict event” and were measured on a response scale from 1 = *Not at all* to 5 = *An extreme amount*. A sample item for surface acting is “How much did you resist expressing your true feelings?”, while a sample item for deep acting is “How much did you try to actually experience the emotions that you needed to show?” This measure has been shown to relate to emotional exhaustion and turnover intent (Chau, Dahling, Levy, & Diefendorff, 2009). Reliabilities across people and episodes for these two scales were acceptable, surface acting $\alpha = .95$, deep acting $\alpha = .96$.

2.6.2 Time Signaled End of Workday Survey

At the end of the workday, participants were signaled to respond to measures of strain, namely *emotional exhaustion* and *work withdrawal*. Emotional exhaustion, the primary component of burnout, was measured with a shortened version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) modified for a momentary stem. A sample item is “Right now, I feel used up.” This scale has been shown to consistently negatively relate to job satisfaction (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Emotional exhaustion was measured on a scale from 1 (*Not at all*) to 5 (*Extremely*). Reliability across items and days was sufficient, $\alpha = .98$. Work withdrawal was measured with a psychological withdrawal scale by Lehman and Simpson (1992). An example item is “Today at work, I put less effort into my job than should have,” measured from 1 (*Never*) to 5 (*Very Often*). This measure of work withdrawal has been shown to positively relate to emotional exhaustion and abusive supervision (Chi & Liang, 2013). Reliability across items and days was satisfactory for this measure, $\alpha = .97$. Finally, emotional experience was measured using the same affect checklist as the conflict episode survey. Reliabilities for end of workday positive and negative affect across items and days were acceptable, positive affect $\alpha = .97$, negative affect $\alpha = .96$.

2.6.3 *Time Signaled Bedtime Survey*

At bedtime, participants answered questions regarding their evening emotional experience. Emotional experience was measured using the same affect checklist as the conflict episode survey with a referent of “this evening.” Reliabilities for evening positive and negative affect across items and days were adequate, each $\alpha = .98$.

2.6.4 *Time Signaled Waking Time Survey*

In the morning after waking, participants responded to measures of their current emotional states. Poor sleep quality was measured with four items adapted from Jenkins, Jono, and Stanton's (1988) Sleep Questionnaire (Jenkins et al., 1996; Barnes, Miller, & Bostock, 2017). Participants were asked questions about their sleep the previous night, for example the extent to which they "had trouble falling asleep," from 1 (*Not at all*) to 5 (*Extremely*) and an estimation of how many hours they slept. Higher scores on this survey therefore indicated poorer sleep quality. The scale is shown to positively relate to fatigue on the within-person level (Scott & Judge, 2006). Reliability across items and days was sufficient for this measure, $\alpha = .95$.

Again, emotional experience was measured using the same affect checklist as the conflict episode survey, but with a referent of "this morning." Reliabilities for positive and negative affect across items and days were adequate, positive affect $\alpha = .98$, negative affect $\alpha = .96$. Table 4 illustrates the daily study schedule in chronological order.

Table 4 - Overview of daily survey schedule, organized chronologically

Signaling strategy	Time	Event	Time	Time
Measure	Morning	Throughout Day	End of Workday	Evening
Conflict expressions		x		
Emotions	x	x	x	x
Emotional exhaustion & Work withdrawal			x	
Sleep quality	x			

2.7 Additional Measures

To better account for conflict affecting strain, I collected an additional end of workday survey item, “Did anything else stressful happen at work today? If yes, please describe this briefly” with an open-ended response. Following this, I asked “How stressful was it?” from 1 = *Not at all* to 5 = *Extremely* response options with a “*Does not apply*” option for those who did not have any other workplace stressors. Collecting these items allowed me to add other workplace stressors as a control variable. This measure could therefore provide justification that conflict is affecting these outcomes, rather than other stressors.

Conflict can accumulate; If you have argued with someone before about an issue, that conflict likely feels different (I would expect it would lead to more negative affect). Therefore, I asked in the conflict episode survey, “Have you had a conflict with this person/these people before?” with scale points 1 = *Never*, 5 = *Very Frequently*. In my supplementary analyses section, I examine whether having a conflict with someone before interacted with the directness or intensity of the conflict.

Lastly, I collected an item at the end of the day to assess one’s overall conflict of the day, “Today I experienced a lot of conflict,” assessed with 1 = *Not at all true* to 7 = *Completely true*. This item allowed me to test what aspects of conflict throughout the day (e.g., directness, intensity, recency, etc.) have the strongest effects on people’s daily judgments of conflict. Results regarding this item are in my supplementary analyses section.

2.8 Conceptual Analytic Approach

In this study, I assessed conflict and emotional reactions on a momentary level, but the dependent variables are on the day level. Although analyses are straightforward when there is only one conflict per day, the most appropriate way to analyses when individuals have multiple conflict episodes per day is less clear. There are several potential ways to examine the relationship between multiple momentary conflicts and day-level strain outcomes. For this reason, the rationale behind my analytic approach is worth discussion. Options include the use of single conflict episodes (e.g., the first conflict, the last conflict, or the most extreme conflict) or aggregates (e.g., number of conflicts, averaging episodes to the day level, or summing to the day level). There are pros and cons of each method of analysis, which I discuss here.

First, consider using a single conflict episode to examine end of day outcomes. One may expect that conflict occurring closest to the end of the day is likely to have the strongest relationship with end of day outcomes because of temporal closeness; the emotions resulting from a recent event have less time to dissipate compared to events that are more distal in time. Recent events are therefore likely to have stronger relationships with end of day outcomes. Another option is using the most extreme conflict. Extreme conflict events are likely to be the most salient in one's day have the largest impact on feelings of strain at the end of the workday, regardless of when the conflict occurs. For example, the most intense conflict of a day is likely to lead to the strongest emotional reactions, which is thereby likely to have the strongest relationship with strain. However, using a single conflict and not including the other conflict experiences within the day would ignore the experiential impact of having multiple conflicts in a day. Taking a first-person point of view, a day with many conflicts should be more straining than day with just one

conflict. The potential accumulation of conflict events would not be captured by merely considering a single conflict each day.

On the other hand, aggregating conflict to the day level would allow me to capture an *entire day* of conflict. However, aggregation changes the meaning of the conflict measurement. For example, one could have a conflict that is high in directness but low in intensity (e.g., a debate), and another conflict that is high in intensity but low in directness (e.g., mean-spirited teasing). If aggregated with an average, this would be captured as a day with moderate directness and moderate intensity conflict. This would ignore that this person experienced multiple conflicts, as this calculation would be exactly the same as if someone had five debates and five mean-spirited teasing episodes. Another option is summation, which would result in a day with high intensity and high directness conflict. However, this calculation would be the same as experiencing two conflicts that are moderately high in both directness and intensity, and almost the same as having one high intensity and high directness conflict. It does, however, account for having multiple conflicts; if someone had five of each of these conflicts, the scores for intensity and directness would linearly increase.

Although summation is not perfect, I believe that summing the conflicts together is the most logical way to look at these data. However, aggregation changes the meaning of conflict experiences, which is particularly problematic when examining directness and intensity together. Being that no study currently exists examining daily conflict within the conflict expressions theoretical framework, how to conduct these analyses best is an open question. For my hypothesis testing, I use summation to aggregate to the day level. I do this for all variables collected by conflict episodes, which include directness, intensity,

positive affect, negative affect, surface acting, and deep acting. In my supplementary analyses section, I explore the data in several ways, such as with summation, averages, most recent episode, and most extreme episode, and number of conflict episodes.

2.9 Multilevel Analytical Approach

Experience sampling studies require the use of multilevel modeling (MLM), as this data collection method violates the observation of independence assumption with observations nested within people. MLM accounts for the nested structure of the data. For this study, I conducted analyses using MLM regression in R.

Due to the hierarchical nature of the data, multilevel modeling (MLM) was used to analyze the data. Daily conflict expressions (Level 1), state affect following conflict (Level 1), and daily strain (Level 1) over 10 days were nested within persons (Level 2). To explore the within-person effects of conflict expressions on affect and strain, Level 1 predictors were person-mean centered to remove the associated Level 2 variance. I chose to model only fixed effects because I was not interested in any cross-level interactions. All results are reported using robust statistics.

For my mediation hypotheses, I followed recommendations from Preacher, Zyphur, and Zhang (2010) and used a parametric bootstrap procedure. Specifically, I calculated indirect effects with RMediation using the distribution of the product method (Tofigi & MacKinnon, 2011). The significance of the indirect pathway was assessed by building 95% confidence intervals (CIs) using a Monte Carlo approach to create bias-corrected CIs for each indirect effect. This bootstrap method uses 1,000 bootstrap samples of each data set (Tofigi & MacKinnon, 2011).

