

Conflict and Decision-Making: Attributional and Emotional Influences

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Abstract

There is general consensus among conflict scholars that cognitive conflict's impact within the organization is functional, whereas affective conflict's impact is dysfunctional. Inconsistent findings in the literature suggest that additional factors impact these relationships. In this study, we integrate theories of conflict, affect, and attribution within the domain of decision-making to gain a greater understanding of how and why organizational conflicts are at times positive, negative, or neutral. Specifically, we posit that the conclusions individuals reach as a result of their attributions, and their subsequent emotions and behavioral responses, play a significant role in determining conflict's effects. We apply theories of team-level emotional convergence to propose how the individual emotional responses of team members may converge into a collective emotional response at the team level. Finally, we propose that the team-level emotional responses initiated by the attribution process are significant moderators of the relationship between conflict type and decision outcomes.

Over the past century, conflict and its subsequent effects within an organization has been a topic of interest for researchers across a vast array of disciplines. The effects of conflict have been assessed on a wide range of outcomes at the individual, team, and organizational level including behavioral reactions to conflict (Tjosvold, 1998), bullying (Ayoko & Callan, 2010), turnover (Pelled, 1996), team member satisfaction (Shaw et al., 2011), team creativity (Badke-Schaub, Goldschmidt, & Meijer, 2010), team performance (Porter & Lilly, 1996), team cohesiveness (Liu, Fu, & Liu, 2009), organizational commitment (Cosier & Dalton, 1990), and firm performance (Elbanna, 2009). Conflict is inevitable within organizations; thus, it is important to understand its consequences to both the members involved in conflict and the organization itself (Amason, 1996; Baron, 1990).

While not always in agreement on conflict's definition, scholars have seemingly reached an accord with respect to conflict type (i.e., cognitive and affective). Cognitive conflict, which is focused on task-related disagreements, has been supported for its beneficial organizational effects, whereas affective conflict, which is focused on relational disagreements, has been condemned for its detrimental effects on the organization as a whole, and decision-making processes specifically (Amason, Thompson, Hochwarter, & Harrison, 1995; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). In this study, we focus on the effects of these two forms of conflict on decision-making processes and outcomes.

In an organizational context, decision-making frequently takes place in teams. Given the complex nature of the decision-making process and the importance of the individual and organizational consequences associated with them, a team-based approach to decision-making is considered advantageous

due to the integration of unique individual skills, diversity of values, knowledge, perspective, and heuristics (Hill, 2016; Page, 2007; Schmidt, Montoya-Weiss, & Massey, 2001). Better decisions, increased commitment, and cooperation between team members are among some of the advantages that team-based processes are proposed to offer (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). However, the decision-making process can be fraught with traps (e.g., bias, escalation of commitment, social loafing) that can lead to ineffective decisions (Brandyberry & Bakke, 2006; Hammond, Keeney, & Raiffa, 2006). To exacerbate matters, team members often have contradictory preferences leading to disagreements among members (Tjosvold, 1998).

Conflict within a decision-making team can have positive as well as negative effects, which collectively are considered “paradoxical” because they can simultaneously lead to improved group decisions along with decreased member satisfaction and commitment (Amason, 1996). Most scholars agree that conflict is generally cognitive or affective in nature and whether its effect is positive or negative is largely dependent upon its type (Amason et al., 1995; Mooney, Holahan, & Amason, 2007). There is general consensus that cognitive and affective conflicts exert positive and negative effects on team outcomes, respectively (Amason, 1996). As such, scholars have remained steadfast in advocating the encouragement of cognitive conflict while discouraging the use of affective conflict among decision-making teams (Amason, 1996; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Parayitam & Dooley, 2009). This prescriptive solution, while logical, has not fully resolved the conflict paradox as research findings have shown that the effects of each conflict type have been mixed (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003).

While cognitive conflict’s effects have generally been positive, at times its effects have been negative, or neutral; furthermore, its benefits appear to be bound to a certain threshold such that only low-to-moderate amounts of cognitive conflict yield positive effects (Hurt & Abebe, 2015; Jehn, 1995; Olson & Parayitam, 2007). The effects of affective conflict have generally been negative but recent evidence suggests affective conflict may result in positive change within the organization (Breugst, Patzelt, Shepherd, & Aguinis, 2012; Khanin & Turel, 2009). With such inconsistencies, it is apparent that our understanding of conflict type and its organizational consequences is incomplete and hinges upon other influential factors.

During a conflict scenario, individuals often engage in attributions (i.e., conflict attributions) attempting to understand the cause of the conflict (Kelley, 1972; Schmidt & Weiner, 1988). Surprisingly, scholars have not exploited attribution theory in organizational research (Harvey, Madison, Martinko, Crook, & Crook, 2014), particularly as it pertains to organizational conflict and its subsequent effects. Importantly, past research demonstrates that attributions (we use the term “attributions” in this manuscript to refer to conflict attributions) play a critical role in determining emotional and behavioral responses to events (Weiner, 1985). As such, we suggest that individuals’ attributions for an organizational conflict may influence how they respond emotionally to the conflict, determining subsequent decision-making outcomes. Therefore, the aim of this study was to draw from theories of attribution and emotions to shed light on inconsistent findings regarding the effects of affective and cognitive conflict, particularly within the domain of decision-making.

We draw upon attribution theory (Weiner, 1985) to suggest that the conclusions individuals reach as a result of their attributions for a conflict, and the subsequent emotions and behavioral responses, play a significant role in determining conflict’s effects on team decision-making. We focus our examination on decision-making outcomes (decision quality, commitment) that are requisites of high performance, and have been theoretically and empirically linked to affective and cognitive conflict in teams (Amason, 1996). These decision outcomes are particularly important, because both are considered essential to team and organizational success (Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992; O’Reilly, Caldwell, Chatman, Lapiz, & Self, 2010). In view of the conflict paradox, increased decision quality and team member commitment cannot coexist (Amason, 1996). Thus, scholars and organizational leaders continue to mull over creative solutions to help management teams realize the benefits (i.e., improved decision

quality) associated with conflict without incurring its costs (i.e., decreased member commitment) (Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992).

In the following sections, we review existing literature on affective and cognitive conflict and their associated consequences. Thereafter, we discuss attribution theory in relation to team conflict. First, we consider why team members may seek attributions when they experience cognitive or affective conflict. Next, we apply attribution theory (Weiner, 1985) to propose a two-stage process by which conflicts elicit team member attributions and subsequent emotional responses. We then apply theories of team-level emotional convergence (Barsade, 2002; Bartel & Saavedra, 2000) to propose how the individual emotional responses of team members may converge into a collective emotional response at the team level. Finally, we propose that the team-level emotional responses initiated by the attribution process are significant moderators of the relationship between conflict type and decision outcomes. Through this analysis, we seek to integrate theories of conflict, affect, and attribution to better understand how and why the effects of organizational conflict are at times positive, negative, or neutral, regardless of type.

Theoretical Background

Conflict: Definition, Types, and Consequences

Fink (1968) defines conflict as “any social situation or process in which two or more entities are linked by at least one form of antagonistic psychological relation or at least one form of antagonistic interaction (p. 456).” We modified this definition for the purpose of our study to exclude the term “antagonistic.” The term “antagonistic” is synonymous with aggression, opposition, and hostility. However, we suggest that while disagreement between social entities does imply some form of opposition, it would not necessarily need to be hostile and aggressive (Rahim, 2001). Adopting Fink’s (1968) definition, we replace the word antagonistic with the term “opposing” to define conflict as any social situation or process in which two or more entities are linked by at least one form of opposing psychological relation or at least one form of opposing interaction. This definition is consistent with more modern views of conflict as perceived discrepancies, disagreements, or incompatibilities (Badke-Schaub et al., 2010; Jehn, 1997) but is broad enough to account for multiple opposing psychological perspectives and behavioral exchanges.

