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Testing the Assumptions Underlying the Dual Concerns Model: Need for Dominance, Narcissism, and Emotion Regulation Also Play a Role

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Abstract

This investigation examines key assumptions underlying the dual concerns model (DCM): that one's conflict style is jointly determined by 1) the degree to which one values attaining one's own goals, and 2) the degree to which one values attaining the other party's goals. It also explores the possibility that conflict styles might result from self- and other-oriented constructs not identified in the DCM, as well as by emotion regulation skills. Undergraduate participants completed a measure of conflict styles, simple concern for self- and other-goals, and several additional measures including narcissism, need for dominance, and emotional regulation. Mixed support for the DCM assumptions was found. Patterns consistent with the model emerged for the dominating and obliging styles, and partially for the Integrating style; no support was found for the avoiding style. In addition, measures of narcissism and need for dominance contributed substantially to the dominating style, above and beyond the effect of simple concern for self-goals and other-goals. Emotional regulation variables (reappraisal, rehearsal, and aggression control) also contributed to four of the five conflict styles above and beyond the effect of simple concern for self-goals and other-goals. Implications for the DCM are discussed.

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The "conflict styles" approach has long been a popular model for studying how people respond during conflict. Derived originally from the work of Blake and Mouton (1964; 1970), and elaborated upon by others (e.g., Rubin et al., 1994; Ruble & Thomas, 1976), this approach is based on the idea that the ways in which people act during conflict are the result of two underlying, independent dimensions: 1) the degree of concern for attaining one's own goals, and 2) the degree of concern for attaining the other person's goals (Van de Vliert, 1997). According to this *dual concerns model* (DCM), one's conflict style results from one's location on these underlying dimensions.

Many investigations of conflict style have been conducted, but the vast majority have not directly evaluated the core assumptions of the DCM: namely, that conflict styles actually result from particular combinations of self- and other-concern. For example, numerous studies have been conducted to compare the conflict styles of groups that are thought to differ in in some way, such as men compared to women (e.g., Chusmir & Mills, 1989), or people from collectivist cultures compared to those from individualistic ones (e.g., Pearson & Stephan, 1998). However, simply finding differences between such groups produces no direct evidence regarding *why* they differ. A handful of studies have directly tested the DCM's assumptions through experimental manipulations (e.g., Sorenson et al. 1999). However, these have yielded very mixed results. Thus, more than 50 years after the DCM's introduction, there is surprisingly little evidence directly supporting its key tenets. In this investigation we carry out such a test, and also evaluate possible explanations for the mixed support that the DCM has received.

The Dual Concerns Model

According to the logic of the DCM, someone high on a concern for both self- and other-outcomes will adopt an *integrative*, problem-solving style of handling conflict, because that style will satisfy both concerns; someone high on a concern for self-outcome, but low on a concern for other-outcome, will likely adopt a competitive style devoted to *dominating*. Similarly, someone low on a concern for self-outcome, but high on a concern for other-outcome, will adopt an *obliging* style characterized by yielding to the other person; someone low on a concern for self-outcome and low on a concern for other-outcome will simply try to *avoid* conflict altogether. Finally, dual-concern models often conceive of a fifth conflict style, *compromise*, which characterizes those at intermediate locations on both underlying dimensions.

It is useful at this point to make a distinction between two components of the DCM: 1) the degree to which the individual wants to achieve self-goals and other-goals (i.e., the dual concerns); and 2) the choice that the individual makes regarding how to act (the chosen conflict style). The concerns can be thought of as motives—varying in strength—directed toward the achievement of particular goals. Based on the relative strengths of these motives, the individual then chooses a course of action that best satisfies these motives. Thus, the model includes both motivational components (the strength of each concern) and cognitive ones (the choice of strategy).

The DCM can also be viewed as operating at two different conceptual levels. The first level reflects how the individual responds to conflict under a particular set of conditions, such as the status of the two parties (e.g., Drory & Ritov, 1997; Slabbert, 2004), or the importance of the issue at stake. At this level, concern for self and concern for other are determined by the particular characteristics of the two parties, the role relationships between them, the specific nature of the current conflict, and any other relevant information. The self-outcomes and other-outcomes in this case result primarily from a *particular* set of circumstances. In a way they represent what might be termed "state" levels of self-concern and other-concern. Research adopting this perspective assesses responses to conflict in situations in which the participants possess information regarding such specific circumstances (e.g., Rahim, 1983; Sorenson et al., 1999).

