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Intergenerational Conflict Management in Immigrant Arab Canadian Families

Sarah Rasmi[1], Timothy M. Daly[2], and Susan S. Chuang[3]

Abstract

The present studies bridged across the conflict management and family psychology literatures to increase our understanding of intergenerational conflict within the context of immigrant Arab Canadian families. Using a quantitative approach, Study 1 (n = 71) found that although emerging adults reported relatively low levels of intergenerational conflict, honor-related conflict issues were salient to this population and not captured by the Intergenerational Conflict Inventory. Study 1 also found that emerging adults' preferred conflict handling style was associated with overall levels of intergenerational conflict as well as cultural orientation and adaptation. Three conflict handling styles (avoid, integrate, and dominate) were associated with increased intergenerational conflict, whereas oblige was associated with decreased intergenerational conflict. These results were confirmed using a qualitative approach in Study 2 (n = 12). Importantly, Study 2 also suggested that oblige took two distinct forms in this population, as some emerging adults actually obliged their parents in the conflict situation, whereas others stated that they would but covertly disobeyed their parents.

Keywords

immigration/migration, acculturation, family/child rearing

Conflict is defined as "an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities," including the self, other individuals, groups, and/or organizations (Rahim, 2002, p. 207). Conflict has been studied extensively in several fields including psychology and conflict management. However, the areas of inquiry have differed. Developmental and family psychologists have tended to focus on intergenerational conflict, which refers to the interpersonal conflict that occurs between parents and their children (Laursen, Coy, & Collins, 1998). In contrast, the majority of conflict management research has been conducted with an organizational focus (e.g., Beersma & De Dreu, 1999). These two contexts share many similarities: Family and work groups each consist of multiple members with an established hierarchy, superordinate goals, and social inputs from all members. Yet, these areas of scholarship have developed largely independently, conflict management research has rarely studied the

[1]American University in Dubai, UAE
[2]United Arab Emirates University, UAE
[3]University of Guelph, Canada

Corresponding Author:
Sarah Rasmi, School of Arts and Sciences, American University in Dubai, P.O. Box 28282, Dubai, UAE.
Email: srasmi@aud.edu

family context, and developmental psychologists have mostly overlooked the well-established theories of conflict management. The present studies are the first to bridge across these two bodies of literature to give us a more comprehensive perspective of family dynamics and relationships within the context of immigrant Arab families in Canada.

There has been an increase in attention on Arab families in North America following the recent events of 9/11 and the Arab Spring. However, little is known about the Arab Canadian population (Rasmi, Chuang, & Safdar, 2012) despite the fact that it is large and growing (Statistics Canada, 2010). Youth (i.e., adolescent and emerging adult) and family issues should be at the forefront of this agenda as Arab Canadians are younger and more likely to live with family members than the general Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2007). Examining the family dynamics and relationships of immigrant Arabs in Canada is particularly important given the dissimilarity between Arab and European Canadian culture and its implications for the family.

Arab culture values interdependence and hierarchy, whereas European Canadian culture emphasizes independence and egalitarianism (S. H. Schwartz, 2006). As a function of these cultural differences, Arab and European Canadian culture also diverge in their family structure and socialization goals. In Arab culture, the family is the most important unit of society (Britto & Amer, 2007). Family structure in Arab societies consists of powerful parents and subservient children; fathers are the leaders of their families (Kazarian, 2005) and mothers are the primary caregivers and disciplinarians (Hattar-Pollara & Meleis, 1995). Arab children are socialized to be obedient, deferent, and interdependent (Kayyali, 2006). In contrast, family structure in Western countries such as Canada is more fluid; women are more involved in the labor force (Marsiglio, Day, & Lamb, 2000) and family relationships are less hierarchical. European Canadian children are taught to actively experiment with and question their environment and encouraged to learn independence and self-care (Hofstede, 2001). These normative culture differences may create additional issues and opportunities for immigrant Arab adolescents and emerging adults and parents to experience intergenerational conflict.

Honor is an important concept in Mediterranean and other collectivist cultures that centers on reputation (individual and familial), social relationships, and adherence to gender-based honor codes (Rodriguez Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2002). Although most of this work has focused on European countries, honor and reputation are also salient components of Arab culture (Uskul, Oyserman, & Schwarz, 2010; Wikan, 1984). In Arab society, people who conform bring honor to their families whereas those who fail to conform bring shame (Hattar-Pollara & Meleis, 1995). Females specifically may dishonor their families by not submitting to male dominance (Glazer & Ras, 1994), engaging in premarital sex, flirting, or dressing provocatively (Abu-Ras, 2007). Indeed, sexual purity is the cornerstone of feminine honor codes in societies that strongly value honor (Cihangir, 2013). Although romantic relationships and clothing choices have been identified as sources of conflict in parent–youth (adolescent and emerging adult) relationships, research has typically viewed them as personal or safety issues. Given their association with honor and its heightened importance in Arab society, it is possible that these issues will lead to conflict in immigrant Arab families in Canada.

Intergenerational Conflict

Intergenerational conflict represents one of the major challenges facing families of adolescents and emerging adults and takes on special significance for immigrants. In adolescence, youth undergo numerous developmental changes to their identity, cognitive capabilities, and peer relationships (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). In emerging adulthood, youth learn to self-regulate and develop their own belief and value systems (Arnett, 2007). In Western families, these changes are typically accompanied by adolescents' greater expectations for autonomy, which can lead to disruptions in the family system (Fuligni, 1998). Western parents usually resolve these

disruptions by increasing youth involvement in the decision-making process, reasoning with youth, or by granting them autonomy (Sorkhabi, 2010). This process is less clear in immigrant families as the literature lacks consensus on the extent of conflict in these populations. For example, it has been argued that immigrant youth expect autonomy at an earlier age than when their parents are willing to grant it which can lead to intergenerational conflict (e.g., Kwak, 2003). However, immigrant youth and their families tend to have similar views on issues such as peer relations, academic achievement, sexual activity, and neolocality, and thus experience less conflict (Kağitçibaşi, 2003). The present studies examined the extent to which intergenerational conflict occurs in immigrant Arab families in Canada using a mixed-methods approach.