CHAPTER 3. RESULTS

3.1 Data Cleaning

Before beginning data analyses, daily responses were cleaned to ensure quality data. A total of 4485 responses were recorded from 128 participants. Daily surveys were removed if a participant took greater than 30 minutes to complete the survey, were answered when participants told the researcher they had the day off, were duplicates from technological errors, or were answered at incorrect time periods. Additional to this, conflict episodes were removed if they recorded for a different day (e.g., response for a conflict but indicated that it occurred 48 hours ago) or were not interpersonal workplace conflicts (e.g., a scheduling conflict or a family related conflict).

A total of 73 responses across all surveys were removed due to data cleaning. There was a total of 885 unique conflict event surveys. Most of these conflict episodes were reported throughout the workday, with 195 episodes (22.03%) reported after participants were reminded to report conflict episodes in the end of day survey. Conflict episodes were then aggregated to the day level resulting in 643 unique days with reported conflict episodes. Of these 643 days, people reported between one and four conflict episodes. A majority of days had one conflict episode (453 days, 70.45%), followed by two conflict episodes (142 days, 22.08%), three conflict episodes (44 days, 6.84%), with only 4 days (0.62%) reporting four conflict episodes in a single day. For the time-sigaled surveys, there were 1021 bedtime surveys, 1075 end of workday surveys, and 1024 waking time surveys were completed across 128 people during the 10-day data collection period. Out of a possible 1,280 for each survey, daily response rates ranged from 79.77% to 83.98%.

It is important to note that not everyone reported a conflict episode during their time in the study; Eleven people (8.59% of participants) reported zero conflict episodes over the 10-day duration of the study. Further, not everyone responded to a time-signaled survey on a day they reported a conflict. The total number of days with conflict episodes had accompanying daily matched responses for outcomes of interest ranged from 452 to 544 days. There was a total of 794 days where there were no conflicts reported but there was at least one time-signaled survey response for that day.

3.2 Data Screening

Next, I examined the data for normality, linearity, homogeneity of variance, homoscedasticity, outliers, and systematic missingness. Normality and the presence of outliers were assessed using descriptive statistics and by reviewing frequency tables and histograms for each variable. Table 5 includes general descriptive statistics for my main variables of interest. Generally, the data were not normally distributed. Several high kurtosis values indicated possible issues of non-normality for several variables of interest, as kurtosis fell outside the range of ± 2 (Field, 2009). Specifically, sums of daily PA and NA from conflict, daily sums of surface acting, and daily sums of deep acting had high values of kurtosis. However, the daily average operationalizations of these variables did not fall outside of the acceptable ± 2 range. Additionally, I examined Q-Q plots for my variables of interest. These tests further confirmed that my variables were non-normally distributed. My daily average operationalizations of these variables had more normal Q-Q plots.

Table 5 - Descriptive Statistics for Main Variables of Interest for Full Study

Variable	Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max	Skew	Kurtosi
Conflict Directness Day Sum	5.24	4.25	2.49	1.00	16.75	1.40	1.71
Conflict Intensity Day Sum	3.04	2.67	1.78	1.00	10.00	1.38	1.93
Conflict PA Day Sum	3.18	2.57	1.90	1.00	15.57	1.64	3.96
Conflict NA Day Sum	2.38	2.14	1.24	1.00	9.43	1.54	3.40
Surface Acting Day Sum	3.18	3.00	1.92	1.00	13.33	1.24	2.14
Deep Acting Day Sum	3.22	3.00	1.86	1.00	12.33	1.38	2.71
Emotional Exhaustion	2.78	2.67	1.11	1.00	5.00	0.21	-0.86
Work Withdrawal	2.23	2.14	0.71	1.00	5.00	0.65	0.57
Poor Sleep Quality	2.10	2.00	0.86	1.00	5.00	1.03	0.80
Sleep Hours	6.70	7.00	1.19	1.50	11.00	-0.58	1.37
Conflict Directness Day Avg	3.82	3.88	0.65	1.00	5.00	-0.53	0.95
Conflict Intensity Day Avg	2.21	2.10	0.81	1.00	4.67	0.41	-0.34
Conflict PA Day Avg	2.27	2.21	0.70	1.00	5.00	0.50	0.45
Conflict NA Day Avg	1.79	1.57	0.68	1.00	5.00	1.10	1.41
Surface Acting Day Avg	2.35	2.33	1.08	1.00	5.00	0.49	-0.54
Deep Acting Day Avg	2.38	2.33	0.97	1.00	5.00	0.31	-0.63

Next, I examined linearity by examining scatterplots in which daily conflict directness, conflict intensity, positive affect, and negative affect were plotted against each outcome. Scatterplots did not indicate non-linearity for the tested associations. Similarly, I tested homoscedasticity by regressing my predictors on each outcome and visually inspecting scatterplots of the predicted values against the residuals. Scatterplots did not indicate any residual outliers or abnormalities, although they did give some indication that there may have been floor effects.

3.3 Within and Between-Person Variation

To examine the meaningful within-person differences and justify the use of multilevel modeling, I first ran intercept-only models to evaluate the variability in the key

Level 1 variables using intraclass correlations (ICC). The ICC column in Table 6 reflects the amount of variance captured at the between-person level. The highest amount of variance at the between-person level was 52%, leaving at least 48% of the variance to be on the within-person level. This showed justification for use of MLM. Table 6 also includes correlations at the within-person and between-person levels. Note that there is an unexpected moderate significant positive within-person correlation between positive affect and negative affect sums, which will be discussed more later.

Table 6 - Intraclass Correlation Coefficients and Within-level and Between-level Correlations for Full Study

Variable	ICC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Conflict Directness Day Sum	.31	—	.71**	.83**	.55**	.54**	.61**	-.11**	-.10**	-.13**	.23**
2. Conflict Intensity Day Sum	.31	.77**	—	.59**	.72**	.69**	.57**	.10**	.11**	-.10**	.19**
3. Conflict PA Day Sum	.42	.87**	.65**	—	.43**	.41**	.62**	-.26**	-.19**	-.14**	.21**
4. Conflict NA Day Sum	.26	.76**	.81**	.64**	—	.73**	.58**	.35**	.13**	.06*	.12**
5. Surface Acting Day Sum	.24	.66**	.74**	.56**	.77**	—	.56**	.29**	.14**	.18**	0.04
6. Deep Acting Day Sum	.30	.79**	.70**	.74**	.73**	.70**	—	-.01	-.08**	0.03	.16**
7. Emotional Exhaustion	.33	.07	.10*	-.03	.17**	.16**	.12**	—	.37**	.32**	-.17**
8. Work Withdrawal	.52	.04	.06	.01	.09*	.12**	.06	.20**	—	.20**	.12**
9. Poor Sleep Quality	.35	.01	-.01	.00	.06	.05	.01	.07	.02	—	-.30**
10. Sleep Hours	.34	-.02	.02	-.02	-.03	-.07	.00	.00	-.01	-.55**	—

Note: Within-person correlations are on the bottom diagonal and between-person correlations are on the top diagonal. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

3.4 Hypothesis Testing

The central hypotheses of this study were that directness and intensity of conflict would relate to positive and negative affect. Table 7 displays MLM regressions of the direct effects of directness and intensity predicting positive and negative affect following the conflict event. Hypothesis 1a, suggesting directness would negatively relate to negative affect, was not supported. Instead, directness had a significant positive relationship with negative affect. Hypothesis 1b, which suggested directness would positively relate to positive affect, was supported. These results indicate that directness related to higher positive affect and negative affect. For intensity, I expected a positive relationship to negative affect (H2a) and negative relationship to positive affect (H2b). Similar to directness, there was a significant positive relationship between intensity and negative affect, although there was an unexpected positive relationship between intensity and positive affect. In sum, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were partially supported. The two unexpected positive relationships were investigated more and are reported in the supplementary analyses section.

Table 7 - Multilevel Regressions of Directness and Intensity Day-level Sums Predicting Daily Positive and Negative Affect Resulting from Conflict

<i>Predictors</i>	Negative Affect from Conflict Sum			Positive Affect from Conflict Sum			Negative Affect from Conflict Sum			Positive Affect from Conflict Sum		
	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	2.38	0.08	<0.001	3.01	0.13	<0.001	2.38	0.08	<0.001	3.04	0.13	<0.001
Directness Day Sum	0.39	0.01	<0.001	0.60	0.02	<0.001						
Intensity Day Sum							0.59	0.02	<0.001	0.64	0.03	<0.001
Random Effects												
σ^2			0.57			0.62			0.46			1.44
τ_{00}	0.56 _{ID}			1.77 _{ID}			0.58 _{ID}			1.51 _{ID}		
ICC	0.49 _{ID}			0.74 _{ID}			0.56 _{ID}			0.51 _{ID}		
Observations			636			636			636			636
Marginal R ² / Conditional R ²	0.361 / 0.676			0.390 / 0.842			0.411 / 0.738			0.224 / 0.620		

I next tested Hypotheses 3a and 3b, which proposed interactions between directness and intensity predicting negative and positive affect. Table 8 displays the results of the interaction tests. There were significant interactions between directness and intensity predicting negative affect as well as positive affect. Figures 3 and 4 display plots of these relationships. As seen in Figure 3, intensity strengthened the effect of directness predicting negative affect when intensity was high compared when intensity was low. As seen in Figure 4, intensity similarly strengthened the effect of directness predicting positive affect when intensity was high compared to when intensity was low. However, it was expected that directness would have a negative relationship with positive affect, rather than a positive one. Hypothesis 3a was supported, but Hypothesis 3b was not supported.