The second approach is to consider the five conflict styles as individual difference variables reflecting somewhat stable concerns for self and other across situations. Participants are asked to indicate how likely they are to employ various conflict styles in their lives (e.g., Cai & Fink, 2002). Thus, any concern for self-outcomes and other-outcomes that might motivate participants' responses do not refer to specific outcomes from a particular kind of interaction, but represent in general the degree to which one values one's own interests in life and how much one values the interests of interaction partners. This approach is often used when the research question has to do with personality correlates of conflict style preferences (e.g., Tehrani & Yahmini, 2020; Wood & Bell, 2008), or when an investigation is addressing possible group differences in conflict style (e.g., Holt & DeVore, 2005).

Evidence for the Model

Many investigations of conflict style have been conducted, but the vast majority have not directly evaluated the core assumptions of the DCM: namely, that conflict styles actually result from particular combinations of self- and other-concern. For example, numerous studies have been conducted to compare the conflict styles of groups that are thought to differ in in some way. Research has compared the conflict styles of men and women (e.g., Chusmir & Mills, 1989; Korabik et al., 1993), those occupying different status levels (e.g., Lee, 2002; Rahim, 1983) and those from differing cultures (e.g., Cai & Fink 2002; Elsayed-Ekhouly & Buda 1996; Pearson & Stephan, 1998; Rahim et al., 2000). Generally speaking, such investigations have found group differences that appear to support the model—*if* it is assumed that the particular groups under investigation also differ in terms of their general concern for self and concern for other. Thus, the fact that women tend to score higher on obliging and lower on dominating can be taken as supporting the DCM if it is assumed that women are generally higher than men in their concern for other-outcomes. The fact that higher status individuals are more likely to use a dominating style and less likely to oblige can be seen as support if it is assumed that self-outcomes for lower-status people are more at risk during conflict. However, these assumptions are rarely tested.

The relatively few attempts to conduct more direct tests have yielded mixed results. One such attempt is the meta-analysis carried out by DeDreu et al. (2000) on "social motives" research in negotiation. The authors identified 28 studies that had manipulated "prosocial" and "egoistic" motives within a negotiation task, and then focused on one particular prediction of the DCM model: that collaborative problem solving is uniquely associated with high levels of both self- *and* other-concern. Consistent with the model, it was found that those high in other-concern acted less contentiously, engaged in more problem solving, and achieved higher joint outcomes, but only when self-concern (e.g. resistance to yielding) was also high. No other DCM claims were examined in this meta-analysis.

Sorenson et al. (1999) had college students imagine hypothetical conflict scenarios and report: 1) the degree of concern for self and concern for other that they would experience in those scenarios, and 2) their likely responses. Regression analyses were then carried out for each of the five conflict styles using concern for self and concern for other as predictor variables. Consistent with the logic of the DCM, the dominating style was positively associated with concern for self and negatively associated with concern for other; also as predicted, obliging was positively associated with other-concern and negatively associated with self-concern. The integrating style was positively associated with concern for other, but was *negatively* associated with concern for self, which is inconsistent with the model. Neither self- or other-concern were associated with avoiding responses.

Finally, Klusek-Wojciszke and Grodzicki (2018) had Polish adults complete a measure of self- and other-interest (Gerbasi & Prentice, 2013) and a measure of conflict styles based on the DCM. Using regression analyses in which the two concerns were used as simultaneous predictors of each style, limited support for the DCM was found. The dominating style was significantly associated with greater self-concern, as the

model predicts; however, it was also *positively* related to other-concern. The integrating style was positively related to other-concern, as predicted, but was unrelated to self-concern. The obliging style was not significantly associated with either concern, and the avoiding style was *positively* related to self-concern.

Possible Explanations for These Mixed Results

Taken together, the results of research testing the DCM's fundamental assumptions provide limited, and somewhat mixed, support. At least two explanations for this pattern may be advanced. The first possibility is that the core constructs underlying the DCM are too broad. "Concern for self" can be conceived of in a variety of different ways. It might refer to an overall positive estimation of one's competence and abilities (e.g., self-esteem, Rosenberg, 1965), or a desire to overcome challenges and attain goals (need for achievement, McClelland et al., 1976). It might refer to the importance of a particular outcome (e.g., placing a high importance on reaching a specific goal). It might also refer to having a grandiose sense of one's abilities and worth (e.g., narcissism, Ames et al., 2006), or a need to dominate others (need for power; need for dominance; Heckert et al. 2000). Given the many forms that self-regard can take, it seems quite plausible that some forms may be more strongly related to conflict style than others.