Cognitive Conflict (i.e., Task Conflict)

Cognitive conflict, also known as task conflict, refers to issue-related differences of opinion (Jehn, 1995). Provided that conflict remains focused on tasks (e.g., developing market strategies, identifying root cause/problem-solving analyses, recommending corrective action, determining allocation of resources, developing organizational goals), cognitive conflict is considered functional (i.e., positive) because it draws attention to often neglected issues, encourages consideration of novel ideas that facilitate innovation and change, and fosters increased loyalty and cohesiveness among team members (Baron, 1991; Jehn, 1995). Cooperative conflict, that is, where conflicting members perceive that their goals are positively related, is another example of positive conflict in that members feel free to disagree over task-related issues as each work toward a “win-win” solution that promotes mutual advantage (Tjosvold, 1991). Cognitive conflict is naturally occurring due to the diversity of perspectives individual members bring to the team, as well as the interdependence of team members within an organization (Amason et al., 1995).

Conflict over opposing ideas often motivates conflicting parties to better understand the other’s position, which can contribute to potentially greater improvements and higher quality decisions (Badke-Schaub et al., 2010). Cognitive conflict’s functional effects are well documented; however, its effects have been mixed, that is, positive, negative, or neutral. De Dreu and Weingart (2003) suggest researchers should attempt to identify those circumstances where the effects of cognitive conflict may be positive

rather than openly assuming cognitive conflict is always good. To gain the benefits of cognitive conflict, strong negative emotions impeding informational processing should be avoided, correct attributions concerning other's motives should be made, and stereo-typical thinking which shifts the focus of the conflict away from the actual content should be avoided (Amason, 1996).

Affective Conflict (i.e., Relationship Conflict)

Affective conflict, also known as relationship conflict, which is focused on interpersonal differences, for example, differences regarding personal issues, negative emotions, and unsatisfactory relationships among team members (Jehn, 1995), has nearly always been viewed negatively because it leads to increased hostility, distrust, and apathy among team members (Jehn, 1997; Mooney et al., 2007). Additionally, group members' cognitive processing is limited due to increased levels of stress and anxiety, as well as greater diversion of focus and energy from the task to each other (Peterson & Behfar, 2003). When team members are no longer willing to engage in constructive task discussions, the team becomes ineffective and decision quality and commitment decreases (Amason et al., 1995).

Most conflict researchers suggest that affective conflict is dysfunctional (Amason, 1996; Buchholtz, Amason, & Rutherford, 2005); however, some studies suggest it may have a positive impact on behavioral intentions. Khanin and Turel (2009) found a dual impact of affective conflict on decision-maker's behavioral intentions. Affective conflict forced decision-makers to overcome inertia; additionally, decision-makers often decided to adjust their own behavior to resolve existing affective conflict and avoid future occurrences by proactively building collaborative relationships among members. More recently, affective conflict improved team members' ability to objectively and accurately assess team performance (Breugst et al., 2012).

Attributional and Emotional Responses to Conflict

Conflict as a Condition Promoting Attributional Search

In this study, we draw upon attribution theory to understand the mixed effects of conflict type within a team dynamic found in the previous literature. Attribution theory is based on the idea of perceived causation; that is, people attempt to comprehend behavior in terms of its causes, which promotes ensuing affective (Weiner, 1985) and behavioral reactions of the observer (Betancourt & Blair, 1992; Kelley & Michela, 1980). Past research suggests that conflict is a situation that encourages individuals to search for attributions (Keaveney, 2008). Attributions are likely to occur for negative outcomes and when outcomes are disappointing, unexpected, or important (Martinko, Harvey, & Douglas, 2007; Weiner, 1985). As such, we suggest that conflict is a condition that is particularly likely to motivate individuals to search for attributions. For example, when conflict between individuals becomes relational and emotionally charged, it can have negative effects on the parties involved, particularly if conflict is taken as a personal criticism (Jehn, 1995; Parayitam & Dooley, 2009). The affective nature of such conflict can be negative, disappointing, and perhaps even unexpected or important, particularly if the person with whom an individual is in conflict with is considered close. As such, we suggest that affective conflict has qualities that are associated with attribution-seeking.

Additionally, Perrewe and Zellars (1999) note that individuals are more likely to engage in causal analysis when they are in cognitively challenging situations. Because cognitive conflicts involve substantive, issue-related differences of opinion that require team members to consider different perspectives and view problems in alternative ways, we suggest that these conflicts are likely to be construed as cognitively challenging, motivating involved parties to engage in attributional processing to make sense of the conflict or the opposing party's actions. As such, we advocate that attribution theory is a fitting means by which to assess conflict in teams. Particularly, we emphasize the importance of ascertaining how individuals involved in conflict perceive and make sense of it.

Dimensions of Attributions

Weiner's (1985) analysis of attributional dimensions proposes that the cause of an action or outcome can be analyzed in terms of three primary dimensions: locus, controllability, and stability. Locus refers to whether the cause of an event is perceived as residing within or outside of the individual. For example, a party involved in a conflict might attribute the conflict to their own abilities, personality, or behaviors (internal locus) or to organization constraints, other team members, or even the task itself (external locus). Controllability refers to whether or not the cause is perceived as controllable; for example, a party involved in the conflict may believe that the conflict is due to a lack of resources (uncontrollable) or due to a lack of effort by team members (controllable). Finally, stability refers to whether or not the cause is seen as temporary or continuing over time. For example, a party involved in a conflict may believe that the conflict is due to a particular contentious issue that is being discussed (temporary) or due to a difficult personality of a permanent member of the team (continuous). Weiner (1985) argues that the way in which causes are analyzed along attributional dimensions determines the discrete emotions that are experienced in response to an event. Drawing from Weiner's (1985) framework, we propose that through their impact on emotions, attributions for conflict influence the quality of decision-making in teams. A primary implication of our perspective is that the decision-making consequences associated with affective and cognitive conflict may vary depending on the attributions made and the resulting emotional responses (Kelley & Michela, 1980).

A Two-Stage Model of Attributions and Emotions

Weiner (1985) proposes a two-stage sequence by which the attribution–emotion process unfolds in response to an experienced event. First, as an individual experiences an event or outcome, his or her initial appraisal elicits a “primitive” emotion (i.e., a general positive or negative affective response). This initial affective reaction is determined by whether the event is perceived to have helped or hindered the individual's attainment of a goal: If an event is perceived as conducive to goal attainment, a positive affective response will be elicited, whereas if it is perceived as hindering a goal, a negative affective response will occur. This initial stage, according to Weiner (1985), is independent from (and prior to) the influence of attributions for the event. In the second stage of Weiner's (1985) model, individuals are motivated to seek attributions (or causes) for the event; it is the nature of these attributions that refine and distinguish individuals' emotional experiences in response to the event. Specifically, the locus, controllability, and stability of the inferred cause determine the discrete emotion (e.g., shame, guilt, surprise) that is felt by the individual in response to the event.

In this study, we apply this framework (Weiner, 1985) to the domain of organizational conflict to understand the role of attributions and emotions in determining decision-making outcomes associated with cognitive and affective conflict. The role of attributions in organizational conflict is important because attributions associated with contentious interpersonal clashes often incite subsequent conflict within the organization (Baron, 1988a). Generally, people exhibit tendencies to blame failures on external factors (e.g., others) and successes on internal factors (e.g., self) (Noel, Donelson, & Kelley, 1987). These attributional biases intensify perceptual conflicts between team members and often result in actual conflict when one team member takes action based on his or her own causal analyses, which may be significantly different than the causal analyses of another team member (Martinko & Gardner, 1987; McElroy, 1982). For example, if a team leader attributes the failure of a team decision to another individual's lack of effort and responds by punishing that individual, the punished member is likely to view the team leader's actions as inappropriate and conflict will ensue (Martinko et al., 2007).