Table 8 - Multilevel Regressions of Directness and Intensity Day-level Sums and Their Interaction Predicting Daily Positive and Negative Affect Resulting from Conflict

<i>Predictors</i>	Negative Affect from Conflict Sum			Positive Affect from Conflict Sum		
	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	2.33	0.08	<0.001	2.98	0.13	<0.001
Directness Day Sum	0.16	0.02	<0.001	0.62	0.02	<0.001
Intensity Day Sum	0.39	0.03	<0.001	-0.06	0.03	0.103
Interaction	0.03	0.01	<0.001	0.02	0.01	0.014
Random Effects						
σ^2	0.40			0.62		
τ_{00}	0.54 _{ID}			1.69 _{ID}		
ICC	0.57 _{ID}			0.73 _{ID}		
Observations	636			636		
Marginal R^2	/ 0.456 / 0.769			0.400 / 0.839		
Conditional R^2						

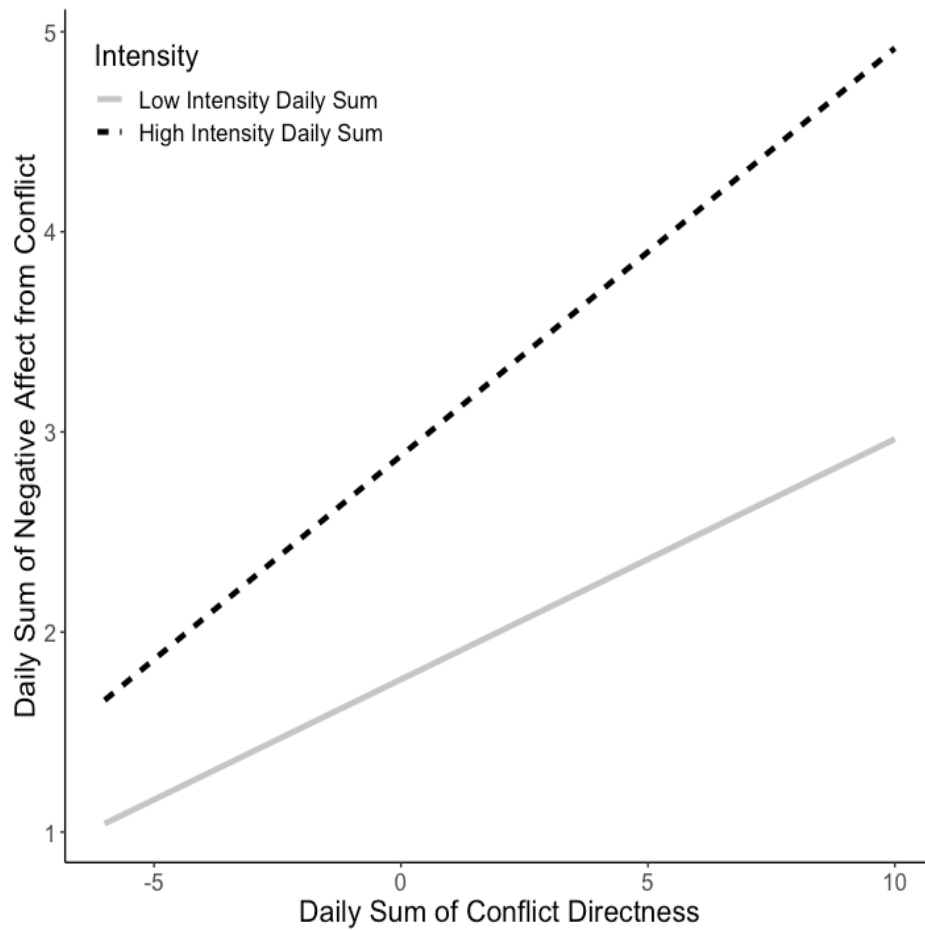


Figure 3 - The interaction between day-level conflict sums of directness and intensity predicting day-level sum of negative affect.

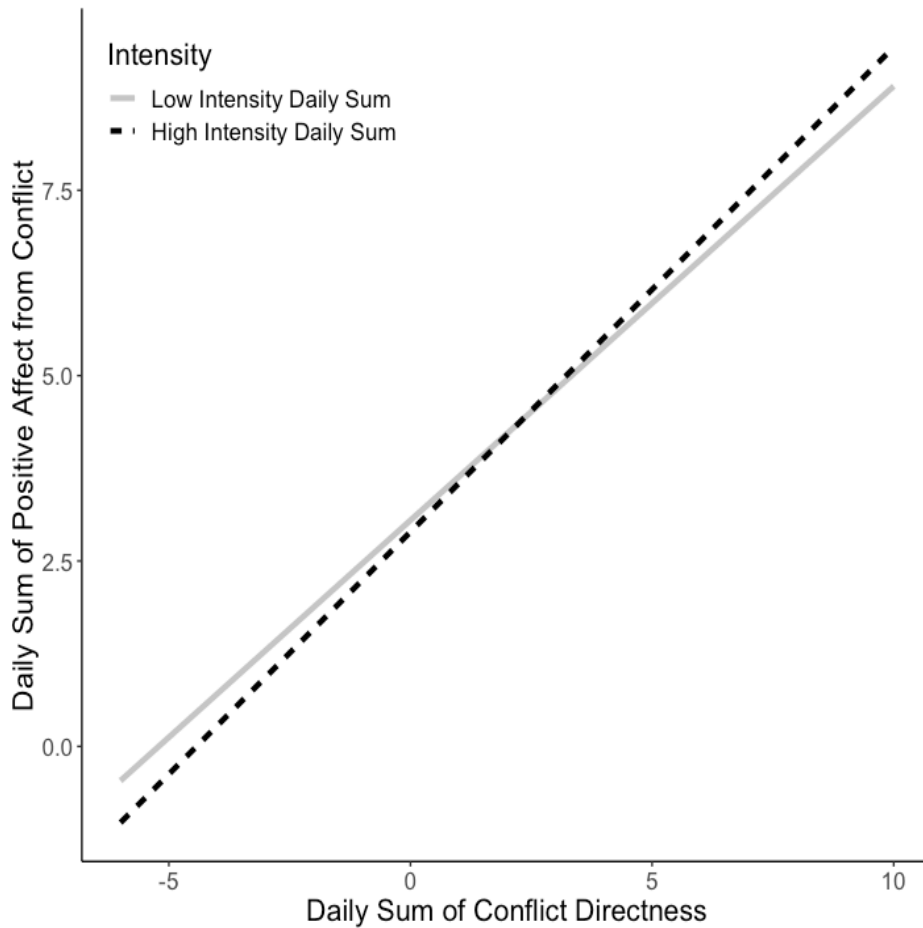


Figure 4 - The interaction between day-level conflict sums of directness and intensity predicting day-level sum of positive affect.

My next hypotheses suggested directness and intensity would predict strain outcomes, specifically emotional exhaustion, work withdrawal, and poor sleep quality. As seen in Table 9, there were no significant effects of directness predicting any of the strain outcomes. This suggests directness of conflict throughout the day does not relate to emotional exhaustion, work withdrawal, or sleep quality. Regarding the intensity of conflict, Table 10 shows there was a significant effect of intensity predicting emotional exhaustion, but there were no significant effects for work withdrawal and sleep quality. This suggests that the day's total conflict intensity relates to emotional exhaustion, but not

other strain outcomes. I also predicted an interaction between directness and intensity, but there were no significant interactive effects predicting emotional exhaustion $\gamma = < .01$, $SE = .01$, $p = .333$, work withdrawal, $\gamma = -.01$, $SE = .01$, $p = .301$, or sleep quality, $\gamma = < .01$, $SE = .01$, $p = .592$. The effect of directness does not seem to depend on intensity in predicting strain. Except for Hypotheses 5a, Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 were not supported.