"Concern for other" can also be conceived in multiple ways. It might refer to a general concern for others' welfare (e.g., benevolence, Schwartz & Bardi, 2001), or placing a high value on being with others (Need for affiliation; Hill, 1987), or recognizing the importance of a particular outcome for another person (e.g., placing a high importance on a attaining a particular goal). As with narcissism, which is an inflated sense of self, concern for others might take the form of an unrealistic deference toward others (e.g., negative femininity, Spence et al., 1979). Given this variety, it seems plausible that some forms of other-regard may be more strongly related to conflict style than others.

Gerbasi and Prentice (2013) provide evidence for this line of reasoning. To validate their measures of general self- and other-concern, they had participants complete these measures along with a wide variety of instruments potentially relevant to those constructs. Self-concern was significantly correlated with a number of these: achievement motivation (r = .37), materialism (.48), narcissism (.46), and a scale measuring the desire to do well *in comparison to others* (.68). Given this pattern, it seems reasonable to argue that a general measure of "self-concern" may reflect not only a simple desire to reach self-goals, but also a grandiose view of the self, and a motivation to not only succeed but to surpass others. Gerbasi and Prentice also found that other-concern was associated with measures of other-oriented motivations such as benevolence (.36), prosociality (.25), empathic concern (.29), and with holding an interdependent self-construal (.58). Thus, because they are associated with so many more specific constructs, "general" self-concern and other-concern may be too broad to serve as reliable predictors of conflict style.

The second possible reason for the DCM's mixed support is that the model gives little attention to an element that plays a large role in conflict behavior: emotion. The logic of the DCM suggests that responses to conflict are the result of a calculation (implicit or explicit) of the degree to which one cares about one's own and the other's outcomes. This emphasis on calculation—a weighing of two quantitative values—paints a portrait of decision-making during conflict as largely rational (e.g., Bell & Song, 2005). Everyday experience, of course, suggest that this is an incomplete portrait, and that conflicts (including negotiations) can be highly emotional.

Take the case of anger, which often results from the perception that one's goals are being blocked in some way and/or when one is provoked by another person (e.g., Berkowitz & Harmon-Jones, 2004). Conflict situations, including negotiations, are contexts in which both of those conditions are likely to be present, and as a result anger is the emotional state that seems most likely to play an important role in conflict situations. (Other emotions may also play a role, of course. These would include other negative emotions such as fear, or positive ones as well.) One consequence of anger is to respond with antagonism

toward the other party (e.g., Lerner et al., 2015). Another consequence of anger during conflict is that it can lead to poorer objective outcomes (e.g., Allred et al., 1997; Pillutla & Murnighan, 1996). Thus, anger can be a potent force in determining responses to conflict, yet does not fit neatly within the DCM's framework.

Specifically, how might emotional responses complicate the predictions of the DCM? One possibility is that emotion may moderate the effect of self- and other-concern on conflict behavior. In the absence of anger, a concern for other may have the predicted effect of increasing collaborative or obliging responses. In contrast, if an individual is sufficiently angered by a perceived provocation during the conflict, then the effect of the underlying concern for other may be muted or completely overridden by the impulse to retaliate.

However, although emotion may be inevitable during conflict, its effects on behavior are not. Considerable research supports the proposition that emotions can be regulated, at least to some degree (Gross, 2007). As a result, the ability to effectively regulate one's emotional state is also likely to play a role in determining behavioral responses during conflict. One especially useful emotional regulation strategy is *cognitive reappraisal*, in which the individual changes the meaning of a situation (such as by considering factors that may have influenced the other person's actions), thus altering the emotional response that situation evokes (Gross, 2007). Such reappraisal has been found to be associated with reduced levels of negative emotion (Mauss et al., 2007) and decreased aggression (Barlett & Anderson, 2011). Other forms of emotional regulation also exist, and focus primarily on inhibiting or suppressing emotional experience and/or emotional display. For example, *suppression, aggression control*, and *emotional inhibition* (Gross, 2007; Roger & Najarian, 1989) all refer to various forms of deliberately controlling emotions. Research generally suggests that such strategies are not as beneficial as cognitive reappraisal (e.g., Gross, 2002; Gross & John, 2003), although the effects of suppression may also vary by culture (e.g., Butler et al., 2007). Finally, although it is not really a "strategy", the tendency to replay emotional situations in memory and to *ruminate* over them is also a relatively non-constructive response (Ciesla & Roberts, 2007; Grant et al., 2021).