Attributional judgments can carry an *emotional punch* (Gibson & Schroeder, 2003). Emotions are formed, in part, as a function of cognitive processes that occur in a conflict setting (Betancourt & Blair, 1992). For example, the emotional response to feeling unjustly blamed is typically one of anger, which can have both intrapersonal (e.g., clouded judgment) and interpersonal (e.g., poor relations) effects that yield negative behavioral responses (e.g., seeking revenge) (Allred, 1999; Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2001;

Hunsaker, 2017). Conflict-provoking actions perceived as emanating from internal causes tend to provoke greater negative emotions and reactions than those attributed to external causes, while perceived controllability of causes strongly influences violent reactions (Baron, 1988a; Betancourt & Blair, 1992). Additionally, emotional and behavioral responses are mitigated or exacerbated by the stability of the cause (Harvey et al., 2014).

In the following sections, we develop our propositions with regard to the role of attributions and emotions in team decision-making outcomes. First, we discuss how cognitive and affective conflicts elicit primitive emotional responses of general positive and negative affect for the involved parties. Next, we posit how attributions for the conflict (along the dimensions of locus, controllability, and stability) determine the discrete emotions (and their magnitude) that are felt individually by team members and collectively by the team as a whole. Finally, we propose specific impacts of these discrete emotions on decision-making outcomes associated with cognitive and affective conflicts.

Proposition Development

Primitive Emotional Responses to Cognitive and Affective Conflict

Weiner (1985) suggests that individuals have an immediate affective reaction (positive or negative) to an event based on whether it helps them to achieve or serves to hinder their goals. The conflict literature highlights that conflicts are often perceived negatively (Amason, 1996) by involved parties, and indeed, negative emotions have received the largest share of attention by researchers examining affective responses to conflict (Allred, 1999). Applying Weiner's (1985) framework, we posit that when conflict is perceived as an impediment to team goal attainment, an initial negative appraisal and affective reaction will occur. Due to its emphasis on personal incompatibilities and emotional disputes (Amason, 1996), the potential emergence of political behavior among team members (Elbanna, 2009), and increased stress and anxiety levels (Simons & Peterson, 2000), we argue that affective conflicts are particularly likely to elicit negative affect in this initial stage of appraisal.

On the other hand, although team members may often appraise conflict as a negative experience that thwarts progress toward goals (Crossley, 2006), conflict experiences might also be appraised positively as an event that contributes to the team's success. For example, in some instances, conflict is perceived as constructive to the team's goals, leading to better decisions and solutions. In particular, conflict that is cognitive has documented benefits for team decision-making (Eisenhardt, Kahwajy, & Bourgeois, 1997; Jehn, 1997). Accordingly, team members may be cognizant of these benefits and construe conflict more positively; applying Weiner's (1985) framework, we suggest that in such instances, team members may perceive cognitive conflict as conducive to the attainment of team goals, triggering an initial positive appraisal and affect.

Proposition 1: A conflict will elicit an initial positive or negative affective response from involved team members, dependent on whether it is perceived to help or hinder goal attainment.

- (1) Affective conflicts are more likely (than cognitive conflicts) to elicit an initial negative affective response.
- (2) Cognitive conflicts are more likely (than affective conflicts) to elicit an initial positive affective response.

Attributions as Determinants of Self-Conscious and Other-Directed Emotions

Emotions are frequently experienced and an important part of a conflict process (Thomas, 1992). Kleinginna and Kleinginna (1981, p. 355) define emotions as a "complex set of interactions among subjective and objective factors which can (a) give rise to affective experiences; (b) generate cognitive processes such as emotionally relevant perceptual effects, appraisals; (c) activate widespread physiological adjustments to the arousing conditions; and (d) lead to behavior that is often expressive, goal-directed, and

adaptive.” Emotions in the workplace directly impact human behavior, attitudes toward conflict episodes, and productivity (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). For example, negative emotions (e.g. anger, guilt) resulting from a conflict scenario can decrease in-role and extra-role behavior that carries over to the following day (Rispen & Demerouti, 2016).

The range of emotions referred to in academic research is extensive, calling some to argue in favor of basic categorizations on the premise that basic emotions contain distinguishable characteristics such as distinctive physiological effects, universal antecedent effects, and coherence among emotional responses (Ekman, 1992). However, Lazarus (1991) contends that every emotion has the potential to be positive, negative, or both, depending on the context. For example, anger is generally associated with negative outcomes. Subordinates who are the targets of their supervisor’s anger report significant increases in tension, fear, and distrust (Callister, Geddes, & Gibson, 2017). Yet, low intensity anger expressions may lead to positive outcomes (e.g. improved interpersonal relationships) where normatively appropriate (Gibson, Schweitzer, Callister, & Gray, 2009). Per Lazarus, each emotion has idiosyncratic meaning, varying sources of causality and subjective experiences attributed to it, which lead to varying inclinations to act. Thus, he argues that it is most advantageous to study discrete emotions.

Weiner (1985) argues that the discrete emotion experienced by an individual in response to an event is attributionally dependent. In particular, he proposes that the initial positive or negative affect that arises in response to an outcome or event will be refined into a specific emotion, depending on the attributions that were formed for the event. Attributions may vary based upon whether the self or other is perceived as responsible for the outcome (Martinko, Gundlach, & Douglas, 2002). Weiner (1985) proposed that internal attributions for outcomes lead to self-conscious emotions, such as guilt or shame (for negative outcomes) or pride (for positive outcomes), whereas external attributions elicit other-directed emotions, such as anger or pity (for negative outcomes) or gratitude (for positive outcomes). Some support for this is found within the context of conflict. Bell and Song (2005) found that when individuals blamed themselves for a conflict, they were more likely to experience guilt and shame; conversely, when they blamed others for the conflict, they were more likely to experience anger. Drawing from Weiner’s (1985) framework, we make the following propositions:

Proposition 2: The attributional dimension of locus (internal/external) determines whether a team member involved in a conflict responds with self-conscious or other-directed emotions.

- (1) Conflicts that are perceived to be internally (self) caused will elicit self-conscious emotions.
- (2) Conflicts that are perceived to be externally (other) caused will elicit other-focused emotions.

Attributions of controllability further specify the type of emotion that is experienced (Weiner, 1985). When a negative event attributed to an internal cause is perceived as controllable, feelings of guilt are experienced; however, if perceived as uncontrollable, shame is felt. On the other hand, when a negative event is attributed to external causes, perceptions of controllability distinguish whether emotions of anger or pity are experienced. Specifically, anger emerges in response to events that are attributed to external, controllable causes, whereas pity occurs in response to events that are attributed to external, uncontrollable causes.

Applying attribution theory to team conflict, Weiner’s (1985) perspective would suggest that when negatively appraised conflicts are attributed internally, self-conscious emotions will occur; the specific nature of these emotions will depend on whether the individual views their contribution to the conflict as controllable. If an individual attributes a negatively appraised conflict to internal, controllable causes (e.g., one’s own lack of effort), that individual will experience guilt. On the other hand, conflicts attributed to internal, uncontrollable causes (e.g., one’s lack of skills) will elicit shame.

When negatively appraised conflicts are attributed externally, other-directed emotions will emerge, with the specific type of other-directed emotion determined by the perceived controllability of the cause of the conflict. Specifically, negatively appraised conflicts attributed to external, controllable causes (e.g.,

other team members' lack of effort) will elicit feelings of anger. This resonates with the existing conflict literature which suggests that anger is a frequent response to conflict (van Kleef, van Dijk, Steinel, Harinck, & van Beest, 2008), perhaps reflecting that conflicts are frequently attributed to others and that the actions of other team members or the organization are often seen as controllable. However, in other instances, a conflict may be attributed to external causes that are not controllable by the other party (e.g., a difficult or contentious issue; lack of time/resources). While Weiner's (1985) original theory proposes that this pattern of attribution leads to an emotional response of pity, this seems less applicable to the context of conflict.

Perrewe and Zellars (1999) argue that when stressful workplace outcomes are attributed to external and uncontrollable sources, feelings of frustration may emerge. Whereas the anger emotion requires a focus on the agent, frustration's focus is dominantly on the outcome (Berkowitz & Harmon-Jones, 2004; Clore & Centerbar, 2004). This is consistent with emotion researchers who contend that frustration is experienced "(a) when an event is appraised as caused by circumstances, (b) when no cause is specified for an event, or (c) when a causal agent is identified but the agency information is disregarded in a person's focus on the event itself" (Roseman, Spindel, & Jose, 1990, p. 912). Thus, we suggest that frustration may better characterize emotional responses to negatively appraised conflicts that are attributed to external, uncontrollable causes.