Table 9 - Multilevel Regressions of Day-level Conflict Directness Sum Predicting Strain Outcomes

<i>Predictors</i>	Emotional Exhaustion			Work Withdrawal			Sleep Quality		
	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	2.98	0.08	<0.001	2.29	0.06	<0.001	2.13	0.06	<0.001
Directness Day Sum	0.03	0.02	0.078	0.01	0.01	0.315	0.00	0.02	0.818
Random Effects									
σ^2	0.76			0.24			0.50		
τ_{00}	0.56 _{ID}			0.28 _{ID}			0.27 _{ID}		
ICC	0.42 _{ID}			0.54 _{ID}			0.35 _{ID}		
Observations	544			544			452		
Marginal R ² / Conditional R ²	0.003 / 0.426			0.001 / 0.537			0.000 / 0.352		

Table 10 - Multilevel Regressions of Day-level Conflict Intensity Sum Predicting Strain

		Emotional Exhaustion			Work Withdrawal			Sleep Quality		
<i>Predictors</i>		<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept		2.98	0.08	<0.001	2.29	0.06	<0.001	2.13	0.06	<0.001
Intensity Sum	Day	0.06	0.03	0.021	0.02	0.01	0.157	-0.00	0.02	0.961
Random Effects										
σ^2		0.76			0.24			0.50		
τ_{00}		0.56 _{ID}			0.28 _{ID}			0.27 _{ID}		
ICC		0.43 _{ID}			0.54 _{ID}			0.35 _{ID}		
Observations		544			544			452		
Marginal R ² / Conditional R ²		0.006 / 0.429			0.002 / 0.538			0.000 / 0.352		

Hypotheses 7 and 8 predicted emotional reactions from conflict would relate to strain outcomes, with positive affect relating to lower strain and negative affect relating to higher strain. Table 11 shows that positive affect did not relate to any strain outcomes, so Hypothesis 7 was unsupported. Table 12 displays a significant effect between negative affect and emotional exhaustion, but no other outcomes. On days where people have more negative affect due to conflict, they are more emotionally exhausted but do not necessarily withdraw more from work or more trouble sleeping. This partially supports Hypothesis 8.

Table 11 - Multilevel Regressions of Day-level Positive Affect Sum from Conflict Predicting Daily Strain

<i>Predictors</i>	Emotional Exhaustion			Work Withdrawal			Sleep Quality		
	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	2.98	0.08	<0.001	2.29	0.06	<0.001	2.13	0.06	<0.001
Positive Affect from Conflict	-0.02	0.03	0.542	0.00	0.01	0.860	0.00	0.02	0.932
Random Effects									
σ^2	0.77			0.24			0.50		
τ_{00}	0.56 _{ID}			0.28 _{ID}			0.27 _{ID}		
ICC	0.42 _{ID}			0.54 _{ID}			0.35 _{ID}		
Observations	544			544			452		
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.000 / 0.421			0.000 / 0.536			0.000 / 0.352		

Table 12 - Multilevel Regressions of Day-level Negative Affect Sum from Conflict Predicting Daily Strain

<i>Predictors</i>	Emotional Exhaustion			Work Withdrawal			Sleep Quality		
	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	2.98	0.08	<0.001	2.29	0.06	<0.001	2.13	0.06	<0.001
Negative Affect from Conflict	0.14	0.04	<0.001	0.04	0.02	0.054	0.04	0.03	0.164
Random Effects									
σ^2	0.74			0.24			0.49		
τ_{00}	0.57 _{ID}			0.28 _{ID}			0.27 _{ID}		
ICC	0.43 _{ID}			0.54 _{ID}			0.35 _{ID}		
Observations	544			544			452		
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.015 / 0.441			0.003 / 0.541			0.003 / 0.355		

Hypotheses 9 and 10 predicted emotional reactions to conflict would mediate the relationship between conflict and strain. However, I only found a main effect between intensity and emotional exhaustion. Although mediation effects can arguably be tested without a total effect (Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010), I take a conservative approach and only report indirect effects of emotion mediating the relationship between intensity and emotional exhaustion. Using the RMediation package, I estimated indirect effects and calculated 95% confidence intervals based on the distribution of the product method (Tofighi & MacKinnon, 2011). I found that there was an indirect effect of positive affect in the relationship between intensity and emotional exhaustion, $\gamma = -.08$, $SE = .02$, $CI = -.12, -.05$. However, this should be interpreted with caution, as results from tests for Hypothesis 7 showed no relationship between positive affect and emotional exhaustion; A stringent test using the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach would require this relationship to be significant for mediation. Next, I examined negative affect as a potential mediator explained effects between intensity and emotional exhaustion. I found an indirect effect of intensity and emotional exhaustion through negative affect, $\gamma = .15$, $SE = .03$, $CI = .08, .21$. As explained previously, there was a main effect of negative affect and emotional exhaustion. These two indirect effects were in the expected directions; positive affect indirectly related to lower strain, while negative affect indirectly related to higher strain. This provides modest support for Hypothesis 9 and support for Hypothesis 10, but only for the outcome of emotional exhaustion.

My next hypotheses were focused on the moderating effects of emotion regulation. Hypothesis 11 proposed deep acting would interact with negative affect, reducing the relationship between negative affect and strain. As seen in Table 13, there were significant

interactions between deep acting and negative affect predicting emotional exhaustion. Figure 5 provides a visualization of this interaction. In line with expectations, deep acting weakened the relationships between negative affect and strain outcomes as negative affect increased. Hypothesis 11 was therefore supported, but only for the emotional exhaustion outcome. Then I tested the surface acting hypothesis. Hypothesis 12 postulated surface acting would interact with negative affect, strengthening the relationship between negative affect and strain. Table 14 shows there were no significant interaction effects between surface acting and negative affect for any of the strain outcomes. Therefore, Hypothesis 12 was not supported.

Table 13 - Multilevel Regressions of Day-level Negative Affect from Conflict Sum, Day-level Deep Acting During Conflict Sum, and Their Interaction Predicting Daily Strain

<i>Predictors</i>	Emotional Exhaustion			Work Withdrawal			Sleep Quality		
	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	3.01	0.09	<0.001	2.28	0.06	<0.001	2.13	0.06	<0.001
Negative Affect from Conflict	0.15	0.05	0.006	0.04	0.03	0.193	0.07	0.05	0.119
Deep Acting	0.03	0.04	0.378	-0.01	0.02	0.637	-0.03	0.03	0.417
Interaction	-0.04	0.02	0.027	0.01	0.01	0.373	-0.00	0.02	0.962
Random Effects									
σ^2	0.74			0.24			0.49		
τ_{00}	0.57 _{ID}			0.28 _{ID}			0.27 _{ID}		
ICC	0.44 _{ID}			0.54 _{ID}			0.35 _{ID}		
Observations	544			544			452		
Marginal R ² / Conditional R ²	0.023 / 0.449			0.004 / 0.541			0.004 / 0.355		

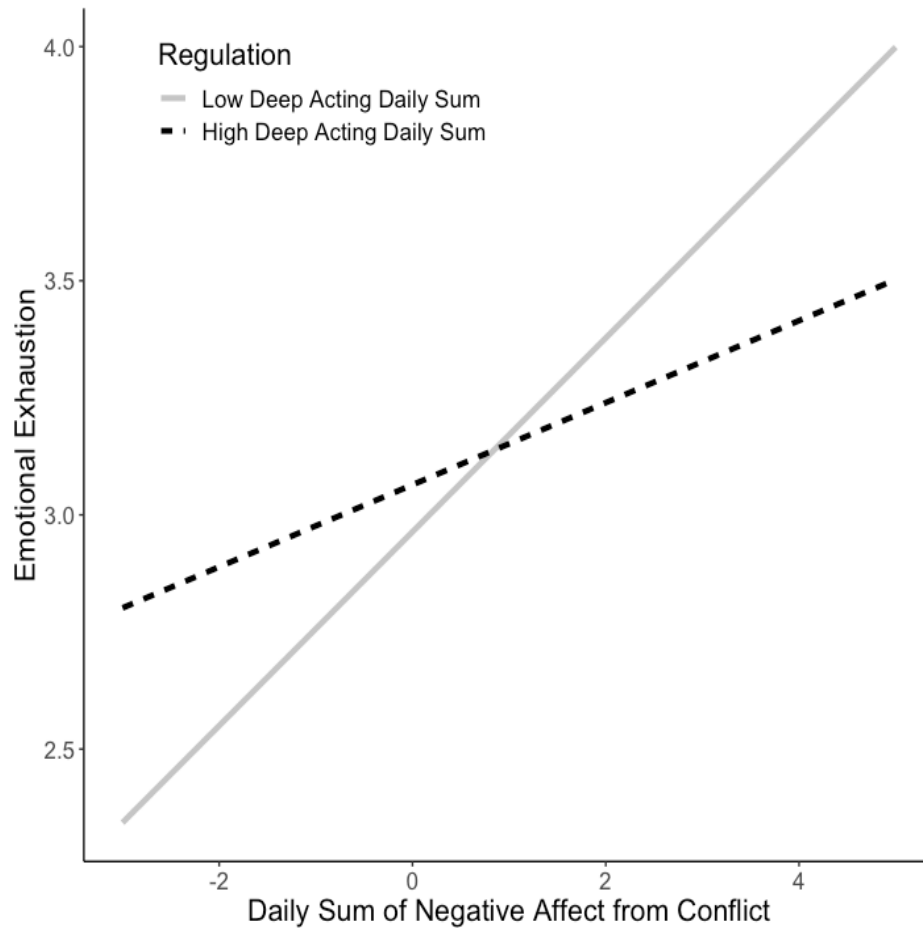


Figure 5 - The interaction between day-level conflict sums of negative affect and deep acting predicting emotional exhaustion.