To date, the intergenerational conflict literature has focused on conflict frequency and intensity (for review, see Laursen et al., 1998), as well as the types of issues over which parents and youth disagree (e.g., Yau & Smetana, 2003). Many scholars have examined intergenerational conflict using the domain specificity perspective (Turiel, 2002), which proposes that individuals' varied social experiences lead to the development of different domains of social knowledge. Three domains organize the schemata that individuals develop to navigate their social worlds: moral (prescribes rules and behaviors intended to preserve the rights and welfare of others, while also maintaining justice and fairness), social conventional (norms that guide social interaction, and uphold social structure, conventions, and institutions), and personal (issues of preference and choice, including privacy, activities, and friendships). Parents and youth have also been found to experience conflict around prudential (issues relating to the health, safety, and comfort of the self as opposed to others), pragmatic (practical issues with long-term consequences), and multifaceted issues (issues that overlap domains; Smetana, Crean, & Campione-Barr, 2005).

Other research has focused on specific areas of conflict in immigrant families. For example, Chung (2001) identified dating and marriage (e.g., whom to marry), education and career (e.g., what to major in college), and family expectations (e.g., how much time to spend with family) as issues that are salient and potentially conflict-laden within Asian American families. These issues are likely relevant to immigrant Arab families, given that Asian and Arab familial cultures share a number of similarities, including a collectivistic orientation toward the family and expectations that children will be diligent and obedient to the group (Hofstede, 2001). However, there are important cultural nuances that may relate to intergenerational conflict issues within these ethnocultural groups. For example, although both cultures are collectivistic, Asian collectivism is Confucian-based and emphasizes modesty and humility, whereas Arab collectivism is honor-based, with an emphasis on reputation (Uskul et al., 2010). Thus, intergenerational conflict in immigrant Arab families in Canada may also include issues around maintaining individual and familial honor and reputation. To extend our understanding of the nature of conflict in immigrant Arab families, the present studies evaluated the relevance of social domain theory and Chung's conflict domains and explored additional issues.

Some studies have examined the outcomes of intergenerational conflict. For example, Smetana and Gaines (1999) identified five styles of conflict resolution from the youth's point of view: parent concedes, youth concedes, punishment, compromise, and no resolution. These resolution strategies are informative but tend to be *result* or outcome-focused with little attention to the *process* of how conflicts were managed. In contrast, the conflict management literature has extensively examined these processes. The present studies incorporated a well-established conflict management theory to provide greater insight into the intergenerational conflict process for immigrant Arab families in Canada.

Although the majority of intergenerational conflict research has examined parent–adolescent dyads, the present studies focus on emerging adults. Following Arnett (2007), we defined emerging adults as those youth who are between the ages of 18 and 29 years old. Historically, most intergenerational conflict research has been biased toward adolescents because it has been well documented that myriad developmental changes may give way to normative intergenerational

conflict (for review, see Steinberg, 2001). Moreover, a large-scale meta-analysis demonstrated that intergenerational conflict tends to dissipate as youth near the end of adolescence (Laursen et al., 1998). This decrease may be due, in part, to a significant life event that commonly occurs toward the end of adolescence: moving out of the family home. Arnett has also underscored that emerging adulthood, unlike adolescence, has many different developmental trajectories and that cultural considerations should be made. For example, it is common in some cultures for youth to reside in the family home until marriage, which can occur well beyond adolescence (Lim, Yeh, Liang, Lau, & McCabe, 2009). As a result, challenges that were once thought to be salient to adolescents may be relevant to emerging adults as well, particularly those from different ethnocultural backgrounds. For this reason, many recent studies examining intergenerational conflict in immigrant families has focused on emerging adult populations (e.g., Ahn, Kim, & Park, 2008; Chung, 2001; Tsai-Chae & Nagata, 2008).

Conflict Management

Conflict management styles are key concepts used to characterize how people respond within conflict situations. The idea that conflict management choices are guided by a concern for personal outcomes balanced with a concern for the other party's outcomes has informed several conflict management frameworks. Rahim's (1983) dual-concerns model is the most widely used and has the benefit of using parsimonious nomenclature. This model has been used to examine conflict management in many different contexts including, but not limited to, the workplace (Van de Vliert & Hordick, 1989), family businesses (Sorenson, 1999), marriage (Greeff & De Bruyne, 2000), classroom management (Morris-Rothschild & Brassard, 2006), and at-risk adolescents (Colsman & Wulfert, 2002). According to Rahim, two dimensions (concern for self and concern for other) are combined to form five conflict handling styles (oblige, avoid, dominate, integrate, and compromise). Briefly, the oblige style (low self-concern, high other concern) is associated with giving in to the other party's views or demands. The avoid style (low self, low other) emphasizes the prevention of conflict by ignoring potential or actual contentious situations, and postponement of conflict situations. The dominate style (high self, low other) is characterized by attempts to satisfy one's own concerns at the expense of the other often through the use of assertive or sometimes aggressive tactics. However, the integrate style (high self, high other) is characterized by attempts to fully satisfy each party's concerns by finding a win–win solution, often through cooperation and information sharing. Finally, compromise is similar to integrate, however with only a moderate concern for self and a moderate concern for other and is associated with attempting to partially satisfy each party's concerns by finding a middle-ground solution (for review, see Rahim, 2002). Although compromise and integrate are theoretically distinct, many studies—particularly with youth and emerging adult samples (Colsman & Wulfert, 2002; Daly, Lee, Soutar, & Rasmi, 2010)—have found that participants do not adequately differentiate between these styles and limit the focus instead on oblige, dominate, integrate, and avoid. In line with previous research, the present studies will examine oblige, dominate, integrate, and avoid, but not compromise.