It seems highly plausible that emotion regulation skills (or the lack of same) may help explain conflict style above and beyond the impact of simple self-concern and other-concern. In the example offered earlier, it was argued that high levels of anger might override an underlying concern for the other. Such an occurrence may be especially likely for individuals with poor emotion regulation skills. In contrast, for those with good emotion regulation skills the initial anger response may be modulated enough to allow collaborative responses consistent with an underlying concern for other to still occur.

Research Questions

Given the mixed evidence to date regarding the DCM's core assumptions, this investigation examines the issue anew, and seeks to evaluate two research questions: 1) To what degree are simple self-concern and simple other-concern associated with conflict styles in the manner predicted by the DCM?; 2) To what degree do *additional* measures outside the model explain variation in conflict style above and beyond the effect of simple self- and other-concern?

Method

Participants and Procedure

Between the years 2007 - 2015, 255 undergraduate students recruited from introductory psychology classes at a small liberal arts college in the southeast U.S. (115 males, 130 females, 10 did not specify gender) participated in this study. Data regarding age and ethnicity were not collected from these participants. However, the college is a residential liberal arts college, with the overwhelming number of students falling

into the 18 – 22 age range; its student body is overwhelming European-American. All data were collected in small group testing sessions in which participants completed paper and pencil questionnaires that contained all of the items measuring the key constructs in the investigation, as well as some additional measures unrelated this paper.

First, participants completed a widely used measure of conflict styles (ROCI-II; Rahim 1983) modified for use with a student sample. Participants were asked to report the frequency with which they responded in various ways during "disagreements and conflicts with peers". Second, participants completed a set of items assessing the degree to which they generally valued self-outcomes and other-outcomes during disagreements with others. These items were written narrowly so as to constitute unambiguous measures of "simple self-concern" and "simple other-concern". Third, participants completed a battery of measures assessing different forms of self-concern and other-concern. This battery includes what might be considered both positive (e.g., self-esteem) and negative (e.g., narcissism) forms. Fourth, participants completed measures of emotional regulation.

Measurements

Conflict Measure

The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II; Rahim, 1983) is 35-item scale that assesses the degree to which respondents engage in behaviors indicative of five different conflict styles: dominating (sample item: "I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue"), integrating ("I try to integrate my ideas with those of my peers to come up with a decision jointly"), avoiding ("I try to avoid an argument with my peers"), obliging ("I usually accommodate the wishes of my peers"), and compromising ("I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse"). Each scale is made up of seven items, answered using a five-point Likert-type response scale indicating how frequently the participant acts in this way during "disagreements and conflicts with peers" (1 = never; 5 = almost always).

Simple Self- and Other-Concern

We created two four-item scales to measure simple self-concern and other-concern. By "simple" we mean that items were intended to assess only a desire to achieve self- or other-goals, and nothing else. For example, the self-concern items were written so as to not tap one's feelings of self-worth (self-esteem), need for dominance, inflated narcissistic self-image, and so forth. Similarly, the other-concern items were written so as to not tap need for affiliation, dispositional compassion, and so forth. Respondents indicated their agreement with each item using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = Disagree; 5 = Agree). See Appendix for the items making up these scales.

Additional Measures of Self-Concern

In addition to the simple self-concern measure, participants also completed several other measures of self-regard. *Self-esteem* (sample item: "I feel that I have a number of good qualities") was measured via the 10-item Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965); participants responded using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (Disagree) to 5 (Agree). Three additional measures were taken from the Manifest Needs Questionnaire (Steers & Braunstein, 1976): *need for achievement (*"I am a hard worker"), *need for dominance (*"I strive to be 'in command' when I am working in a group"), and *need for autonomy (*"In my work projects I try to be my own boss"). Each scale consisted of five items, answered using five-point response scales running from 1 (Disagree) to 5 (Agree).

Finally, *narcissism* was measured via the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-16; Ames et al., 2006). The NPI-16 consists of 16 pairs of items that require participants to choose between a narcissistic or non-narcissistic option (e.g., "I find it easy to manipulate people" and "I don't like it when I find myself manipulating others").

Additional Measures of Other-Concern

In addition to the simple other-concern measure, participants also completed several additional measures of other-concern. Two of these were drawn from the Extended Personal Attributes Questionnaire (EPAQ: Spence et al. 1979). The first of these was the *femininity* scale, made up of socially desirable characteristics typically endorsed more by women than men (e.g., kind). Given this item content, we considered it a measure of "positive" other-concern. The second scale was a *negative femininity* scale, made up of socially undesirable characteristics typically endorsed more by women than men (e.g., servile, gullible, spineless), in which self-concerns are largely abandoned and the needs of the other are given unreasonable weight. Given this item content, we considered it a measure of "negative" other-concern. For each item, respondents describe how well the item describes them using a five-point scale running from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very).