Table 14 - Multilevel Regressions of Day-level Negative Affect from Conflict Sum, Day-level Surface Acting During Conflict Sum, and Their Interaction Predicting Daily Strain

<i>Predictors</i>	Emotional Exhaustion			Work Withdrawal			Sleep Quality		
	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	3.00	0.09	<0.001	2.28	0.06	<0.001	2.13	0.06	<0.001
Negative Affect from Conflict	0.10	0.06	0.088	-0.01	0.03	0.741	0.04	0.05	0.457
Surface Acting	0.05	0.04	0.136	0.04	0.02	0.065	-0.00	0.03	0.982
Interaction	-0.02	0.02	0.193	0.00	0.01	0.632	0.00	0.01	0.733

Random Effects

σ^2	0.74	0.24	0.50
τ_{00}	0.57 _{ID}	0.28 _{ID}	0.27 _{ID}
ICC	0.44 _{ID}	0.54 _{ID}	0.35 _{ID}
Observations	544	544	452
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.020 / 0.446	0.007 / 0.544	0.003 / 0.354

Finally, I tested the moderated mediation effects of deep acting and surface acting. Hypothesis 13 proposed deep acting would moderate the strength of the mediated relationship between conflict expressions and strain, such that the mediating effect of negative affect would be weaker with high deep acting compared to low deep acting. Similarly, Hypothesis 14 suggested surface acting would moderate the strength of the mediated relationship between conflict expressions and strain, such that the mediating effect of negative affect would be stronger with high surface acting compared to low surface acting. To test these two moderated mediation hypotheses, four conditions must be met: (a) significant effects of directness and intensity on strain outcomes; (b) significant interactions between directness/intensity and the two types of emotion regulation (i.e., significant interactions between negative affect and emotion regulation in predicting strain); (c) significant effect of negative affect on strain; and (d) different conditional indirect effects of conflict expression on strain, via negative affect, across low and high levels of emotion regulation (Muller, Judd, & Yzerbyt, 2005; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). The last condition, which is the essence of moderated mediation, establishes whether the strength of the mediation via negative affect differs across the two levels of the moderator (Preacher et al., 2007; Ng, Ang, & Chan, 2008). Moderated mediation is

demonstrated when the conditional indirect effect of conflict expression on strain, via negative affect, differs in strength across low and high levels of deep acting and surface acting.

My results for Hypothesis 5a, which demonstrated that intensity significantly predicted emotional exhaustion, supported Condition 1 for moderated mediation. My result for Hypothesis 4a testing a relationship between directness and emotional exhaustion was marginally significant ($p = .078$). Therefore, I decided to test for a moderated mediation for directness and emotional exhaustion. Because multilevel regressions of directness and intensity predicting work withdrawal and sleep quality were not significant, I only tested mediated moderation effects predicting emotional exhaustion.

Hypotheses 11 and 12 tested Condition 2, which assessed whether there was an interactive effect of negative affect with emotion regulation in predicting strain. As previously explained, deep acting interacted with negative affect in predicting emotional exhaustion. Condition 2 was therefore met for deep acting. However, surface acting did not interact with negative affect to predict strain outcomes. Because the results of the moderated multilevel regressions were not significant for surface acting, I did not test the effects of moderated mediation for surface acting any further. Thus, Hypothesis 14 was not supported.

The next condition was concerned with the main effect between the mediator and the outcome of interest. Condition 3 was supported by my results for Hypothesis 8a, as negative affect was positively related to emotional exhaustion. Therefore, the first three

conditions indicated that deep acting could moderate the mediated effect of negative affect between conflict expressions and emotional exhaustion.

Finally, I examined Condition 4, which requires the magnitude of the condition indirect effect of deep acting via negative affect to be different for individuals across high and low levels of deep acting. Following recommendations from Preacher et al. (2007), I operationalized high and low levels of deep acting as one standard deviation above and below the mean score of deep acting. I then used RMediation (Tofigi & MacKinnon, 2011) to calculate estimates and bias-corrected CIs of the conditional indirect effect of directness and intensity across low and high levels of deep acting. For directness, results showed that the conditional indirect effects of negative affect were significant at levels of low deep acting ($\gamma = .10$, $SE = .02$, $CI = .07, .15$), but not at high levels of deep acting ($\gamma = .07$, $SE = .07$, $CI = -.02, .17$). Results were similar for intensity; the conditional indirect effects of negative affect were significant at low levels of deep acting ($\gamma = .13$, $SE = .03$, $CI = .07, .20$), but not at high levels of deep acting ($\gamma = .03$, $SE = .07$, $CI = -.12, .17$). This suggests negative affect is more strongly related to emotional exhaustion when one is low in deep acting compared to when one is high in deep acting. Thus, Hypothesis 13 was supported, but only for the emotional exhaustion outcome.

3.5 Supplementary Analyses

Overall, my analyses using summation of daily conflict events suggest that directness and intensity of conflict positively relate to positive affect, negative affect, and emotional exhaustion. Emotional reactions helped explain the relationship between conflict intensity and emotional exhaustion. Finally, deep acting interacted with negative affect,

such that higher levels of deep acting buffered the positive relationship between negative affect and emotional exhaustion.

However, being that no study existing study to date has examined daily conflict within the conflict expressions theoretical framework, the most appropriate way to conduct these analyses is an open question. Because I argued for the use of summation in my proposal, I focused on testing my hypotheses using the summation method. Although I made the decision to use summation, someone else could have tested the same hypotheses using a different aggregation approach that could have made equal sense. For example, one could have used daily averages of conflict or single conflict episodes such as the first episode, the most recent episode, and the most extreme episode.

There were several indications that summation may not have been the best approach for testing my hypotheses. As previously mentioned, the summation data were non-normal and had issues with kurtosis. Further, as displayed in Table 6, there was a moderate positive within-person correlation between positive and negative affect, $r = .64$, $p < .01$. Existing research shows that positive and negative affect are either non-significantly or negatively correlated (e.g., Beal & Ghandour, 2011; Glomb, Bhawe, Miner, & Wall, 2011; Merlo et al., 2018; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1985). Therefore, this signaled a potential issue. At the episodic level (before aggregation to the day level), positive and negative affect resulting from conflict had a negative relationship, $r = -.29$, $p < .001$. This suggests that summation was likely particularly problematic for analyses using positive and negative affect. In this section, I present supplementary analyses that utilize other ways of analyzing the effect of conflict episodes. These analyses can help inform which potential methods of aggregation may be most appropriate to analyze these data.

3.5.1 *End of Day Judgments of Conflict*

As an initial examination of the best ways to conduct these analyses, I examined how conflict directness and intensity would predict end of day judgments of conflict. Specifically, I used daily summation, daily average, first conflict episode, last conflict episode, and most extreme conflict episode to each predict the single outcome of day's evaluation of conflict. There were 190 days out of 643 days (29.55%) where individuals reported more than one conflict episode.

Multilevel regressions showed that for directness, summation, $\gamma = .21$, $SE = .03$, $p < .001$, and maximum directness conflict episode, $\gamma = .33$, $SE = .12$, $p < .001$, predicted end of day judgments of conflict. Average directness, $\gamma = .14$, $SE = .14$, $p = .258$, first conflict episode, $\gamma = .13$, $SE = .03$, $p = .251$, last conflict episode $\gamma = .03$, $SE = .11$, $p = .820$, were not significant predictors. For intensity, all conceptualizations were significant predictors; daily summation, $\gamma = .34$, $SE = .04$, $p < .001$, daily average $\gamma = .39$, $SE = .10$, $p < .001$, first conflict episode, $\gamma = .31$, $SE = .09$, $p < .001$, last conflict episode, $\gamma = .37$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$, and maximum intensity episode, $\gamma = .48$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$. This suggests that intensity has a stronger relationship with end of day conflict evaluations compared to directness, effects of which may only be captured by daily summation or maximums. Furthermore, number of conflicts each day had a significant relationship with one's end of day conflict evaluation, $\gamma = .75$, $SE = .10$, $p < .001$. When zero was imputed for days when no conflict was reported, the strength of this relationship decreased but was still significant, $\gamma < .01$, $SE < .01$, $p < .001$.

3.5.2 *Daily Conflict Averages*

Although daily averages of conflict episodes did not seem to predict end of day evaluations of conflict, I was curious as to whether daily average operationalization of directness and intensity would predict emotional reactions or strain outcomes. Furthermore, summation scores indicated kurtosis issues for several variables of interest in my data (see Table 5), while averages of these variables did not fall outside acceptable ranges for kurtosis. I decided to test my first three hypotheses using the daily average variables as supplementary analyses.