Despite being developed within a Western context, Rahim's (1983) dual-concerns model has been validated in Arab (Elsayed-Elkhouly & Buda, 1996), East Asian (e.g., Onishi & Bliss, 2006), European (e.g., Rahim et al., 2002), and Southeast Asian countries (e.g., Croucher, Holody, Hicks, Oommen, & DeMaris, 2011). Some research has argued that although Rahim's model is cross-culturally valid, individualists and collectivists handle conflict differently. Specifically, individualists have been found to dominate whereas collectivists prefer the less confrontational styles (e.g., Komarraju, Dollinger, & Lovell, 2008). Far fewer studies have examined conflict management in immigrant and other bicultural populations broadly (Kim-Jo, Benet-Martinez, & Ozer, 2010) or in the context of families. Some studies examining

intergenerational conflict management have not incorporated the dual-concerns model, despite the fact that it is the most influential and widely used framework (e.g., Haar & Krahé, 1999; Phinney, Kim-Jo, Osorio, & Vilhjalmsdottir, 2005; Sugimura, Yamazaki, Phinney, & Takeo, 2009). The present studies addressed these gaps by examining conflict management in the context of immigrant Arab families in Canada.

Intergenerational Conflict Management in Immigrant Arab Families

Although no studies have examined the preferred conflict handling style of Arab or immigrant Arab emerging adults, it is likely that both populations will prefer to oblige the parent and reject the use of dominate due to Arab family relationships and dynamics. Specifically, Arab families consist of stratified personal relationships with parents expecting youth to be diligent and obedient. Arab youth are receptive to this dynamic, as they tend to submit to their parents' wishes and internalize their worldview (Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie, & Farah, 2006; Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie, Farah, Sakhleh, et al., 2006).

In contrast to Arabs in the Middle East, immigrant Arab youth in Canada are exposed to a society with considerably different cultural norms and values. As immigrant Arabs in Canada undergo their acculturation process, they may become more or less oriented to their heritage and/or settlement cultures, which can have implications for youth and parents' preferred conflict handling style. For example, immigrant Arab youth who are exposed to and endorse the Western ideals of egalitarianism, authoritativeness, and personal freedom may start to emphasize concern for self over concern for other. Parents who continue to maintain strong beliefs about paternalistic authority and group priorities will expect their children to emphasize concern for other. These mismatched conflict management styles may result in more intense or escalated conflict, making it important to consider intergenerational conflict management in the context of the family's cultural orientations. Youth and parents who are more oriented to the European Canadian culture are expected to prefer the Western ideal of integrating with the other, whereas those who are more oriented to the Arab culture are expected to prefer oblige and dominate, respectively.

Differences in youth and parent orientation to the heritage and settlement culture may not only affect perspectives of conflict management styles but could also relate to individual and familial adaptation. There is a large body of literature examining acculturation gaps between parents and their children (for review, see Tardif-Williams & Fisher, 2009; Telzer, 2010). Most of this work has been predicated on the assumption that as youth become socialized in the settlement society, they become more oriented to that culture and begin to internalize its values (Kwak, 2003). As their parents were socialized in the heritage society, this shift is less likely to occur and when it does, it happens at a slower rate (Costigan & Dokis, 2006). These gaps, in turn, may weaken the bond between parents and their children (Choi, He, & Harachi, 2008) leading to heightened intergenerational conflict (Tardif & Geva, 2006), identity conflict (Stuart & Ward, 2011), and difficulty navigating the settlement society (S. J. Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006). Thus, the present studies also examined how emerging adults' preferred conflict handling styles relate to individual and familial adaptation.

The Present Studies

We examined the extent and nature of intergenerational conflict in immigrant Arab families, identified emerging adults' preferred conflict handling styles across different domains of conflict and how these styles relate to cultural orientation as well as individual and familial adaptation. Study 1 explored these issues with a quantitative survey and Study 2 unpacked them using a qualitative methodology.

Although this study was exploratory, we approached this investigation with several expectations. First, emerging adults were expected to prefer to oblige when engaged in conflict with their parents, as it is most consistent with Arab cultural norms. We also expected this preference to be stronger for families in which the emerging adult and/or parent was perceived to be strongly oriented to the Arab culture. Second, because oblige is culturally normative, we expected that emerging adults who preferred this conflict handling style would report the best familial outcomes (i.e., decreased intergenerational conflict and stronger parent–emerging adult relationships). Similarly, because dominate goes against Arab cultural norms, we expected that emerging adults who preferred this conflict handling style would report poorer familial outcomes (i.e., increased intergenerational conflict and weaker parent–emerging adult relationships). We also expected these emerging adults to report heightened identity conflict, due to the difficulty reconciling their heritage cultural norms with their preferred conflict handling style. Finally, we expected that emerging adults who preferred to integrate would report better sociocultural adaptation, as this style reflects the Western ideal.

Study 1

Method

Participants and procedures. Seventy-one immigrant Arab emerging adults (53.5% female) who migrated to Canada with their parents participated in this study. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 28 years old and had lived in Canada for an average of 10.28 years (SD = 7.12). Most participants indicated that they were either Muslim (80.0%) or Christian (15.7%). Participants were recruited through university associations, settlement agencies and service providers, community organizations, and snowball sampling and entered into a draw to win one of the two CAN$250 cash prizes.

Measures. Participants completed an online survey that was administered in English and included demographic questions, as well as measures of intergenerational conflict and conflict management (completed separately for mothers and fathers), cultural orientation (perceptions of mothers and fathers were rated independently), ethnocultural identity conflict, sociocultural adaptation, and parent–emerging adult relationships (completed separately for mothers and fathers). Participants provided independent ratings of intergenerational conflict, conflict management, and parent–emerging adult relationships with mothers and fathers and these were analyzed separately.