Proposition 3: The attributional dimension of controllability interacts with locus to determine a team member's discrete emotion felt in response to negatively appraised conflicts:

- (1) Negatively appraised conflicts attributed to internal and controllable causes will elicit guilt.
- (2) Negatively appraised conflicts attributed to internal and uncontrollable causes will elicit shame.
- (3) Negatively appraised conflicts attributed to external and controllable causes will elicit anger.
- (4) Negatively appraised conflicts attributed to external and uncontrollable causes will elicit frustration.

While parties involved in a conflict may often appraise conflict as a negative experience that thwarts progress toward goals (Barki & Hartwick, 1993; Crossley, 2006), experiences of conflict might also be appraised positively as an event that will contribute to the team's success. Consider the case of a problem-solving team tasked with identifying the root cause of a defective product received by an important customer. The manufacturing of a product is complex; hence, the process of root cause analysis involves investigating and categorizing all of the potential sources of quality defect and identifying the primary one, so that corrective measures may be taken to prevent its recurrence (Rooney & Heuvel, 2004). As such, the emergence of opposing viewpoints and perspectives (cognitive conflict) within the team may be seen by team members as contributing to a successful outcome.

When a conflict is appraised positively, team members may seek attributions for the conflict, especially if the situation is deemed important or cognitively challenging (Perrewe & Zellars, 1999; Wong & Weiner, 1981). Weiner (1985) suggests that when positive outcomes are attributed internally, an individual experiences self-conscious feelings of pride and enhanced self-esteem. Contrastingly, when a successful outcome is attributed to external and controllable sources, an other-directed emotion of gratitude is felt. This analysis can be applied to our above example, where a problem-solving team debates different solutions and root causes of a product defect that has occurred. A team member who perceives his or herself as central to producing this positive conflict (e.g., by being actively involved in providing different perspectives or opinions to the team) is likely to feel pride. In contrast, if the conflict is attributed to others' abilities or efforts (e.g., other members of the team questioned existing solutions and introduced opposing ideas that will potentially lead the team to determine the source of the defect), gratitude is felt. However, if the other's role in producing the conflict is seen as something that was not under their control (i.e., an external, uncontrollable attribution), Weiner's (1985) attribution framework suggests that feelings of surprise, rather than gratitude, will emerge. As such, we put forth the following propositions.

Proposition 4: The attributional dimension of controllability interacts with locus to determine a team member's discrete emotion felt in response to positively appraised conflicts:

- (1) Positively appraised conflicts attributed to internal causes, particularly when that cause is perceived as controllable, will elicit feelings of pride.
- (2) Positively appraised conflicts attributed to external and controllable causes will elicit feelings of gratitude.
- (3) Positively appraised conflicts attributed to external and uncontrollable causes will elicit feelings of surprise.

Stability Attributions for Conflict as Determinants of Emotion Magnitude

The attributional dimension of stability refers to the degree to which the cause of an event is viewed as temporary or continuing over time (Weiner, 1985). Past research suggests that the degree to which the cause of a conflict is viewed as stable may depend on whether the conflict is primarily affective or cognitive. For instance, Simons and Peterson (2000) suggest that affective conflict between individuals tends to be stable across different issues (e.g., relational issues contributing to the conflict will continue to occur), whereas cognitive conflict between individuals is limited to the specific issue and therefore will change as issues change. Therefore, we propose that affective conflicts are more likely to be attributed to stable causes, whereas cognitive conflicts are more likely to be attributed to temporary (unstable) causes.

While locus and controllability attributions influence the specific discrete emotions that are experienced, stability intensifies these emotions, such that when the cause of an event is perceived as stable, emotions in response to that event will be of greater magnitude (Weiner, 1985). Indeed, Weiner (1985) suggests that when negative events are attributed to stable causes, individuals are likely to experience a sense of hopelessness, due to the expectation that the negative event will recur. Therefore, we propose that if the cause of a conflict is viewed as permanent (i.e., it will be a continual cause of conflict within the team) rather than temporary, the discrete emotions associated with the conflict will intensify. By extension, because affective conflicts are associated with more stable attributions, they are expected to elicit stronger emotions, whereas cognitive conflicts, due to their less stable attributions, are expected to elicit weaker emotions.

Proposition 5: Conflict type is associated with a team member's stability attributions, such that affective conflicts are more likely to be attributed to stable causes, whereas cognitive conflicts are more likely to be attributed to temporary (unstable) causes.

- (1) Attributions of stability will intensify the emotion (e.g., guilt, anger, frustration) associated with the conflict.
- (2) Affective conflicts will elicit stronger emotional responses, whereas cognitive conflicts will elicit weaker emotional responses.

From Individual-level Attributions to Team-level Outcomes

Previously, we have argued that individual team members' attributions for a team conflict lead them to experience discrete emotional responses to that conflict. Implicit in this statement is the assumption that, at least in some instances, team members will vary in how they interpret and attribute the same conflict, leading them to experience different types of emotions in response. This line of reasoning is consistent with recent streams of research that suggest that team members (or parties involved in a conflict) may diverge in their perceptions of a conflict. For example, research on conflict asymmetry (Avgar & Neuman, 2015; Corgnet & Gunia, 2010; Jehn, Rispens, & Thatcher, 2010) demonstrates that individuals may vary in the amount or level of conflict that they perceive within the team, such that some team members perceive more or less conflict than others. Similarly, studies on cognitive framing (Pinkley, 1990; Pinkley & Northcraft, 1994) suggest that individuals may apply different cognitive lenses to understand and

interpret a conflict. These perspectives are consistent with our argument that team members' varying perceptions of an event may steer them toward different attributions for the conflict that elicit discrete emotional responses.

However, although individuals may diverge in their perceptions of a conflict, studies suggest that through their communication, teams also negotiate and develop shared meaning that is needed for taking organized action (Donnellon, Gray, & Bougon, 1986; Purdy, Kish-Gephart, Labianca, & Ansari, 2018). We suggest that a key aspect of this communication facilitating shared meaning may be the emotional displays of individual team members. Not only are emotional displays (i.e., the outward show of emotions through facial expressions and body language) an important source of social information (Bartel & Saavedra, 2000; Van Kleef, 2014), but, in contrast to more cognitive constructs, emotions are characterized by their contagion or ability to spread to other members within a team (Barsade, 2002; Bartel & Saavedra, 2000; Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993). As such, we suggest that the emotions that individual team members experience and display in response to the conflict may also influence emotions at the collective (team) level. We build this argument around the "contagious" nature of emotions. We suggest that individuals' emotional responses (stemming from attributions) will spread to the team and that certain emotions and certain team members will carry more influence in this process. Importantly, we argue that the convergence of emotions at the team level does not negate the importance of the individual-level team member responses to a conflict. Indeed, as we discuss in the following section, each team member's attributions and the resulting emotions that are elicited are crucial ingredients that combine to influence the type of emotions that are shared at the collective level. We discuss our propositions in detail below.

Convergence of Individual Emotions at the Team Level

As noted, teams are composed of individual members who may vary in the attributions that they form for a given conflict. Still, how do these different emotions experienced at the individual-level translate into emotions experienced at the collective (team) level? To address this issue, we turn our attention to the relationship between individual-level emotions and collective team-level emotions.

In recent decades, the question of how emotions emerge and function at the group or team level has garnered increased attention. While emotions are generally considered an individual-level construct, evidence exists that emotions can be a group-level phenomenon as well (Smith, Seger, & Mackie, 2007). Furthermore, the group's emotion can be influenced from the bottom-up through the emotions experienced by individual group members (Barsade & Gibson, 1998). Bartel and Saavedra (2000) suggest that individual-level emotions are most likely to converge into a collective team-level emotion when teams have stable membership and are characterized by social and task interdependence. We argue that these aspects characterize management teams, making this a context in which collective convergence of individual-level emotions is particularly likely to occur.