Finally, one subscale from the Manifest Needs Questionnaire was used to measure concern for other: *need for affiliation* ("I am a people person"). This scale consists of five items to which participants responded via a five-point Likert-type format (1 = Disagree; 5 = Agree).

Emotional Regulation

Several forms of emotional regulation were assessed. Participants completed the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ; Gross & John, 2003), which assesses individual differences in the habitual use of two emotion regulation strategies: *cognitive reappraisal* and *expressive suppression*, each measured by five items. (Sample items: "When I'm faced with a stressful situation, I make myself think about it in a way that helps me stay calm" (reappraisal), and "I keep my emotions to myself" (suppression)). Responses are made on seven-point response scales running from 1(disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly.)

Participants also completed the 56-item Emotional Control Questionnaire (ECQ 2; Roger & Najarian, 1989), which assesses four types of emotional regulation*: behavioral control, aggression control, emotional inhibition*, and *rehearsal.* A sample behavioral control item is "Almost everything I do is carefully thought out". An example of an aggression control item is "If someone insults me I try to remain as calm as possible". A sample emotional inhibition item is "I seldom show how I feel about things." A rehearsal item used was "I often day dream about situations where I'm getting back at people". Each scale consists of 14 binary items (True; False) indicating whether the item accurately describes the respondent.

Results

Initial reliability analyses revealed Cronbach alpha values lower than .60 for four scales (negative femininity, need for affiliation, need for autonomy, and behavioral control). As a result, we did not use these scales in the analyses. Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, alpha coefficients, and correlations among the variables included in this investigation.

To address the two research questions at the heart of this investigation, we carried out a series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses (see Table 2). For each of the five conflict styles separately, we conducted a hierarchical analysis in which gender was entered on the first step. Gender was included because prior research has found that women and men score differently on measures of conflict style

Table 1

Correlations, Descriptive Statistics, and Internal Reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) for all Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Integrating	*.86*																
2. Obliging	.37***	*.82*															
3. Avoiding	-.12	.39***	*.86*														
4. Compromising	.62***	.52***	.29***	*.76*													
5. Dominating	.19**	-.12	-.10	.08	*.85*												
6. Self-Concern	-.04	-.23***	-.09	-.10	.44***	*.64*											
7. Other-Concern	.28***	.28***	.17**	.26***	-.19**	-.05	*.67*										
8. Self-Esteem	.29***	-.13*	-.26***	.02	.10	.10	-.03	*.88*									
9. Need to Achieve	.25***	-.03	-.13*	.09	.29***	.20**	.09	.25***	*.62*								
10. Need for Dominance	.17**	-.10	-.23***	.06	.58***	.30***	-.05	.17**	.49***	*.77*							
11. Narcissism	.03	-.27***	-.30***	-.15*	.54***	.36***	-.21***	.30***	.29***	.54***	*.72*						
12. Positive Femininity	.18**	.21***	.06	.19**	-.27***	-.21**	.27***	.05	.01	-.09	-.15*	*.74*					
13. Reappraisal	.36***	.31***	.07	.33***	.03	-.12	.19**	.25***	.25***	.13	.09	.16*	*.87*				
14. Suppression	-.10	.19**	.33***	.08	-.12	-.16*	-.06	-.26***	-.01	-.23***	-.22***	-.24***	.11	*.73*			
15. Rehearsal	-.25***	-.07	.12	-.16**	.20**	.27***	-.17**	-.33***	-.08	.14*	.15*	-.05	-.12	.03	*.73*		
16. Emotional Inhibition	-.14*	.21***	.44***	.08	-.11	-.09	.03	-.26***	-.08	-.25***	-.27***	-.30***	.06	.70***	.01	*.76*	
17. Aggression Control	.10	.42***	.41***	.26***	-.41***	-.40***	.30***	-.09	-.17**	-.35***	-.49***	.23***	.09	.23***	-.27***	.35***	*.75*
Mean	3.83	3.44	3.31	3.57	3.16	3.64	3.86	3.84	3.60	3.21	.36	3.95	4.88	3.60	.53	.47	.62
Standard Deviation	0.66	0.61	0.88	0.59	0.78	0.73	0.72	0.77	0.63	0.83	.21	0.54	1.21	1.28	.22	.23	.23
Response Scale	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	0-1	1-5	1-7	1-7	0-1	0-1	0-1

Note: Cronbach's alpha coefficients appear in the diagonal

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

(Chusmir & Mills, 1989; Korabik et al., 1993). On the second step, simple self-concern, simple other-concern, and an interaction term (created by standardizing simple self- and other-concern scores before multiplying them) were then entered. The interaction term was included because some prior investigations (e.g. Sorenson et al. 1999) have argued that the DCM's predictions about the joint effect of the two concerns imply the presence of an interaction between them. On the third step we entered additional measures of self-concern (self-esteem, need for achievement, need for dominance, and narcissism), other-concern (positive femininity), and measures of emotional regulation strategies (reappraisal, suppression, rehearsal, emotional inhibition, and aggression control).