Intergenerational conflict. An adapted version of Chung's (2001) 24-item Intergenerational Conflict Inventory (ICI) was used to measure intergenerational conflict. An item about religiosity replaced the item about time spent practicing music. An additional item about staying overnight with a dating partner was also added to this measure. Items included three conflict categories: (a) family expectations (e.g., "Your desire for greater independence and autonomy"), (b) education and career (e.g., "How much time to spend on studying"), and (c) dating and marriage (e.g., "When to begin dating"). Items were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (*not a lot of conflict over this issue*) to 6 (*a lot of conflict over this issue*) for conflict with both their fathers and mothers (αs = .92). To identify additional conflict issues, participants were able to indicate up to three other issues around which they have recently experienced conflict with their mother and/or father. Previous research has found the ICI to be a reliable and valid measure (for details, see Chung, 2001; see also Ahn et al., 2008). A total score for Intergenerational Conflict with father and mother was calculated by averaging the scores for each conflict issue. Higher scores reflected increased intergenerational conflict. Detailed information regarding the descriptives for each conflict issue is available upon request from the first author.

Conflict handling style. Participants indicated their conflict style for each of the intergenerational conflict issues by selecting one of the four statements adapted from Daly et al.'s (2010) Conflict Handling Best Worst Scale (CHBWS). The CHBWS is forced-choice measure of conflict management style preference, which has demonstrated strong convergent and predictive validity (Daly et al., 2010). Thus, the four conflict statements used in this instrument can be considered representative of each conflict style: "I try to avoid conflict" (avoid), "I look for the best outcomes for both of us" (integrate), "I try to win my position" (dominate), or "I try to give my mother/father what s/he wants" (oblige). A score for each style was derived from calculating the proportion in which it was selected by each participant across all conflict issues.

Arab and Canadian culture orientation. Birman, Trickett, and Vinokurov's (2002) 44-item Language, Identity, and Behavioral Acculturation (LIB) scale was used to measure Arab and Canadian culture orientation. The LIB contains items relating to language (e.g., "How would you rate your ability to speak English/Arabic at school/work?"), cultural identity (e.g., "I have a strong sense of being Arab/Canadian"), and cultural participation (e.g., "How much do you read Arabic/Canadian books, newspapers, or magazines?") that were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 4 (*very much*). The LIB was originally developed for use with former Soviet refugees, but it is designed to be easily adaptable to other sample populations. For this study, the reference cultures were changed from "Russian" to "Arab" and "American" to "Canadian." Previous research has used the LIB with diverse samples, and has generally reported excellent subscale reliability (e.g., Birman, 2006a; Ho & Birman, 2010).

Each item was rated three times, indicating participants' personal response and their perception of both their father and mother. Cronbach's alpha ranged from .80 to .92. Arab and Canadian orientation scores (Emerging Adult, Perceived Father, Perceived Mother) were obtained by averaging the respective scale items. Higher values reflected stronger orientation to Arab and Canadian culture. As we were interested in the perceived gap between parents' and emerging adults' cultural orientation, we computed a gap score by calculating the product of emerging adult and mother/father cultural orientation (for a more detailed discussion of how acculturation gap scores are calculated using the interaction method, see Birman, 2006b).

Ethnocultural identity conflict. Ward, Stuart, and Kus's (2011) 20-item Ethnocultural Identity Conflict Scale (EICS) was used to measure ethnocultural identity conflict, which refers to the internal conflict that may result when individuals have a strong attachment to multiple identities that have conflicting norms (e.g., Ward, 2008). Sample items include "I am confused about the different demands placed on me by my family and other people" and "I find it hard to maintain my cultural values in everyday life." Participants rated each item on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Previous research with diverse samples suggests that the EICS is a reliable and valid measure (for details, see Stuart & Ward, 2011; Ward, 2008). Cronbach's alpha was .93. A total score for ethnocultural identity conflict was obtained by averaging the scale items (negatively worded items were first reverse-coded), with higher scores representing more ethnocultural identity conflict.

Sociocultural adaptation. Ward and Kennedy's (1999) Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) was used to measure the level of difficulties that the immigrant emerging adults in this study experienced in their settlement society. The SCAS is a flexible scale that is easily modified, so we selected 21 items that we thought would best reflect the challenges of immigrant Arab emerging adults in Canada. Sample items included "Getting used to the local food" and "Making friends." Participants rated each item on a scale ranging from 1 (*no difficulty*) to 5 (*extreme difficulty*). The SCAS is a widely used and well-established measure of sociocultural adaptation that is both reliable and valid (for psychometric properties established across multiple studies and designs, see

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics.

	M (*SD*)		
	Mother	Father	Emerging adult
Conflict	2.32 (1.06)	2.24 (1.06)	—
Family expectations	2.44 (1.14)	2.39 (1.19)	—
Education and career	2.25 (1.36)	2.19 (1.42)	—
Dating and marriage	1.94 (1.46)	1.89 (1.48)	—
Conflict handling styles			
Avoid	0.10 (0.15)	0.09 (0.15)	—
Integrate	0.04 (0.09)	0.05 (0.10)	—
Dominate	0.12 (0.19)	0.12 (0.19)	—
Oblige	0.43 (0.34)	0.42 (0.35)	—
Cultural orientation			
Arab	**3.19[a] (0.45)**	**3.70[b] (0.42)**	**3.18[a] (0.50)**
Canadian	**2.54[a] (0.70)**	**2.73[b] (0.71)**	**3.33[c] (0.44)**
Cultural orientation discrepancy			
Arab	**−0.03 (0.28)**	**0.03 (0.27)**	—
Canadian	**0.08 (0.37)**	**0.12 (0.38)**	—
Individual and familial adaptation			
Ethnocultural identity conflict	—	—	2.46 (0.93)
Sociocultural adaptation	—	—	1.71 (0.45)
Parent–emerging adult relationship	**96.88[a] (16.76)**	**90.62[b] (21.05)**	—

Note. Significant differences are bolded and specific differences are denoted by superscripts.