Bartel and Saavedra (2000) postulate two complementary pathways, emotional contagion and emotional comparison, by which the individual emotions of team members may converge into collectively experienced affect. Emotional contagion (Hatfield et al., 1993) describes an automatic process by which emotions are spread through subconscious mimicry of the emotional displays of others. The process initiates with an individual who experiences a particular emotion (e.g., anger); this emotion manifests in the individual's nonverbal behavior, including facial expression, tone of voice, and body postures (e.g., gritting teeth, angry intonations). Others who are around this individual will subconsciously copy these emotional displays. The resulting neurological feedback provided by the emotional expressions that they mimic then leads them to experience the same emotion. In such a way, the emotion of an individual is spread to the collective through a largely subconscious process.

Emotional comparison (Bartel & Saavedra, 2000; see also social appraisal: (Manstead & Fischer, 2001; Parkinson & Simons, 2009) refers to a more thoughtful process by which group members pay

attention to the emotions that are expressed by others in order to obtain cues as to how they themselves should appraise and respond to an emotion-evoking situation. The essential idea behind this approach is that the emotions of others carry information that is used to appraise the situation and choose one's own emotional response. For example, applied to the area of conflict, team members may attend to the emotional expressions of other members of the team to gain information about the appropriate way to respond to the situation. If others appear angry over a conflict, a team member may reappraise a situation in a way that is consistent with this emotion and engage in a similar emotional response.

Thus, past research supports that individual-level emotions may converge into team-level emotions (Barsade, 2002; Bartel & Saavedra, 2000). However, within a team where different members may simultaneously be experiencing different emotional responses to a conflict, the question is raised as to how these individualized responses will combine or resolve into a shared team-level emotion. To address this question, we suggest that, while all individualized responses to the conflict are potentially important elements in determining the collectively shared emotions of the team, certain types of emotions, as well as certain team members, may have greater influence in this process. First, certain emotions may be more likely to spread than others. In particular, emotions that are high energy (e.g., anger, excitement) spread more easily than low energy emotions (e.g., sadness, contentment). Because negative information is more salient, it has also been suggested that negative emotions are more likely than positive emotions to spread through contagion (Bartel & Saavedra, 2000).

Additionally, certain team members may be more likely than others to influence the team-level emotions. For example, highly expressive individuals (i.e., individuals who display strong affective nonverbal behavior) are more likely to spread their emotions to others (Sy, Choi, & Johnson, 2013). Consistent with both the emotional contagion and emotional comparison frameworks, others need to be able to clearly observe nonverbal emotional displays; thus, individuals with high expressivity are more likely to have their emotional displays noticed and observed by others (Dasborough, Ashkanasy, Tee, & Tse, 2009; Sy et al., 2013). Further, scholars argue that the team leader is the primary influence on a group's emotions (Dasborough et al., 2009; Sy et al., 2013). Due to the leader's salience, centrality, and power within the team, his or her emotional displays are more likely to be attended to and used as a source of information by the team members (Sy et al., 2013). Similarly, team members who are more experienced or are more seasoned members of the team may have more influence in spreading their emotions through the emotional comparison process (Bartel & Saavedra, 2000). Drawing on this literature, we make the following propositions regarding the relationship between individual (team member) and team level (collective) emotions that are experienced in response to conflict.

Proposition 6: Emotions experienced by individual members of the management team in response to a conflict converge into shared team-level emotions through the processes of emotional contagion and emotion comparison.

- (1) Individually experienced emotions that are (a) high energy and (b) negative will exert the greatest influence on the collective team emotion.
- (2) Members of the team that (a) have high emotional expressiveness, (b) are experienced and seasoned members of the team, or (c) hold leadership positions within the team will exert the greatest influence on the collective emotion.

Teams, Emotions, and Decision-Making Effectiveness

Team-based structures have become more prevalent in organizations (Bolman & Deal, 1992; Mankin, Cohen, & Bikson, 1996). Given their flatter organizational composition, teams often have faster response capabilities (Hill, 2016). This is important because management teams are tasked with making more and increasingly better decisions, which may propel an organization into an advantageous

competitive position if the decision-making process is effective (Hill, 2016; Mankins & Steele, 2006; O'Reilly et al., 2010). Individual members must perceive a team-based decision as high quality and be in alignment with the team's decision, if the organization is to realize positive gains from its teams (Dess, 1987). Otherwise, a lack of member commitment to a decision can impede its implementation and execution (O'Reilly et al., 2010). Consequently, decision effectiveness is a paramount concern of organizational leaders, particularly in light of the well-known conflict paradox (Amason & Schweiger, 1994).

Decision effectiveness is a construct that must be clearly defined as the term "effectiveness" can mean different things to different people (Devine, 1999; Ellis & Mitchell, 2002; Harrison & Pelletier, 1998). It is not uncommon to find researchers studying decision effectiveness while either never explicitly, or vaguely, defining the construct (Elbanna & Child, 2007). Decision effectiveness can be defined in terms of the process that was used to arrive at a decision, or it could also be defined in terms of the output of the decision, although there are fewer outcome-related measurements of decision effectiveness due to the difficulty of establishing a causal link between the decision and performance (Schilling, Oeser, & Schaub, 2007). Process-related measurements of decision effectiveness are established upon perceived quality of the decision process, and these decision-making processes have been significantly related to decision success (Dean & Sharfman, 1996; Schilling et al., 2007). Therefore, assessing decision effectiveness in terms of the process used to arrive at the decision is widely supported (Dean & Sharfman, 1993; Schmidt et al., 2001; Slotegraaf & Atuahene-Gima, 2011; Timmermans & Vlek, 1996).

Researchers interested in conflict's effects on decision-making have typically relied on process-related measurements of decision effectiveness while assessing the decision process in terms of quality, consensus, or commitment (Amason, 1996; Carmeli, Sheaffer, & Halevi, 2009; Ehie, 2010; Parayitam & Dooley, 2009). In this manuscript, we adopt a process-related approach since decision effectiveness is defined as the perceived quality of and commitment to the decision by members of the decision-making team. This approach is consistent with prior literature (Amason, 1996; Amason & Schweiger, 1994). Thus, high decision effectiveness would imply that a decision was perceived to be of high quality, and to which members are highly committed.

Organizations are depicted as political systems in which decision-makers have some degree of conflicting objectives (Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992). Teams are composed of members with differing personalities who often operate distinctly from each other and possess idiosyncratic ways of processing information and making decisions (Bell & Marentette, 2011; Hambrick, 1997). As such, members of a team are prone to disagree over past decisions, current alternatives, and the evidence presented in support of a proposed plan (Amason & Mooney, 1999; Mankins & Steele, 2006).

The complexity of the decision-making process is exacerbated by group or individual goals that often are in conflict with each other (Ehie, 2010). To compound matters, decision-making is highly uncertain and dynamic and impacts the long-term health of the organization (Priem, Rasheed, & Kotulic, 1995). As such, management teams must interact well and be adept at making effective decisions to keep their organizations competitive and profitable (Eisenhardt et al., 1997; Hambrick, 1995). Decisions made by management teams have a significant influence on an organization's performance and long-term value (Mankins & Steele, 2006). If decision-making teams are incapable of working together effectively, for example, if they get derailed with dysfunctional forms of conflict or allow other factors (e.g., emotions) to interfere with their interpersonal relationships or judgments, the success of the organization may be jeopardized (Eisenhardt et al., 1997).

While rational-cognitive models of decision-making have long dominated the literature, it is now well-regarded that decision-makers are incapable of separating their emotions from the decision process (Pfister & Bohm, 2008). To truly understand decision behavior, cognitions and emotions must be considered jointly (Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992). We propose that the attributions made by team members during conflict play an integral role in determining their individual and subsequent team-level affective responses, which will then impact decision-making effectiveness.