Again, these first three hypotheses were that directness and intensity of conflict (and their interaction) would relate to positive and negative affect. Table 15 displays MLM regressions of the direct effects of daily averages of directness and intensity predicting daily averages positive and negative affect following the conflict event. While summation results indicated an unexpected positive relationship between directness and negative affect, use of daily averages indicated a negative relationship, as hypothesized. Similarly, summation results indicated an unexpected positive relationship between intensity and positive affect, but daily averages indicated a negative relationship, as hypothesized. Consistent across both approaches were the hypothesized positive relationship between directness and positive affect, as well as a positive relationship between intensity and negative affect. I also tested Hypothesis 3, which proposed interaction effects. There were no interactive effects between directness and intensity in predicting daily average PA following conflict, $\beta = .03$, $SE = .06$, $p = .624$, or daily average NA following conflict, $\beta = -.03$, $SE = .06$, $p = .630$. The use of daily averages of conflict fully supports Hypotheses 1 and 2 but does not support Hypothesis 3.

Table 15 - Daily Averages of Directness and Intensity Predicting Daily Averages of Positive and Negative Affect Due to Conflict

<i>Predictors</i>	Negative Affect from Conflict Avg			Positive Affect from Conflict Avg			Negative Affect from Conflict Avg			Positive Affect from Conflict Avg		
	<i>Estimate</i> <i>s</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimate</i> <i>s</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimate</i> <i>s</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimate</i> <i>s</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	1.83	.05	<.001	2.24	.05	<.001	1.83	.05	<.001	2.24	.05	<.001
Directness Day Avg	-0.13	.04	.001	0.19	0.04	<.001						
Intensity Day Avg							0.33	.03	<.001	-.19	.03	<.001
Random Effects												
σ^2	0.25			0.27			0.20			0.27		
τ_{00}	0.23 _{ID}			0.21 _{ID}			0.24 _{ID}			0.21 _{ID}		
ICC	0.48 _{ID}			0.44 _{ID}			0.55 _{ID}			0.44 _{ID}		
Observations	636			636			636			636		
Marginal R ² / Conditional R ²	0.009 / 0.489			0.019 / 0.448			0.085 / 0.588			0.027 / 0.458		

3.5.3 Momentary Analyses

Although my strain outcomes were measured on the day level, conflict was measured on the momentary (or episodic) level. Conflict directness, intensity, and emotional reactions to conflict were all measured on the same momentary level. I was therefore able to test Hypotheses 1 through 3 on the momentary level. As shown in Table 16, directness related to lower negative affect and higher positive affect, while intensity related to higher negative affect and lower positive affect. All of these relationships were in the expected directions. I also tested the interaction of directness and intensity, but there

was no interaction predicting momentary negative affect, $\gamma = .04$, $SE = .04$, $p = .368$, nor momentary positive affect, $\gamma = -.06$, $SE = .05$, $p = .198$. These results are more similar to the average aggregation than the summation aggregation.

Table 16 - Momentary Directness and Intensity Predicting Momentary Positive and Negative Affect Due to Conflict

<i>Predictors</i>	Momentary Negative Affect from Conflict			Momentary Positive Affect from Conflict			Momentary Negative Affect from Conflict			Momentary Positive Affect from Conflict		
	<i>Estimate_s</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimate_s</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimate_s</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Estimate_s</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	1.82	0.05	<0.001	2.24	0.05	<0.001	1.83	0.05	<0.001	2.24	0.05	<0.001
Directness Momentary	-0.08	0.03	0.014	0.23	0.03	<0.001						
Intensity Momentary							0.33	0.02	<0.001	-0.20	0.03	<0.001
Random Effects												
σ^2	0.26			0.32			0.20			0.31		
τ_{00}	0.22 _{ID}			0.22 _{ID}			0.24 _{ID}			0.22 _{ID}		
ICC	0.46 _{ID}			0.41 _{ID}			0.54 _{ID}			0.41 _{ID}		
Observations	885			885			885			885		
Marginal R ² / Conditional R ²	0.004 / 0.466			0.031 / 0.425			0.103 / 0.589			0.034 / 0.428		

3.5.4 Comparing Days With and Without Conflict

In my primary analyses, days without a reported conflict were coded as missing. Therefore, if a person did not report a conflict any given day, his or her responses to any strain surveys were not included in my hypothesis testing because there was no valid predictor. This is not ideal for a complete understanding of conflict affecting strain, as one

would expect days without conflict to be less straining than days when one experiences conflict. As a supplementary test, I dummy coded days with and without conflict (with conflict as 1, without conflict as 0) and ran multilevel regressions predicting strain outcomes. I found that when examined a binary variable, conflict positively predicted emotional exhaustion, $\gamma = .35$, $SE = .05$, $p < .001$, work withdrawal, $\gamma = .10$, $SE = .04$, $p = .005$, but not poor sleep quality, $\gamma = -.01$, $SE = .05$, $p = .911$.

CHAPTER 4. DISCUSSION

The current investigation examined within-person relationships of daily conflict expressions. There were three major aims of the primary study: to understand (a) how conflict expressions impact momentary positive and negative affect, (b) how conflict expressions and their accompanying emotional reactions relate to daily strain, and (c) how emotion regulation moderates these relationships. As the first study investigating both directness and intensity of conflict expressions and their connections to strain and emotion regulation, this study contributes to theoretical and empirical knowledge of conflict in the workplace.

4.1 Conflict Expressions Predicting Emotional Reactions

I demonstrated that within-person variance in directness and intensity of conflict expressions covaried with fluctuations in positive and negative affect. The Weingart et al. (2015) model my study is based on suggests conflict expressions should relate to emotional reactions. As expected, directness related to greater positive affect and intensity related to greater negative affect. This was consistent across all analytic approaches: summation, averages, and momentary level analyses. Unexpectedly, however, directness related to greater negative affect and intensity related to greater positive affect when using summation. As demonstrated in my supplementary analyses, these two unexpected effects were likely conflated by the number of conflict episodes in a day; the directions reversed for the two unexpected relationships when the data were analyzed using daily averages and momentary level data. More specifically, when using these other methods, I found that directness related to lower negative affect and intensity related to lower positive affect. As

I discuss in detail later, this suggests that summation may not be the most appropriate aggregation method in examining these relationships. When considering the results of the supplementary analyses, these findings suggests that directness and intensity impact emotions in line with expectations by Weingart et al. (2015). Directness related to higher positive affect and lower negative affect, while intensity related to lower positive affect and higher negative affect.

When considering these effects of directness and intensity together, one would expect high directness and low intensity conflict may lead to highest positive affect and lowest negative affect. However, the interactive effects did not exactly demonstrate this. Directness and intensity interacted to predict positive and negative affect, but only when examined with summation operationalizations. More specifically, when intensity of conflict was high, there was a stronger relationship between directness and negative emotions compared to when intensity was low. This was in line with the theoretical model proposed by Weingart et al. (2015), as high directness with high intensity conflict like shouting would lead to more negative emotions than a high directness with low intensity conflict like debate. However, results also showed that low directness conflicts related to lower negative affect. The conflict expressions model proposes that low directness conflict, such as passive aggression or backstabbing, would also lead to negative emotions. Therefore, results are only somewhat in line with the Weingart et al. (2015) model.

There was also an interactive effect between directness and intensity predicting positive emotions. Surprisingly, there was a stronger positive relationship between directness and positive emotions when intensity was high compared to low. This suggests that high directness with high intensity conflict such as shouting leads to more positive

emotions than high directness with low intensity conflict such as debate. This was surprising in terms of direction, as I expected a negative relationship between directness and positive emotions. Again, this was likely affected by the method of aggregation, as there was a negative relationship between directness and positive emotions when examined with averages and momentary level data. However, interactive effects did not appear when using averages or momentary data.

4.2 Conflict Expressions Predicting Strain

In general, directness of conflict throughout the workday did not relate to strain. Intensity predicted emotional exhaustion but did not predict work withdrawal or sleep quality. There were no interactive effects between directness and intensity predicting strain. This is somewhat contrary to a plethora of cross-sectional research that has demonstrated that higher amounts of workplace conflict relates to greater strain (e.g., Constantin & Teodora, 2016; Dijkstra et al., 2011; Dijkstra et al., 2009; Frone, 2000; Fox et al., 2011; Penney & Spector, 2005; Neckles-Charles, 2018; Nixon et al., 2011; Spector & Jex, 1998). Because conflict can threaten one's self-esteem and require cognitive resources to cope with conflict (De Dreu et al., 2004), I expected workplace conflict would require the use of personal resources and lead to strain. However, my results only support the notion that the intensity of conflict relates to emotional exhaustion. There are two possible explanations for this.

First, it may be that emotional exhaustion is the most sensitive strain outcome, while work withdrawal and sleep quality are not as readily impacted. Existing within-person conflict studies show relationships between conflict and job insecurity (Garrido

Vásquez et al., 2019), conflict with one's partner at home (Sanz-Vergel et al., 2015), and daily job satisfaction with coworkers (Hagemeister & Volmer, 2018). These outcomes, as well as emotional exhaustion, may be more emotionally sensitive outcomes compared to work withdrawal behavior and sleep quality. While existing work suggests there is day-to-day variation in work withdrawal (e.g., Scott & Barnes, 2011; Scott, Barnes, & Wagner, 2012; Totterdel & Holman, 2003) and sleep quality (e.g., Diestel, Rivkin, & Schmidt, 2015; Scott & Judge, 2006; Sonnentag, Binnewies, & Mojza, 2008; Wagner, Barnes, & Scott, 2014), daily emotional exhaustion is more commonly studied as an outcome (e.g., Hülshager, Alberts, Feinholdt, & Lang, 2012; Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009; Liu, Wang, Chang, Shi, Zhou, & Shao, 2014; Teuchmann, Totterdell, & Parker, 1999; Wagner et al., 2014).