Ward & Kennedy, 1999). Cronbach's alpha was .77. Scores were reverse-coded so that higher scores indicated better sociocultural adaptation.

Parent–emerging adult relationships. Armsden and Greenberg's (1987) 25-item revised Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) was used to measure parent–emerging adult relationships. Items reflected parental trust (e.g., "My mother/father accepts me as I am"), communication (e.g., "My mother/father helps me to understand myself better"), and alienation (e.g., "I don't get much attention from my mother/father") and were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (*almost never or never true*) to 5 (*almost always or always true*) for mothers and fathers. The IPPA is a well-established and extensively used measure. Although developed and validated with 16 to 20 year olds, it has been used with college-attending youth of immigrant backgrounds (e.g., Han & Lee, 2011; Ying, Lee, & Tsai, 2007). These studies reported high internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha was .92. A total score for Mother–Emerging Adult Relationship and Father–Emerging Adult Relationship was computed by summing the individual item scores for all three subscales (negatively worded items were reverse-coded first). Higher scores reflected better mother– and father–emerging adult relationships.

Results

The extent and nature of intergenerational conflict. Descriptive statistics for the study variables are presented in Table 1. Immigrant Arab emerging adults in Canada did not report much intergenerational conflict, as conflict item scores ranged from a mean of 1.00 (*SD* = 1.23) to 2.97 (*SD* = 1.90).[1] Participants were asked to identify conflict issues that were not captured in Chung's (2001) scale in an open-ended questionnaire. The issues indicated by emerging adults in this

section related to honor and reputation, including curfew and going out ($n = 6$), choice of friends ($n = 3$), being allowed to sleepover at a same-gender friend's house ($n = 3$), marriage expectations including when to marry and choosing to marry someone from a different country ($n = 2$), the degree to which they practice their religion ($n = 2$), having different beliefs and ideologies ($n = 2$), and choice in clothing ($n = 1$).

To examine the possible need for inclusion of control variables, correlations between three demographic variables (age, gender, and years in Canada) and all study variables were examined. Years in Canada was significantly correlated with emerging adults' Canadian orientation ($r = .41$, $p < .001$) and Arab orientation ($r = -.29$, $p < .001$), indicating that the longer emerging adults resided in Canada, the more oriented toward Canadian culture and less oriented toward Arab culture they became. Furthermore, gender was significantly correlated with integrate (rs = −.34, −.33, ps = .004 for mothers and fathers, respectively) and oblige (rs = .28, .29, ps = .017, .014 for mothers and fathers, respectively), with females more likely to integrate and less likely to oblige both parents than males. Therefore, years in Canada was entered as a control variable into analyses including emerging adults' cultural orientation, whereas gender was entered as a control variable into analyses including preferred conflict handling styles.

A 2 (Parent Gender) × 3 (Conflict Domain) repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted to determine differences in perceived conflict across conflict domains. Significant main effects were found for parent, $F(1, 69) = 4.31$, $p = .042$, $\eta^2 = .06$ and conflict domain, $F(2, 68) = 8.04$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .19$. Participants reported significantly less conflict with their fathers overall as compared with their mothers. Furthermore, participants reported significantly less conflict around dating and marriage as compared with family expectations, neither of which differed significantly from education and career issues.

Emerging adults' preferred conflict handling style. Consistent with our expectations, emerging adults preferred to oblige their mothers (43%) and fathers (42%) in almost half of all conflict situations, compared with dominate (12% for mothers and fathers), avoid (10% for mothers, 9% for fathers), and integrate (4% for mothers, 5% for fathers).

To examine emerging adults' preferred conflict handling styles across different conflict domains with both parents, we conducted a 2 (Parent) × 3 (Conflict Domain) × 4 (Conflict Handling Style) repeated-measures ANOVA. The emerging adult's gender was included as a covariate. Significant main effects were found for conflict domain (see above) and conflict handling style, $F(3, 65) = 8.17$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .27$. As found previously, participants preferred to oblige their parents significantly more than they preferred to avoid, $t(67) = 6.55$; integrate, $t(67) = 8.28$; or dominate, $t(67) = 5.77$, all $ps < .001$, their parents in a conflict situation. Emerging adults also preferred to dominate their parents more than they preferred to integrate with them in a conflict situation, $t(67) = -2.63$, $p = .011$. Significant two-way interaction effects were also found for Conflict Handling Style × Emerging Adult Gender, $F(3, 65) = 3.91$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2 = .15$, as well as Conflict Handling Style × Conflict Domain, $F(6, 62) = 4.07$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .28$. Males ($M = 0.53$, $SD = 0.36$) preferred to oblige their parents more than females ($M = 0.34$, $SD = 0.30$), $F(1, 69) = 6.25$, $p = .015$. Females ($M = 0.08$, $SD = 0.11$) preferred to integrate with their parents more than males ($M = 0.01$, $SD = 0.03$), $F(1, 69) = 9.73$, $p = .003$.

To further explore the Conflict Handling Style × Conflict Domain Interaction, we conducted a series of paired comparisons. Given that parent gender was not found to be significant, we aggregated Mother and Father Conflict × Domain Scores by averaging them together. Results indicated that emerging adults were significantly more likely to prefer the avoid style when dealing with education and career issues ($M = 0.15$, $SD = 0.23$) as compared to either family expectations, $M = 0.05$, $SD = 0.13$, $t(70) = -3.78$, $p < .001$, or dating and marriage issues, $M = 0.06$, $SD = 0.18$, $t(70) = 2.97$, $p = .004$. Furthermore, emerging adults were significantly less likely to oblige their parents when dealing with dating and marriage issues ($M = 0.34$, $SD = 0.41$) as

Table 2. Relations Between Youth's Preferred Conflict Handling Style and Individual and Familial Adaptation.