Externally Focused Emotions and Decision-Making

Perhaps the most dominant emotion experienced during conflict is anger (Allred, 1999). Further, because anger is a negative emotion characterized by high intensity and energy, it may be an emotion that is particularly likely to spread throughout a team (Bartel & Saavedra, 2000). Anger can elicit antisocial behavior leading to decreased productivity (Jehn, 1995), verbal and physical abuse (Pfeiffer, 2011), retaliatory effects (Allred, 1999), damaged interpersonal relations (van Kleef et al., 2008), and decreased satisfaction in negotiations and intentions to interact with another party (van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004). Betancourt and Blair (1992) found that anger was positively related to violence of actions in response to conflict. Allred, Mallozzi, Matsui, and Raia (1997) found that individuals experiencing higher levels of anger toward another were less willing to work with the other person in the future. Ill-regarded feelings resulting from anger episodes compromise future transactions, which contributes to an ongoing state of conflict (Baron, 1988b) and the use of distributive tactics during conflict resolution (Olekalns & Smith, 2003). It follows, then, that attributions resulting in anger at another individual may contribute to dysfunctional decision outcomes, retaliatory response to thwart another's goals, and an unwillingness of team members to work together.

On the other hand, while anger can result in detrimental outcomes, there is also potential for anger to spur positive impacts (Gibson et al., 2009; Stickney & Geddes, 2016). The dual threshold model of anger (Geddes & Callister, 2007) suggests that when anger provokes expression of one's dissatisfaction in a manner that falls within the realm of organizationally appropriate behaviors (e.g., communicating with superiors in regard to a problematic issue), positive outcomes occur. In particular, anger can enable one to take action and ultimately lead to resolution of a problem. Geddes and Callister (2007) argue that these positive effects of anger will occur when anger is expressed (rather than suppressed). Anger expression is most likely to occur when individuals are highly committed to the organization and when they do not feel cynicism or hopelessness (Geddes & Callister, 2007; Stickney & Geddes, 2014). Alternatively, expression may come as a result of a third-party acting as a surrogate speaking on behalf of an angered colleague (Stickney & Geddes, 2016). Further, anger will lead to positive outcomes only when it is directed in ways that are organizationally appropriate. For example, when anger is focused on personal rather than organizational concerns, it is more likely to be expressed in unproductive ways that lead to unfavorable outcomes (Geddes & Callister, 2007). As such, we argue that anger stemming from conflicts that are affective (based on relational/personal issues) is more likely to lead to unfavorable outcomes, while anger that stems from cognitive conflicts is more organizationally focused and will therefore be more likely to lead to favorable outcomes. Further, because stable causes of negative outcomes can trigger hopelessness (Weiner, 1985) [inhibiting productive expression of anger], we argue that affective conflicts attributed to stable causes will be especially likely to result in unfavorable outcomes. Therefore, we propose the following:

Proposition 7: Anger arising from team members' conflict attributions (i.e., external, controllable) will moderate the relationship between affective and cognitive conflict and decision effectiveness such that:

- (1) The positive relationship between cognitive conflict and decision effectiveness is strengthened when attributions result in anger.
- (2) The negative relationship between affective conflict and decision effectiveness is strengthened when attributions elicit anger, particularly when causes of the conflict are attributed as stable.

Frustration and anger tend to arise when negative outcomes occur where positive outcomes were expected; yet, frustration and anger are distinct emotions (Clore & Centerbar, 2004; Roseman, 1991). Anger is a more self-assertive emotion that requires a negative outcome to occur in the context of assumed agency (Aldrich & Tenenbaum, 2006). Frustration is an outcome-focused emotion lacking, or largely ignoring the influence of, agency assignment (Berkowitz & Harmon-Jones, 2004; Clore & Centerbar, 2004).

Conflict in a team decision-making context often prevents a team from reaching effective decisions because the team fails to move beyond the conflicting discussion (Gersick, 1989). In such circumstances, the task of effective decision-making may appear to be impossible, leading to frustration (Glass & Singer, 1972). As long as the individuals engaged in conflict attribute the inability to make an effective decision to aspects of the decision itself, as opposed to another individual, frustration will remain the experienced emotion (Roseman et al., 1990). Whereas individuals have a tendency of responding to anger with retaliatory action against the causal agent (Angie, Connelly, Waples, & Kligyte, 2011), individuals often disengage behaviorally when they are frustrated (Frijda, Kuipers, & Ter Schure, 1989). Disengaging from a decision-making context leads to lower quality decisions because it impedes creativity and innovation, prevents multiple viewpoints from being discussed, and results in group-think and decreased cohesiveness among team members (Baron, 1990; Janis, 1982). Thus, we propose the following:

Proposition 8: Frustration arising from team member conflict attributions (i.e., external, uncontrollable) will moderate the relationship between cognitive and affective conflict and decision effectiveness such that:

- (1) The positive relationship between cognitive conflict and decision effectiveness is weakened when attributions elicit frustration.
- (2) The negative relationship between affective conflict and decision effectiveness is strengthened when attributions elicit frustration.

Gratitude is an emotion experienced by individuals who perceive that they have benefitted from another's intentional and voluntary actions, which subsequently elicits reciprocating prosocial behavior from the beneficiary toward the benefactor (Tsang, 2006). However, these prosocial behaviors can extend beyond the benefactor to other uninvolved parties (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006). Although a beneficiary may be motivated to engage in helping behavior in response to gains received by chance, benefits derived from another's deliberate actions generate a higher aspiration to reciprocate with helping behavior (Tsang, 2006).

As previously noted, gratitude is likely to emerge during positively construed cognitive conflicts. Effective decision-making teams are those that are capable of reaping the benefits (e.g., high-quality decisions) of cognitive conflict while avoiding its more destructive, that is, affective, aspects (Amason, 1996; Eisenhardt et al., 1997). These high-quality decisions provide a sense of accomplishment that serve to enhance cohesiveness among team members, fostering further trust and gratitude (Christian, 2013). Given the prosocial behavioral tendencies associated with feelings of gratitude, one can expect improvements during a decision-making process as individuals temper acts of self-interest in favor of engaging in cooperative efforts (DeSteno, Bartlett, Baumann, Williams, & Dickens, 2010). Thus, we propose the following:

Proposition 9: The positive relationship between positively construed cognitive conflict and decision effectiveness is strengthened when team member attributions (i.e., external, controllable) result in gratitude.

Surprise is a cognitive emotion that occurs when there is a contradiction between one's expectations and an actual event, and the magnitude of discrepancy between one's expectation and experience influences the intensity of one's surprise emotion (Scheffler, 2010). Although a surprise event is unpredictable, it is generally regarded that surprise is a pleasant feeling brought about by others (Batra & Ray, 1974; Lerner, Li, Valdesolo, & Kassam, 2015). The unexpected nature of a surprise event is generally more impactful than an expected one such that emotional experiences are enhanced with the occurrence of a low probability event or the nonoccurrence of a high probability event (Oliver, Rust, & Varki, 1997).

Surprise is considered a reflective emotion that promotes an individual's search for understanding of the discrepancy between expected and experienced outcomes (Meyer, Reisenzein, & Schutzwohl, 1997; Tsang, 2013). In essence, surprise triggers a need for comprehension which influences an individual's selected behavioral responses (Louis, 1980). Additionally, individual cognitive schemas are updated and expectations about future experiences are modified (Cooper, 2007; Louis, 1980).

During a conflict scenario, it is generally regarded that task-related disagreements yield positive outcomes (Jehn, 1995). However, this is not a foregone conclusion as studies have revealed that cognitive differences sometimes cannot be overcome (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Mooney et al., 2007). Individuals engaged in cognitive conflict can never fully expect that they will experience positive outcomes, and, even if an expected positive outcome is achieved, the magnitude of the difference between what was expected and experienced is unpredictable. While an unexpected positive outcome is more pleasurable than an expected positive outcome, an unexpected positive outcome of greater magnitude will result in significantly more pleasure enhancing the prospects that outcomes of future cognitive conflict will also be positive (Mellers, Schwartz, Ho, & Ritov, 1997; Mellers, Schwartz, & Ritov, 1999; Visser, Kraemer, & Swerts, 2014). As such, we put forth the following proposition:

Proposition 10: The positive relationship between positively construed cognitive conflict and decision effectiveness is strengthened when team member attributions (i.e., external, uncontrollable) result in surprise.