Gender was significantly associated at Step 1 with only one conflict style (obliging), and when the Step 3 variables were entered it had no significant effects at all. Thus, gender effects are not considered further.

The first research question is whether simple self- and other-concern are associated with conflict styles as predicted by the DCM; Step 2 of these regression analyses most directly addresses this question. The addition of self-concern, other-concern, and the Self x Other interaction term significantly predicted each of the five conflict styles to varying degrees. Importantly, the Self x Other interaction was not significantly associated with any of the conflict styles; any relationship between simple self- and other-concern and conflict style can therefore be interpreted as "main effects". The dominating style was predicted most successfully (R^2 = .20). With regard to the model's specific assumptions regarding how each type of concern is associated with each style, the pattern is mixed. For dominating and obliging, the full pattern of predicted associations was found. For dominating, self-concern was significantly positively related, and other-concern was significantly negatively related. For obliging, the opposite pattern was found; self-concern was significantly negatively associated, and other-concern was significantly positively associated. For integrating, only the predicted positive association with other-concern was significant; there was no significant effect for self-concern. For avoiding, there was no support for the DCM; self-concern was unrelated, and other-concern was significantly related but in a direction opposite to prediction. (The compromising style is difficult to evaluate in terms of DCM predictions, since those choosing this style are said to be neither high nor low on self- and other-concern. The pattern of results found here for compromising most resembles that found for obliging.)

The second research question is whether additional measures of self-concern, other-concern, and emotion regulation explain additional variance in conflict styles beyond the simple measures. The third step of the analyses in Table 2 addresses this question. The entry of the additional variables produced a significant increase in R^2 for every conflict style, with the increase especially striking for the dominating and avoiding styles. Thus, the addition of variables outside the DCM markedly improved the predictability of all five conflict styles.

At Step 3, two categories of variables were entered: alternative forms of self- and other-concern, and measures of emotion regulation. Variables in both categories were significant predictors of conflict style, above and beyond the effects of self-concern and other-concern at Step 2.

The alternative self- and other-concern variables had their largest impact on a single conflict style; substantial and significant associations were found for narcissism and need for dominance in the analysis of the dominating style. In contrast, the emotion regulation variables had significant effects on every style other than dominating. Cognitive reappraisal was positively associated with integrating, obliging, and compromising; aggression control was positively associated with obliging and avoiding. Two other regulation variables (rehearsal and emotion inhibition) displayed an identical pattern—positively associated with avoiding and negatively associated with integrating. Thus, various forms of emotion regulation were substantially associated with conflict styles, above and beyond the effect of simple self- and other-concern.

Table 2

Regression Analyses Using Gender, Simple Self-Concern, Simple Other-Concern, and Additional Measures of Self-Concern, Other-Concern, and Emotion Regulation to Predict Conflict Styles

Predictors	Integrating	Dominating	Obliging	Avoiding	Compromising
Step 1					
Gender	-.04	.08	-.14*	-.07	-.12
R^2	.00	.00	.02*	.00	.01
Step 2					
Gender	-.04	.05	-.13*	-.05	-.11
Self-Concern	-.06	.39***	-.24***	-.09	-.13*
Other-Concern	.26***	-.18**	.25***	.17**	.26***
Self x Other	-.05	-.10	-.07	.09	.00
R^2	.06***	.20***	.13***	.03*	.09***
R^2 Change	.06***	.20***	.11***	.03*	.08***
Step 3					
Gender	-.05	.02	-.05	.03	-.06
Self-Concern	-.02	.16**	-.05	.08	.01
Other-Concern	.16*	-.08	.10	.07	.11
Self x Other	.00	-.07	-.07	.06	.01
Self-esteem	.08	-.09	-.12	-.10	-.08
N Achieve	.10	-.01	-.06	-.01	-.02
N Dominance	.13	.39***	.14	-.05	.21*
Narcissism	-.04	.23***	-.08	-.06	-.13
P. Femininity	.07	-.11	.13*	.10	.14
Reappraisal	.24***	.01	.25***	.06	.26***
Suppression	.02	-.05	.09	.04	.05
Rehearsal	-.19**	.01	.01	.18**	-.14*
Emotion Inhibition	-.16	.05	.04	.30***	-.01
Agg. Control	.02	-.08	.26***	.27***	.11
R^2	.25***	.47***	.28***	.32***	.19***
R^2 Change	.19***	.27***	.15***	.29***	.10***