Conflict handling style	Canadian orientation			Canadian orientation discrepancy		Arab orientation			Arab orientation discrepancy		IC		P-EA relationship		EIC	SCAS
	M	F	EA	M	F	M	F	EA	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Mother																
Avoid	−.10	−.04	.22†	−.12	−.12	.12	.17	−.07	−.04	−.16	.37**	.15	−.30*	−.26*	.02	.06
Integrate	−.13	−.10	.03	−.05	−.07	.01	.04	−.19	.00	−.06	.33**	.24†	−.31*	−.14	.16	.21
Dominate	−.15	−.15	−.11	−.12	.10	−.25*	−.09	.14	−.35**	−.29*	.52***	.53***	−.27*	−.19	.39***	.14
Oblige	−.08	−.09	−.14	.06	.12	−.16	−.14	.02	.24*	.29*	−.27*	−.12	.17	.10	−.15	.05
Father																
Avoid	−.09	−.01	.22†	−.17	−.15	.13	.16	−.05	.00	−.13	.27*	.15	−.20	−.19	−.04	.07
Integrate	−.10	−.11	.03	−.02	−.09	.00	.10	−.11	−.03	−.09	.33**	.39***	−.27*	−.20	.24*	.27*
Dominate	−.06	−.10	−.06	.05	.03	−.20	−.11	.14	−.33**	−.28*	.47***	.58***	−.21†	−.22†	.38***	.13
Oblige	−.14	−.11	−.19	.10	.18	−.20	−.16	.05	.22	.27*	−.26*	−.14	.18	.22†	−.17	.02

Note. IC = Intergenerational Conflict; P-EA Relationship = Parent–Emerging Adult Relationship; EIC = Ethnocultural Identity Conflict; SCAS = Sociocultural Adaptation; M = Mother; F = Father; EA = Emerging Adult.
†$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

compared to either family expectations, $M = 0.47$, $SD = 0.35$, $t(69) = 3.73$, $p < .001$, or education and career issues, $M = 0.42$, $SD = 0.39$; $t(69) = 2.33$, $p = .023$.

Heritage and settlement culture orientation. To examine the relations between emerging adults' preferred conflict handling style and heritage and settlement culture orientation (emerging adult and perceived parent), perceived parent–emerging adult Arab and Canadian orientation discrepancy, parent–emerging adult relationships, and intergenerational conflict, Pearson's *r* correlation coefficients were examined (see Table 2). As expected, participants who perceived mothers to be more oriented toward the Arab culture were less likely to dominate. This association was directionally, but not statistically, supported for fathers. Emerging adults' own Canadian orientation was positively associated with avoid (mothers and fathers), although this relation was only marginally significant.

Results also indicated that perceived parent–emerging adult differences in Arab cultural orientation were associated with preferred conflict handling style. Specifically, emerging adults who perceived larger Arab orientation discrepancies with their mothers and fathers were less likely to dominate (rs = −.35, −.28, ps = .003, .02, respectively) and more likely to oblige their parents (rs = .24, .27, ps = .043, .021).

Individual and familial adaptation. Correlations between emerging adults' preferred conflict handling style and adaptation were examined (see Table 2). With respect to individual adaptation, ethnocultural identity conflict was associated with two styles of conflict handling: dominate (mothers and fathers) and integrate (fathers). Furthermore, emerging adults who preferred to integrate with their fathers reported better sociocultural adaptation. With respect to family adaptation, oblige was positively associated with strong parent–emerging adult relationships and negatively associated with intergenerational conflict for both parents, whereas all other conflict handling styles were negatively associated with parent–emerging adult relationships and positively associated with intergenerational conflict for both parents. Although only some of these associations were statistically significant, the pattern that emerged is interesting to the extent that it suggests that oblige functions differently as a conflict handling style than integrate, dominate, and avoid.

Discussion

In this study, immigrant Arab emerging adults in Canada did not report many conflicts with either of their parents. It is possible that the low occurrence of intergenerational conflict relates to a high concordance between parent and emerging adult perspectives with respect to issues that frequently instigate conflict in other populations. This notion is consistent with scholars who have argued that collectivistic parents tend to have collectivistic children with shared views on many issues (Kağitçibaşi, 2003). It is also possible that the extent of conflict was not fully represented using Chung's (2001) conflict domains. Indeed, these Arab emerging adults indicated a number of additional conflict issues that relate to honor and reputation—two salient aspects of Arab culture (Uskul et al., 2010). The nature and extent of intergenerational conflict will be further explored in Study 2 using a qualitative inquiry.

As expected, immigrant Arab emerging adults in Canada overwhelmingly preferred to oblige their parents, as opposed to dominate, avoid, or integrate. This finding is consistent with Arab family dynamics which consists of powerful parents and subservient children (Hofstede, 2001; Kayyali, 2006). Similarly, the more oriented to Arab culture emerging adults perceived their mothers to be, the less likely they were to dominate. Contrary to our expectations, oblige was not positively associated with Arab orientation (emerging adult or perception of parents).