Self-Conscious Emotions and Decision-Making

Self-conscious emotions are highly social and can be positive (e.g., pride) or negative (e.g., shame and guilt) but they are often not experienced until some event, such as living up to, or failing to live up to, some ideal standard, triggers the self-evaluative process (Lewis, 2008; Tracy & Robins, 2004). The primary characteristic of self-conscious emotions is the combination of an individual's self-representation and self-reflection into a self-evaluative process; otherwise, an experienced emotion may be considered more general/basic, but not self-conscious (Tracy & Robins, 2004). Recent research suggests that self-conscious emotions, such as guilt and shame, can also exist at the collective or group level, with outcomes paralleling those found at the individual level (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007).

In a self-evaluative process, an individual can either hold themselves responsible or not responsible, for their behavior (Lewis, 2008). If an individual holds themselves responsible, then an emotion such as guilt over one's actions may arise, along with prosocial behavioral intentions such as: reflective thought attempting to understand a conflict situation (Rispens & Demerouti, 2016), initiating corrective actions aimed at removing the guilt emotion (Lewis, 2008); disengaging in delinquent behaviors (Cohen, Panter, & Turan, 2012); and distancing one's self from one's own misdeeds (Schmader & Lickel, 2006). These behavioral responses provide an opportunity to maintain cooperative relations with others, bestowing benefits for future decision-making tasks (DeSteno, 2009). Although counterintuitive, even affective conflict can bring about positive behavioral changes to avoid future conflict episodes (Khanin & Turel, 2009). Guilt-prone individuals are more likely to seek constructive responses to anger by engaging in behavior aimed at strengthening interpersonal relationships (Tangney, 1995). Similarly, guilt that is experienced at the collective level is associated with a desire to strengthen or repair relationships (Lickel et al., 2005). Thus, we propose the following:

Proposition 11: Guilt arising from team member conflict attributions (i.e., internal, controllable) will moderate the relationships between cognitive and affective conflict and decision effectiveness such that:

- (1) The positive relationship between cognitive conflict and decision effectiveness is strengthened when attributions result in guilt.
- (2) The negative relationship between affective conflict and decision effectiveness is weakened when attributions result in guilt.

Shame, which arises from a discrepancy about who a person is and who they would like to be (Lazarus, 1991), is often associated with withdrawal (Tangney, 1995), although it is also correlated with anger (other-directed), resentment, irritability, and a tendency to place blame for negative events on others (Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher, & Gramzow, 1992). Shame experienced at the collective (group) level is similarly associated with anger (Schmader & Lickel, 2006) and linked to avoidance behavior (Lickel et al., 2005). As such, shame is generally seen as a dysfunctional emotion that is counterproductive in

social interactions (Nelissen, Breugelmans, & Zeelenberg, 2013). Because shame motivates negative behavioral intentions (Tangney & Dearing, 2003), we propose the following:

Proposition 12: Shame arising from team member conflict attributions (i.e., internal, uncontrollable) will moderate the relationships between cognitive and affective conflict and decision effectiveness such that:

- (1) The positive relationship between cognitive conflict and decision effectiveness is weakened when attributions result in shame.
- (2) The negative relationship between affective conflict and decision effectiveness is strengthened when attributions elicit shame.

Pride is a self-conscious emotion that is particularly relevant in decision-making because an organization's leaders are more likely to experience this emotion; thus, pride may be a key indicator of decision effectiveness (Bodolica & Spraggon, 2011). Pride can yield both constructive and destructive outcomes based upon its type (Lewis, 2008). As it relates to conflict and decision-making, authentic pride is apt to be associated with cognitive, but not affective, conflict because of its constructive orientation. In the context of cognitive conflict, feelings of authentic pride arise when individuals attribute successful attainment of tasks (e.g., high-quality decisions) to their own knowledge, skills, abilities, and/or behavior (Lewis, 2008; Weiner, 1985). If a collective sense of authentic pride emerges within a team, we argue that it will act as a motivating force for the team to persevere through difficult tasks and stimulate effort toward goal achievement (Williams & DeSteno, 2008).

Hubristic pride is characterized as the "biblical sin with negative connotations of self-aggrandizement" (Xun, Ping, & Mukhopadhyay, 2014, p. 698). It has also been depicted as overassurance with extreme pride, which can lead to an exaggerated sense of one's capabilities, performance, overvaluation of one's chances of success, and an acceptance of decision alternatives that are often excessively risky (Judge, Piccolo, & Kosalka, 2009; Picone, Dagnino, & Mina, 2014). Hubristic pride is associated with high self-esteem, feelings of arrogance, conceit, superiority over others, and disagreeableness, and has been used to explain poor corporate performance and inefficient strategic endeavors (Nelson & Russell, 2014; Tracy & Robins, 2007). As such, individuals who experience hubristic pride upon attributing a positive conflict to their own effort or ability may be more likely to display arrogance or contempt for others on the team to whom they view themselves as superior. To the extent to which this emotion spreads throughout the team, it may lead to subsequent team-level behavior that is detrimental to decision-making. For example, hubristic individuals are likely to adopt behaviors that are detrimental to effective decision-making, such as taking competitive positions with subordinate perspectives, displaying an unwillingness to consider sources of information beyond their own, and assigning blame for failures to external sources (Picone et al., 2014; Shipman & Mumford, 2011). Further, we suggest that a team in which the emotion of hubristic pride emerges may engage in overly risky decision, due to their exaggerated confidence in their success leading to their acceptance of risky options (Judge et al., 2009; Picone et al., 2014). Thus, we propose the following:

Proposition 13: Pride arising from team member attributions (i.e., internal, controllable) for positively construed conflicts will moderate the relationships between cognitive and affective conflict and decision effectiveness such that:

- (1) The positive relationship between cognitive conflict and decision effectiveness is strengthened when attributions result in authentic pride.
- (2) The positive relationship between cognitive conflict and decision effectiveness is weakened when attributions result in hubristic pride.

Discussion

Research on the effects of conflict type on decision outcomes is well developed (Baron, 1990; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Jehn, 1995), and many scholars have based their conclusions on the "typical"

effects associated with the relationship between conflict type and decision outcomes. Researchers have branded the effects of conflict as paradoxical, suggesting that the achievement of high-quality decisions occurs at the expense of member commitment to those decisions (Amason, 1996; Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992). To realize the positive effects of conflict without incurring its negative consequences, researchers have advocated that team members should engage in cognitive conflict while avoiding any affective conflict (Amason & Schweiger, 1994; Ehie, 2010). However, even when members openly embrace conflict, problems can still arise if one person attributes another's comments as a form of personal criticism (Mooney et al., 2007). It is not surprising then that the results of conflict research have often been contradicting (Breugst et al., 2012; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Khanin & Turel, 2009).

The propositions developed here highlight our contention that attributions and emotions experienced during conflict alter the "typical" effects currently associated with each conflict type, strengthening our understanding as to why conflict's effects may be functional in one context and dysfunctional in another. While we agree that encouraging cognitive conflict while avoiding affective conflict is logical advice (Amason, 1996), to truly gain the benefits of conflict without incurring its costs in a decision-making context, it is important to understand how attributions and emotions influence team dynamics during the decision-making process (Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992).

Specifically, we make four main contributions with regard to how attributions and emotions play a role in understanding the decision-making outcomes associated with affective and cognitive conflict. First, we argue that the characteristics of both cognitive and affective conflict will elicit attribution-seeking among involved parties, but that these two types of conflict may lead to differential primary appraisals and emotional responses to the conflict. Based on Weiner (1985), we propose that parties involved in a conflict will form an initial appraisal of the conflict based on whether it is perceived to help (positive appraisal) or hinder progress toward a goal (negative appraisal); in turn, this determines their "primitive" emotional response to the conflict. We argue that affective conflict will be more likely to be appraised negatively, leading to the occurrence of general negative affect, whereas cognitive conflicts will be more likely to be appraised positively, leading to a positive affective response.