Second, the effects of conflict may accumulate over time to impact average levels of strain rather than daily fluctuations. This would explain why effects are found cross-sectionally rather than within-person. Although I did not directly test this notion, between-person correlations provide insight for this possibility. As seen in Table 6, there were significant relationships between conflict expressions and strain on the between-person level. Directness had negative relationships with emotional exhaustion, work withdrawal, and poor sleep quality. Intensity had positive relationships with emotional exhaustion and work withdrawal. Surprisingly there was a negative relationship between intensity and poor sleep quality, suggesting intensity of conflict relates to better sleep on the between-person level. However, five out of six were in the expected directions. Meanwhile, the within-person correlations among these variables were not significant except a positive correlation

between intensity and emotional exhaustion. This suggests these relationships exist at the between-person level rather than the within-person level.

I expected that emotional reactions from conflict would relate to strain outcomes, but the only significant effect I found was between negative affect and emotional exhaustion. There was a marginal relationship between negative affect from conflict and work withdrawal, but no relationship with sleep quality. Positive affect had no direct effects on any strain outcomes. Although there was only a main effect of conflict intensity predicting emotional exhaustion, there were indirect effects of emotional reactions in this relationship. More specifically, positive affect was related to lower emotional exhaustion and negative affect was related to higher emotional exhaustion. Applying a COR (Hobfoll, 1989) perspective, I expected positive emotion resulting from conflict expressions to lead to resource gain, which would mitigate the effect of conflict leading to strain outcomes. Conversely, I expected that negative emotions resulting from conflict appraisal would signal a loss of resources, which would lead to strain. Results mostly support this notion for emotional exhaustion, as conflict intensity had an indirect effect on emotional exhaustion through emotional reactions. However, there was only a significant main effect between negative emotion and emotional exhaustion, with no main effect of positive emotion and emotional exhaustion. This implies negative affect is more important than positive affect in explaining the effect of conflict intensity predicting emotional exhaustion. This is in line with existing research, as existing studies of conflict mainly focus on negative affect in conflict (e.g., Bruk-Lee & Spector, 2006; Fox et al., 2001; Gonzalez-Roma & Hernandez, 2016; Greer & Jehn, 2007; Ilies et al., 2011; Meier et al., 2013;

Rispens & Demerouti, 2016; Volmer et al., 2012; Volmer, 2015; Zhang & Huo, 2015) rather than both positive and negative emotions (e.g., Chen & Ayoko, 2012).

4.3 The Moderating Role of Emotion Regulation

In my study, I found a moderating effect of emotion regulation. More specifically, deep acting weakened the positive relationship between negative affect and emotional exhaustion. Moreover, moderated mediation analyses showed that there was only a relationship between negative affect and emotional exhaustion under low conditions of deep acting, as the indirect effect of negative affect disappeared under high levels of deep acting. This suggests that deep acting can mitigate the harmful effects of negative affect. This is an important finding, as existing research examining moderators of conflict have largely focused on variables that are difficult to change or control, including individual differences like personality (Dijkstra, van Dierendonck, Evers, & De Dreu, 2004), trait anger (Sliter, Pui, Sliter, & Jex, 2011), trait self-control (Jimmieson, Tucker, & Campbell, 2017), internal locus of control (Dijkstra et al., 2011), core self-evaluations (Liu, Li, Fan, & Nauta, 2015; Volmer, 2015). Existing research has also examined aspects of work due to other people or the organization as a whole, such as supervisory support (Thomas, Bliese, & Jex, 2005), third-party help (Giebels & Janssen, 2005), organizational procedural justice (Volmer, 2015), and organizational culture (Guerra, Martínez, Munduate, & Medina, 2005), but again workers do not have personal control over these. Future work should replicate this finding and further investigate how deep acting impacts conflict.

Surprisingly, there were no interactive effects between negative affect and surface acting in predicting strain. This suggests surface acting does not necessarily worsen the

straining effects of negative emotions during conflict. Analyses also did not show a main effect of surface acting predicting strain in the interaction regression analysis, although there was a marginal effect of surface acting predicting work withdrawal. Although research from emotional labor suggests surface acting is taxing (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013), it may not be additionally detrimental in the context of workplace conflict. If conflict leads to negative emotions, it might be in each parties' best interest to hide those emotions to avoid conflict spirals. In this way, surface acting could prevent further conflict while not necessarily leading to greater strain. However, future work should investigate this in greater detail, as surface acting can lead to perceptions of inauthenticity which could cause conflict to spiral.

4.4 Supplementary Analyses and Method of Aggregation

In hopes of arriving at a clearer picture of the best way to analyze the data, I conducted supplementary analyses using different examinations of conflict expressions. Of all the days that workers reported conflicts, nearly one third of days had more than one conflict episode. Determining the best method to examine the entire day of conflict was therefore an important question. To investigate this, I analyzed the effects of directness and intensity predicting end of day conflict evaluations using single conflict episodes like first, last, and most extreme. I also examined averages and summation, as well as number of conflicts within the day.

In examining end of day conflict evaluations, I found different methods produced different results for directness. Using directness as a predictor of one's overall judgment of the day's conflict, I found significant positive effects using summation and maximum

directness episode. However, I did not find significant effects using daily average, first episode, or last episode. For intensity, I found significant effects for all conceptualizations. Finally, number of conflicts each day had a positive relationship with end of day conflict evaluation, both with and without including days with zero conflicts.

Based on these results, the best analytical approach to take is still not entirely clear. Intensity seems to be a stronger predictor of conflict evaluation than directness considering all intensity operationalizations were significant predictors. This is not entirely surprising, as intense conflicts lead to strong negative emotions and are therefore likely to be in the forefront of people's minds when asked about overall conflict in a day. However, directness is a bit more nuanced, as high directness with low intensity conflict like debate should be more beneficial. Conversely, high directness with high intensity conflict like shouting is likely detrimental. This could be part of the reason that effects change with the different analytic approaches. The effects of directness may be diluted when averaging over the day, as directness was only a significant predictor when using summation and maximal episode.

Although these results did not provide perfectly clear answers, these analyses still provide useful information regarding potential analytic approaches. When I used momentary level data for conflict expressions predicting emotional reactions, results were more similar to the averaging aggregation than the summation method of aggregation. More specifically, the negative relationships between directness and negative affect as well as intensity and positive affect appeared in both the momentary and average analyses, but this effect was positive when using summation. The momentary level data is closer to the constructs of interest because it has not been altered – it examines each conflict episode separately. Because the results from the momentary level analyses were more similar to

averaging than summation, this suggests that averaging is perhaps the more accurate method of aggregation. More specifically, I believe averaging is more appropriate when examining outcomes that are also aggregated. When I decided to use summation for examining the effects of conflict throughout the day, I did not consider how this method of aggregation forces the addition of a positive linear effect between each independent variable and outcome that are aggregated when there are multiple conflicts. Furthermore, I did not consider how non-normal the data may be when using summation. Summation was perhaps not the ideal method of aggregation, particularly for aggregated outcomes like positive and negative emotional reactions.

4.5 Theoretical Implications

To my knowledge, this is the first study examining conflict expressions of both directness and intensity together. Existing research has only examined different levels of intensity. For example, Tsai and Bendersky (2016) examined debate versus disagreement, which are both high in directness but vary in intensity. Similarly, Todorova et al. (2014) only examined mild versus intense conflict affecting information sharing and positive active emotions. I found that conflict expression related to emotional reactions, as directness related to greater positive affect and intensity related to greater negative affect. Directness was related to greater negative affect and intensity related to greater positive affect. These two unexpected effects may have been conflated by the number of conflict episodes, as the directions reversed when the data were analyzed using daily averages; daily average directness related to lower negative affect, while daily average intensity related to lower positive affect. Furthermore, this study utilized an experience sampling

methodology with full-time workers in a field setting. This is a rigorous test of Weingart et al.'s (2015) conflict expressions framework.

Again, I also provided insight regarding ways to aggregate conflict episodes to the day level when there were multiple conflict events in a day. Summation to the day level may not be the most appropriate, as the results reversed when using sums compared to averages. Furthermore, kurtosis posed an issue for several summed variables. The data suggest that the number of conflict episodes is an important factor. Averages or using single conflict episodes may be more appropriate, depending on the research question of interest.