With respect to individual and familial adaptation, the use of the oblige style was positively associated with parent–emerging adult relationships and negatively associated with intergenerational conflict for both mothers and fathers. As found previously, this pattern is consistent with both Arab family dynamics (Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie, & Farah, 2006; Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie, Farah, Sakhleh, et al., 2006) and our expectations. In contrast, and consistent with our expectations, using a dominate style was associated with increased intergenerational conflict, weaker parent–emerging adult relationships, and increased ethnocultural identity conflict. The dominate style is likely to be more acceptable in European Canadian as opposed to Arab families, given that it directly opposes Arab family dynamics. Thus, emerging adults who use this style to manage conflict with their parents are likely to experience more ethnocultural identity conflict because they are simultaneously dealing with the conflicting norms of Arab and European Canadian culture. Finally, consistent with our expectations, emerging adults who preferred to integrate with their fathers had better sociocultural adaptation. This finding is consistent with the notion that integrate represents a Western ideal, suggesting that emerging adults who prefer to use this conflict handling style have less difficulty navigating the settlement society.

Study 1 provided some preliminary evidence with respect to the nature and extent of conflict, as well as emerging adults' preferred conflict handling styles and its relation to heritage and settlement culture, individual, and familial adaptation. Study 2 will extend these findings and explore the salience of honor-based conflict issues using a qualitative approach.

Study 2

Method

Participants and procedure. Participants were 12 immigrant Arab emerging adults (6 females) who migrated to Canada with both parents within the past 10 years. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 25 years old (M = 21.33 years, SD = 1.72). Most identified themselves as Muslim (n = 8) or Christian (n = 3). Emerging adults were recruited as in Study 1 and paid CAN$20 to participate. Guided by a social constructionist approach, a series of face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted to unpack intergenerational conflict within immigrant Arab families in Canada. Participants were fluent English speakers and the interviews were conducted in English by a bilingual interviewer. The specific questions were, "Parents and their children do not

always see eye-to-eye. Are there any issues that you and your mother/father tend to disagree about?" and "Can you recall the last major disagreement you had with your mother/father. When was it? What was it all about?" To identify the emerging adult's perspective of the conflict, as well as their parents' perceived perspective, participants were also asked to indicate their position on the issue, whether their mother/father saw their point of view, and to indicate their parents' position on the issue and whether they saw his or her point of view. Finally, emerging adults were asked to describe how the disagreement was resolved. Interviews lasted between 45 and 133 min (M = 83 min:02 s, SD = 21 min:51 s). Each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed with speech disfluencies removed to improve readability without compromising meaning. All participants' names were changed. Participants gave verbal consent at the beginning of the interview.

Data analysis and validation. A typological approach was used to organize the data by themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Findings were validated in three ways (Cresswell, 2003). First, themes were supported using thick and rich data extracts. Second, inter-rater reliability was calculated using a random subset of the transcripts (50% of the dataset) and found to be high (Cohen's κ = .90). Any coding discrepancies were discussed until a consensus was reached. Third, a member of the Arab Canadian community was given a copy of these findings and asked to provide feedback regarding both their quality and the way that they were interpreted. This person found both the data and analysis to be sound, further stating that it captured some of the issues that were relevant to his or her experience as an immigrant Arab in Canada.

Results

The extent and nature of intergenerational conflict. Emerging adults reported conflict episodes around issues that were personal (n = 12), social conventional (n = 4), and prudential (n = 5). Personal issues included cleaning their room (n = 5) and how much they pray (n = 2), social conventional issues included their relationship with their siblings (n = 2) and being considerate of others when using the family car (n = 2), and prudential issues included smoking (n = 1) and wearing a seatbelt (n = 1). All participants were asked to articulate their perspective of the episode, as well as perceptions of their parents' perspective of the same conflict issue. The findings revealed a sharp contrast: Emerging adults considered all conflict issues to be within their personal domain, whereas their parents were perceived to view the same issue as social conventional and thus within their parental jurisdiction. This is consistent with previous research showing that parents asserted their authority using social conventional justifications, whereas emerging adults perceived the same conflict issues to be personal (Smetana & Asquith, 1994). Many participants also reported conflict issues relating to education and career (n = 7), family expectations (n = 7), and dating and marriage (n = 4). Education and career issues included choosing their university major (n = 4) and how much time they spend studying and their marks (n = 4), family expectation issues included helping parents when asked (n = 3), and dating and marriage issues included being allowed to date (n = 2). In line with Study 1, emerging adults reported conflict around a number of honor-based issues that were not captured in the ICI. For example, five participants indicated that they experienced conflict with their parents around curfew and going out, whereas four had conflict as to their choice of friends. Karina recounted the following incident concerning curfew:

> One day I stayed out until 3:00 a.m. for my friend's birthday and my mom was like, "Come home right now!" I didn't pick up the phone and it was a problem because she was expecting me home early. She locked the door so I would have to knock and she'd know exactly what time I came home and then a problem happened. [When I got home, the door was] locked and I kept knocking. Eventually, she opened and started yelling at me and I told her, "It was my friend's birthday. I told

> you I was going to be late" and she said, "But you never told me you're going to be that late!" And then I went to my room because if I argued with her she would have gotten more mad. So I just kept my mouth shut and went to bed.

In most cases, parents used honor-based justifications for conflict issues relating to social relationships and activities. Karina's mother tried to exercise her authority and justify her position by explaining that Karina's behavior was violating their personal and familial honor:

> The next day she sat with me and was like, "You shouldn't stay out late. If people see you out late—especially in the building—they might look at you as a bad girl and you don't want that. Especially Arabic people when they talk, they make the girl look bad. I don't want that for you. I don't want to have a reputation that my daughter stays out late and parties all the time."

Conflict surrounding choice in friendships was particularly intense when those friendships were cross-gender. For example, Mahmoud stated that his mother did not want him to develop a platonic relationship with any females, because she was afraid that they will "deceive him" and distract him from his work, "She tells me, 'This girl might play with your mind and you might leave your studying and start focusing on other stuff. Your future is more important.'" When probed on what his mother meant by "getting you in trouble," Mahmoud stated that she was concerned that he would enter into a romantic and/or sexual relationship.