N Achieve = Need for Achievement; N Dominance = Need for Dominance; P. Femininity = Positive Femininity; Agg. Control = Aggression Control

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

Discussion

This study provides strong support for the argument that constructs which fall outside of the typical DCM account can explain a significant amount of additional unique variation in conflict styles. This is especially true for the dominating and avoiding styles. The results also suggest that the DCM may not be as powerful an explanation for conflict styles as is often supposed.

Integrating

The DCM offers an intriguing hypothesis: that collaboration is especially likely when both self-concern and other-concern are high. The notion that the same motive (self-concern) that produces a competitive, dominating style is also essential for collaboration is a pleasing, mildly non-intuitive narrative. The fact that this pattern did not appear in the present investigation is therefore noteworthy. Instead, only simple other-concern was associated with an integrative style. Why might we find this pattern when earlier research seemed to support the DCM?

One answer is that earlier research may have found more limited support for this pattern than is typically assumed. For example, the De Dreu et al. (2000) meta-analysis found that high levels of other-concern were associated with more problem solving and higher joint outcomes but only when self-concern was also high, a pattern consistent with the DCM account. However, this review limited itself to studies in which self- and other-concern were directly manipulated, such as through instruction or incentive. For example, one frequently used method for manipulating self-concern in those studies was to directly instruct participants to not yield to the other party until they were assured a certain minimum outcome. This "resistance to yielding" instruction is one way to conceive of self-concern, and probably applies to many situations in which a negotiator feels constraints (either internal or external) in "how far they can go" in settling a dispute.

On the other hand, in situations lacking such clear situational pressures, what effect does a more general valuing of self-outcomes have on behavior? Many investigations take such an approach by choosing not to manipulate self- and other-concern, and instead simply asking respondents to report on how they respond to conflicts—either in general, or with particular categories of people (e.g, co-worker, boss, significant other). In such investigations the DCM does not fare as well. For example, Sorenson et al. (1999) had participants complete the ROCI-II with regard to four hypothetical situations (e.g., a salesman pitching a product to you), thus providing a measure of conflict style for each scenario. In addition, for each scenario participants completed short measures of self-concern and other-concern. Regression analyses using self- and other-concern to predict conflict styles were then conducted. Although self-concern was significantly positively associated with the dominating style, it was significantly *negatively* correlated with the collaborative style. Similarly, Klusek-Wojciszke and Grodzicki (2018) had participants complete a measure of conflict style as well as the Self and Other Interest Inventory (Gerbasi & Prentice, 2013). Self-interest was significantly and positively related to the dominating style, but was not significantly associated with an integrating style.

The pattern found in this investigation is therefore consistent with these prior studies. The finding in each case is that self-concern, when measured rather than manipulated, does not contribute to an integrative style. This pattern is also consistent with earlier work by Janssen and Van de Vliert (1996) which found that other-concern was a stronger predictor of de-escalatory behavior and problem solving than was self-concern. Taken together, these findings suggest a real limitation on the DCM's ability to predict integrating responses. The fact that emotion regulation strategies *do* significantly predict such responses reinforces this view.

Dominating

This investigation provides support for the DCM's predictions concerning the dominating style; self-concern was significantly positively associated with this style, and other-concern was significantly negatively associated. However, entering additional self-concern measures on the third step of the regression analyses increased the model's R^2 substantially. In fact, the addition of these variables more than doubled the amount of variance accounted for—from .20 to .47. Clearly the measure of simple self-concern did not capture some important influences on the dominating style.

Specifically, forms of self-concern that emphasize an outsized sense of self (narcissism) and a need to dominate others (need for dominance) were significantly and positively associated with the dominating style. This pattern therefore suggests that the dominating style results from more than just a desire to achieve goals beneficial to the self; it springs also from motives to prevail even (or especially) at the expense of the other.

Obliging

This investigation also found support for the DCM's predictions concerning the obliging style; self-concern was significantly negatively associated with this style, and other-concern was significantly positively associated. Again, however, entering the additional predictor variables on the third step produced a significant increase in R^2. Aggression control displayed the strongest association with obliging; a greater tendency to tamp down impulsive hostile responses was associated with a more obliging style. The use of cognitive reappraisal strategies displayed a similar pattern. Thus, using the obliging style seems to be as strongly associated with constructive emotional regulation skills as it is with simple concern for self- and other-outcomes.