In addition to testing the conflict expressions model proposed by Weingart et al. (2015), I extended the model to examine strain outcomes. Despite the extensive research that has been done on team conflict, teams' researchers rarely examine the impact of conflict on strain outcomes (De Dreu et al., 2004). As such, this study connects research in teamwork to OHP, as it uses a team-based theory of conflict expressions to predict strain. This contributes towards a more holistic understanding of the process of how conflict impacts worker strain. I found that conflict directness and intensity related to emotional exhaustion, but not work withdrawal or sleep quality. It may be that emotional exhaustion is the most sensitive daily strain outcome. Future work could consider other strain outcomes that may be similarly impacted, perhaps constructs that likely to be impacted by emotions.

Furthermore, I extended the Weingart et al. (2015) model to incorporate emotion regulation. Although the framework implies that emotion regulation can play a role in the conflict process, it does not specify how. Using emotional labor concepts, I suggested deep

acting and surface acting may impact conflict. I found that deep acting mitigated the harmful effect of negative affect leading to emotional exhaustion, but there were no moderating effects of surface acting. It may be that surface acting is not especially harmful in reaction to conflict as existing emotional labor research would suggest. Future work could investigate this possibility further.

4.6 Practical Implications

The results of the primary study would be of interest to those in professions where conflict is a routine experience. For example, police officers, bill collectors, lawyers, and mediators must handle and face conflict as part of their primary job responsibilities. School teachers, referees, social workers, and customer service representatives are also likely to face conflict on a regular basis. Although it has been established that conflict is related to strain (Frone, 2000; Fox, Spector, & Miles, 2001; Penney & Spector, 2005; Nixon et al., 2011; Rainey, 1995; Spector & Jex, 1998), this study suggests there may be ways to reduce the straining effect of conflict. Namely, positive affect had negative indirect effects on emotional exhaustion and deep acting buffered the harmful effect of negative affect on emotional exhaustion. This said, determining ways to boost one's positive affect during conflict or following conflict may be useful for minimizing workers' strain. Further, results suggest that workers facing conflict should use deep acting emotion regulation in reaction to conflict episodes. Deep acting showed to mitigate the unfavorable effect of negative emotions.

Furthermore, conflict is an inherent part of work and life. Even if one's occupation does not include regularly handling conflict, conflicts will still naturally occur in one's

workplace. Understanding how to confront others and respond to conflict most effectively is an important challenge that applies to everyone. This can perhaps explain the popularity of self-help books like *Crucial Conversations*. This popular-press book defines a crucial conversation as “a discussion between two or more people where (1) stakes are high, (2) opinions vary, and (3) emotions run strong” (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan & Switzler, 2002, p. 3). I believe the emphasis on emotions in situations with differing opinions highlights the value of incorporating emotional experience as part of the conflict process. Further work is needed to determine the utility of using high directness but low intensity conflict to achieve one’s goals when there are differing opinions, but this framework has the potential to be useful for all employees.

Because conflict leads to negative affect, it would be beneficial if workers had “cooling off” time to process their emotions following conflict episodes. Time to cool off relates to literature on breaks and recovery, which suggests that low-effort or high autonomy breaks can reduce fatigue, increase vitality, and increase positive affect (e.g., Trougakos, Beal, Green, & Weiss, 2008; Trougakos, Hideg, Cheng, & Beal, 2014; Zacher, Brailsford, & Parker, 2014). Organizations can provide employees with autonomy over their schedules and places to take breaks. Managers and employees can schedule longer meeting times or block off their calendars for breaks when they know disagreement is likely to occur. This way, workers have some downtime to unwind following a potentially tense meeting.

4.7 Limitations

Even though ESM provided a strength of examining workers' reports in their natural settings and in real time, this study is limited in that it relies solely on self-report data. Arguably, individuals are best at evaluating their own emotions and feelings of strain, but certain constructs may not be best evaluated via self-report. For example, behavior such as work withdrawal may not be accurately captured. In a similar vein, mood congruent bias may have occurred in the responses; Individuals answered questions about their emotions and emotion regulation at the same time that they reported their conflict experiences. They may have reported more regulation or more intense conflict if in a negative mood, or the reverse in a positive mood. Together this suggests responses may be biased.

Similarly, conflict expressions are subject to interpretation. Arguably this is an inherent part of the construct from a theoretical standpoint – and is indeed emphasized by Weingart et al., (2015) – but suggests there may be individual differences in how people understand and react to conflict. Furthermore, one may not always recognize when they are a target of a conflict. If a coworker is being passive aggressive, this may not register as a conflict until multiple passive aggressive events occur, perhaps across several days. The effects of this scenario may not be fully captured by my analyses, as analyses were conducted on the day level.

Although participants were given clear and thorough instructions and asked to complete conflict episodes as they occurred at work, it is impossible to know whether participants truly followed directions. Event-sampling has been shown to be a useful way to examine conflict and emotions (Merlo, Bufton, Kay, & Weiss, 2019), but there is no way to know if people were truly reporting all of the conflicts they experienced at work. To try to combat this issue, I (a) asked participants before they began the ESM portion of

the study for an example of a conflict from their work, (b) asked in the end of day survey if there were any conflicts they forgot to report earlier in the day, and (c) checked in with participants who reported few conflicts in the first week of the study to make sure they understood the definition. Still, there were a total of 11 participants who reported zero conflicts throughout the 10-day study. It may be that these people truly did not experience any conflict, or it may be that these people did not follow directions.

Finally, my mediation model implies casual relationships between conflict expression, emotional reactions, and strain. However, my research design does not allow me to definitively conclude that conflict expressions lead to affective reactions. Although I collected several measurements over time and conducted analyses across time periods, ESM data is only correlational and therefore cannot prove causality. Experimental research would be needed to demonstrate the causal effects of conflict expression.

4.8 Future Directions

There are many future directions for the emerging area of conflict expressions, as this framework is still quite new. Although I investigated surface acting and deep acting as moderators, there are many potential moderators that are worthy of investigation. Personality constructs such as agreeableness, emotional stability, extraversion immediately come to mind, as these are likely to affect how one normally expresses and interprets conflict. Existing research suggests those high in agreeableness handle conflict differently and are particularly impacted by conflict (Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, & Hair, 1996; Suls, Martin, & David, 1998; Wood & Bell, 2008). Similarly, Dijkstra et al. (2005) found that extraversion and emotional stability were significant moderators in the effects of conflict

frequency on well-being. Other individual differences such as sensitivity (Smith & Zautra, 2001) or skills such as mindfulness (Horton-Deutsch & Horton, 2003; Laurent, Hertz, Nelson, & Laurent, 2016) could also be important moderators. It would be of greatest utility for future work to focus on trainable skills rather than individual differences that are difficult to change, so practitioners can focus on developing these skills in jobs where people often face conflict.

This study focused on within-person differences and did not consider organizational factors. Contextual factors such as workplace culture and conflict norms would be interesting to incorporate. Industries where regular and direct conflict is considered normal, such as lawyers, customer service, and insurance evaluators may not demonstrate the same patterns of relationships compared to industries where conflict is less common. Similarly, some organizations may have cultures where conflict is avoided, while other organizations' cultures may welcome conflicting ideas. Future work should consider organizational-level aspects.

Future studies investigating these ideas could also benefit by incorporating objective measures, such as physical activity tracking or sleep quality, which are becoming increasingly accessible (Eatough, Shockley, & Yu, 2016). Advances in technology will continue to expand our ability to capture objective data, for example perhaps use of pupil diameter to measure fatigue (Morad, Lemberg, Yofe, & Dagan, 2000). If integrating outcomes such as work performance or emotional display, future work would be strengthened by using other-reports such as supervisor or coworker reports to reduce concerns of self-report biases.

4.9 Conclusion

Conflict is an inescapable part of work, but we can control how we express it. This experience sampling study showed that conflict expressions relate to emotional reactions and end of workday emotional exhaustion. This suggests conflict expression is likely an important factor in creating productive conflict and minimizing strain. This is an initial step in demonstrating the effects of conflict expressions on emotional reactions and connects research on teams and OHP. The empirical research on conflict expression research is only just beginning, but this initial study demonstrates its potential.

APPENDIX. RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Subject: Work Experience Lab Study: Earn up to \$75 for a 2-week daily

Hi [First Name],

The Work Experience Lab is conducting a study on workplace conflict. We would like to offer you the opportunity to participate, but first we have some questions to help us determine if you are a good match for this study. If you are not a good match, we will be sure to contact you regarding future studies.

- 1) Approximately how many hours do you work per week?
- 2) Do you have a working smartphone that you are able to access during your working hours?
- 3) What percentage of your average week do you work with others in person (i.e., working in an office or with clients/customers in person)?
- 4) Do you work a night shift or have a rotating shift?

Participating in the study requires completing the following activities:

- Emailing back with answers to the questions above
- Completing an online orientation survey with your personal computer (approximately 20 minutes)
- Responding to several short surveys daily (approximately 3-5 minutes) over 10 working days, both while at home and at work

If you would like to participate in this study, please respond to this email and let us know your answers to the above questions.

You cannot be in an EU country at the time of participating in this study. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Sophie

Sophie A. Kay

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