Second, we argue that these more general, primitive affective responses to the conflict will then be translated into discrete emotions depending on the conflict attributions. We suggest that these emotions will emerge at the individual (team member) level and then converge at the team level to influence decision-making processes. Drawing from Weiner (1985), we propose that the locus of the conflict attribution (i.e., was the conflict internally or externally caused?) will determine whether self-conscious or other-focused emotions are elicited in response to the conflict. Controllability attributions (i.e., was the cause of conflict controllable or not?) will then further determine the discrete emotion that is experienced. When conflict is negatively appraised, locus and controllability dimensions will interact to determine whether anger, frustration, guilt, or shame is experienced. When conflict is positively appraised, these dimensions will jointly determine whether pride, gratitude, or surprise is experienced in response to the conflict. Because we expect that the type of conflict (affective, cognitive) will influence the initial appraisal of the conflict, by extension, we expect that cognitive conflicts are more likely to elicit positive emotions of pride, gratitude, and surprise (stemming from positive general affect), while affective conflicts are more likely to elicit negative emotions of shame, guilt, frustration, and anger. Lastly, we argue that the stability dimension of the conflict attribution will determine the magnitude of the felt emotion, such that conflicts that are perceived as stable will elicit stronger emotional responses.

Third, we propose mechanisms (emotional contagion, emotional comparison) by which the discrete emotions felt by individual team members will converge into collectively experienced affective responses to the conflict. We suggest that when emotional reactions to the conflict vary (due to different attributions formed by different team members), the emotional response of the team as a whole will be most

influenced by emotions that are negative or high in energy, and by team members who are leaders, emotionally expressive, or have been with the team for a long time.

In our final set of propositions, we argue that it is the discrete emotion elicited by these patterns of attribution that will determine the decision-making outcomes associated with the affective or cognitive conflict. As such, we argue that the specific emotion that is experienced will moderate the relationship between conflict and its outcomes. To illustrate, we argue that affective conflicts are more likely to be appraised negatively; however, depending on the pattern of attributions that are made for the conflict, different discrete emotions will occur, each of which may strengthen or weaken the decision-making outcomes. For example, if the initial negative affective response to affective conflict is translated into “guilt” (i.e., the conflict is attributed as internal and controllable), the negative association between affective conflict and decision-making outcomes will be weakened due to the constructive actions elicited by guilt. On the other hand, if the negative affective response is translated into “frustration” (i.e., the conflict is attributed as external and uncontrollable), the negative association between affective conflict and decision-making outcomes will be strengthened, due to the detrimental influence of frustration on decision-making outcomes.

Implications for Theory and Practice

Scholars have made great contributions toward our understanding of conflict. However, our knowledge is incomplete because most studies fail to consider the manner by which those involved in conflict attempt to comprehend it. Attribution theory and emotions are underutilized in leadership research, yet offer a novel opportunity by which to comprehend behavior (Ashkanasy, Hartel, & Daus, 2002; Martinko, Harvey, & Dasborough, 2011). Thus, we put forth that both attribution theory and emotions are important and appropriate lenses by which to scrutinize conflict relationships. Our study emphasizes the importance of examining both negatively and positively construed conflict and highlights the effects of specific attributions and related individual and team-level emotions experienced during a decision-making context. We underscore the significance of both other-directed and self-conscious emotions, emphasizing the importance of discrete emotions experienced by decision-making teams, which is consistent with the position of others who claim that it is within the sphere of discrete emotions where emotional work experiences can best be understood, predicted, and have a vital influence on organizational behavior (Ashkanasy et al., 2002).

Although we have emphasized theoretical issues in this study, we believe this manuscript offers practical implications as well. To effectively manage decision-making teams, attributions and emotions must be given greater consideration, particularly because affective responses to attributions are known to elicit behavioral reactions (Weiner, 1985). If, as we argue, certain conflict attributions result in more beneficial decision-making outcomes due to the discrete emotions that they produce, implementation of workplace interventions that focus on attributions may encourage more fruitful resolution of team conflicts. For example, the technique of attributional retraining, which teaches individuals to change their typical patterns of attributions to attain more positive outcomes, may help employees to form more advantageous attributions for conflicts.

Additionally, leaders would do well to improve emotional intelligence skills and encourage a positive emotional climate (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002). Emotional intelligence is associated with more effective regulation of emotional responses. For example, Geddes and Callister (2007) suggest that emotionally intelligent employees are better able to control whether their feelings of anger cross over into organizationally inappropriate behavior; as such, they are better able to reap the benefits or positive outcomes associated with feeling anger. Increasing emotional intelligence at the team level also enhances trust and group identity (Druskat & Wolff, 2001), which are more broadly associated with favorable group dynamics (Olson & Parayitam, 2007).

Limitations and Future Directions

While the current paper focuses on the three dimensions of attributions that were established in Weiner's (1985) original model (and that have been most frequently studied within the literature), other dimensions of attributions, such as intent (the degree to which an event was deliberately caused) and globality (the degree to which the cause may be expected to affect several different situations) of the cause (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978; Kelley & Michela, 1980), may also be relevant within the context of conflict and a potential focus of future study. Further, the scope of our study does not include an examination of the antecedents of these causal interferences (e.g., what conditions promote internal vs. external attributions for conflict, etc.), suggesting another avenue for future study. For example, certain biases characterize the attribution process, which may have implications for the types of attributions that are made about conflicts. For instance, self-serving biases highlight the tendency for individuals to make attributions that make them feel good about themselves (Kunda, 1987). This suggests that individuals may be more likely to attribute dysfunctional conflict externally to others or to the situation (resulting in anger or frustration), while attributing conflict that leads to successful outcomes to themselves (resulting in pride).

While our study explored the relevance of emotions that were directly linked to conflict attributions, future research may wish to examine the role of other emotions and their role in conflict situations. For example, negatively appraised conflicts may trigger additional emotions outside of the realm of Weiner's attribution framework, such as contempt, disgust, or even empathy (Haidt, 2003), which may subsequently impact decision-making outcomes in favorable or unfavorable ways. Additionally, although we examined anger as an emotion that is directed at another person, some scholars suggest that other agency is not a necessary requirement for this emotion because people can be angry with themselves (Ellsworth & Tong, 2006; Van Mechelen & Hennes, 2009). Among the few studies to consider self-anger effects, Ellsworth and Tong (2006) found that self-anger shared similar appraisal and action tendencies with the emotions of shame and guilt. Similarly, Deffenbacher, Oetting, Lynch, and Morris (1996) found a high correlation between self-anger and embarrassment. Although anger is typically not mentioned as a self-conscious emotion, its similarities to other self-conscious emotions would suggest that research on self-directed anger would yield findings similar to those of the more traditional self-conscious emotions.

Finally, we encourage future work to examine other outcomes of conflict within this attributional-emotional framework. While we limited the scope of our manuscript to conflict's effects on decision-making outcomes, there is a need to further understand how conflict impacts other organizational concerns such as team performance (Breugst et al., 2012; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003), creativity (Badke-Schaub et al., 2010), trust (Peterson & Behfar, 2003), absenteeism (Jehn, Rupert, & Nauta, 2006), and turnover (Whitaker & DeHoog, 1991).

Conclusion

An attributional approach to understanding conflict has potential to shed light on how cognitive and affective conflict in teams relates to decision-making. In particular, qualities that characterize conflict may motivate involved parties to search for attributions. When individuals form attributions for the cause of conflict, their beliefs about the locus, controllability, and stability of the cause may influence their emotional response, subsequently impacting the emotions felt by the team as a whole and the quality of decision-making. Future empirical and theoretical work may benefit from considering the role of both attributions and emotions in relation to conflict and its outcomes.

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