Avoiding

In contrast to the results described thus far, these analyses provide no support for the DCM's predictions regarding the avoiding style. This style is said to result when concern is low for both self-outcomes other-outcomes; simply avoiding the conflict makes sense when neither concern is operating. Contrary to prediction, in this investigation self-concern was not significantly associated with avoiding, and other-concern was actually significantly *positively* related. This is consistent with the complete absence of support for the DCM's predictions regarding avoidance previously reported by Sorenson et al. (1999) and Klusek-Wojciszke and Grodzicki (2018).

If not self- and other-concern, what accounts for variability in the use of the avoiding style? One answer seems to be emotion regulation skills. One of the largest increases in R^2 in this investigation (from .03 to .32) was found when emotion regulation variables were added to the model. Aggression control, rehearsal, and emotion inhibition were all significantly and positively related to greater avoidance. That is, respondents were more likely to endorse the avoidance style if they are likely to inhibit emotional displays—especially hostile ones—and when they are prone to ruminate about conflict episodes.

How Well Does the DCM Explain the Ways in Which People Respond During Conflict?

A reasonable conclusion to draw from this investigation is that the DCM provides a partial explanation for the use of conflict styles, but one limited by its failure to consider other factors, especially the use of emotion regulation strategies. As noted by Bell and Song (2005), the DCM suggests a view of humans as largely rational decision-makers. The choices we make when engaged in negotiations and other

here, such as the effects that dispositional narcissism and need for dominance had on the use of the dominating style. The problem, in a nutshell, is simple: how would one manipulate "state" levels of narcissism?

It seems likely to us that the expression of any conflict style is interactively determined by both states and traits. Pre-existing personality traits, values, and motives can make individuals prone to employ certain kinds of styles; for example, our results suggest that someone low on trait narcissism may in general be less likely to employ a dominating style. Similarly, characteristics of the situation (e.g., status) may have direct effects on conflict style. Those occupying a lower status role may in general be more prone to display an obliging style (e.g., Rahim, 1983). Importantly, however, states and traits are also likely to have interactive effects on the expression of conflict styles.

One possibility is that the characteristics present in a situation may sometimes be of such potency as to render traits relatively unimportant. For example, all the employees of a powerful and volatile boss may display similar conflict styles, such as obliging, regardless of the variety that exists in their dispositional conflict style preferences. Alternately, interactions with peers of equal status may allow individual preferences in conflict style to more fully manifest themselves. The stronger the situational forces, the less powerful trait characteristics are likely to be; the weaker the situational forces, the more "room" there will be for dispositional factors to shape behavior. Research testing such possibilities would have much value.

It is also possible that personality traits, values, and motives influence conflict responses in ways that are more indirect. In particular, individual predispositions may come into play at the earliest stages of a conflict episode, shaping the way in which the individual interprets the situation, with implications for downstream behavior. For example, someone high in a need for dominance may see another's relatively neutral behavior in a very different way than someone low on such a need. The higher amount of dominating behavior later displayed by the former individual may therefore result from an initially greater perception of the "threat" the other person poses. In essence, personality traits may cause two individuals to experience an "objectively" identical situation in two subjectively different ways.

Conclusion

The DCM provides a useful way to conceive of the forces behind one's choice of conflict style, but not a perfect one. Evidence for the model's core tenets is weaker than one might imagine, and as the current study indicates, factors outside the model play a substantial role in determining conflict style. Efforts to incorporate additional constructs such as these can make the DCM more powerful and comprehensive theoretical account of conflict styles.

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Appendix

Items Making Up the Simple Self- and Other-Concern Scales

Simple Self-Concern

When I am in some kind of negotiation with another person, it is important to me that I am satisfied with the eventual outcome.
During disagreements, it is important to me to come out on top.
During negotiations, it is not all that important that I get the best deal possible. (Reverse)
During a disagreement with another person, I am not all that concerned with winning the battle. (Reverse)

Simple Other-Concern

When I am in some kind of negotiation with another person, it is important to me that the other person be satisfied with the outcome.
When I am in a disagreement with another person, it bothers me if that person's feelings get hurt.
When I am negotiating with another person, it doesn't matter to me whether or not they get a fair value. (Reverse)
During a disagreement with another person, I'm not concerned about meeting their needs. (Reverse)