Beyond curfew and going out and choice of friends, most female participants ($n = 4$) reported conflict with their mothers around their clothing choices. In all of these cases, their mothers wanted them to dress more conservatively and perceived their daughters' clothing choices to be provocative. Furthermore, three participants reported conflict with their parents around their religious commitments. In all of these cases, emerging adults reported that their parents wanted them to be more involved in their Islamic faith.

Emerging adults' preferred conflict handling style. Consistent with Study 1, emerging adults were found to prefer to oblige their parents in 60% of conflict situations, followed by integrate (20%), dominate (14%), and avoid (6%).[2] Similarly, 10 participants used the oblige style in at least one conflict situation, 5 emerging adults used integrate, 3 emerging adults used dominate, and 2 emerging adults used avoid. Representative episodes of each conflict handling style are presented below.

Oblige. Two distinct forms of obliging were uncovered. Some participants told their parents that they would do as they were told—and actually did it—to mitigate conflict. For example, Layla disagreed with her father over her university major; he wanted her to go into journalism whereas she wanted to do politics. To end the conflict with her father, Layla majored in journalism. Other emerging adults told their parents that they would do as they were told—but then covertly disobeyed them—to minimize conflict. For example, Mostafa described himself as "the type of person who actually tries to avoid problems. I would just do whatever she says or tell her that I'll do whatever she wants but on the other hand, actually not do it." Finally, despite promising her mother that she would not date her boyfriend, Karina stated that she is "going to keep trying and hopefully one day they'll agree about it."

Integrate. Two participants, Reem and Omar, reported that conflict in their families was resolved through authoritative family discussions, with the free flow of information and relative interests that characterize the integrate style of conflict handling. Both participants stated that their families would convene to address any disagreements or sources of tension. Omar described his family meetings as very structured: Each member would take a turn presenting

their perspective as notes were taken and collated to inform an action plan. In contrast, Reem described her family meetings as less structured. According to Reem, her mother would identify a conflictual or tense situation (typically occurring between her husband and one or more of her children) and gather the children to speak about it informally. Reem described her mother's role as the family peacekeeper, moderating the discussion until a solution was reached.

Dominate. In contrast to the vast majority of participants, Lana not only used a dominate style of conflict with her mother but also appeared to instigate conflict. Indeed, she stated several times that she initiated conflict "just because I want to go against [my mother's] word." Lana also portrayed her relationship with her mother as very combative. For example, she described shouting at and outwardly disobeying her mother's wishes, as well as emotionally blackmailing her with the empty threat of moving back to Qatar. Another example of the dominate style was a conflict situation that Iskandar described with his mother. He stated that he was very vocal with her about his disapproval of her decision to send gifts and money to her sister back in Egypt because he felt that she was being too generous to the detriment of her family's well-being, and continued even when he was proven to be right. At this point, Iskandar stated that his mother understood his point of view and refused to talk about it anymore.

Avoid. Several emerging adults appeared to bypass conflict by accepting and submitting to their parents' wishes and perspectives. For example, Lana stated that because she only saw her father a few months each year, there were fewer opportunities for conflict and when they arose, she actively tried to avoid them. Similarly, Dina avoided conflict with her transnational father by submitting to his demands. With her mother, Dina tried to avoid conflict by following her rules about going out. She felt that these rules stemmed from her loneliness and boredom, given that she had three daughters who were seldom home and a husband who lived primarily abroad.

Heritage and settlement culture orientation. Participants avoided or covertly disobeyed their parents as a means of handling conflict that arose from differing perspectives, particularly when the emerging adult was more oriented to the Canadian culture and the parent was more oriented toward the Arab culture. For example, Khaled stated that he selectively shared information with his parents to reduce conflict arising from their different and irreconcilable views on multiple issues.

Individual and familial adaptation. Consistent with Study 1, some emerging adults described a conflict situation in which their preferred conflict handling style was related to parent–emerging adult relationships, ethnocultural identity conflict, or sociocultural adaptation. For example, Dina indicated that she acquiesced to her father by majoring in finance as opposed to psychology because she was very close to and wanted to please him. This decision eliminated conflict and possibly strengthened their relational bond. In contrast, Mostafa used the dominate style in some conflict situations despite acknowledging that it outwardly contradicts the notion that Arab parents should be obeyed without question, "That's the thing with Arabic parents, their 'no' is unexplainable and just 'no.'" Throughout the interview, Mostafa reported great difficulty reconciling his parents' expectations around maintaining his heritage culture with the demands placed on him by the European Canadian society. Finally, participants who were able to integrate their perspective with their parents' perspective in conflict situations (i.e., Omar and Reem) seemed to have some success navigating their new sociocultural context. This relation had special significance for Omar and Reem as they were the only two participants to live away from home. For example, Omar stated that this style had been effective in resolving some of the conflict that he experienced with both of his parents around his education and smoking through the authoritative family discussions that were described previously.

Discussion

The findings of this study were consistent with many of the results reported in Study 1. Emerging adults reported conflict around issues captured by social domain theory and Chung's conflict domains. As in Study 1, Study 2 results indicated that honor-based issues such as curfew, choice of friendships, activities, clothing, and religious commitments are extremely salient to this population. Oblige was emerging adults' preferred conflict handling style both between and within participants. Importantly, the results of this study suggested two distinct forms of oblige: overt obedience and covert disobedience. Consistent with Study 1, strong parent–emerging adult relationships were associated with oblige, dominate was found to go against Arab family dynamics and was related to ethnocultural identity conflict, and integrate was associated with sociocultural adaptation and emerged for participants who lived away from home and likely required greater ability to navigate the settlement society than their peers who lived with their families.

General Discussion

Existing research examining intergenerational conflict in immigrant families has focused on the developmental, family, and cross-cultural psychology literatures while largely overlooking conceptualizations developed in the conflict management discipline. Using a mixed-methods approach, our study found that conflict management's dual-concerns model is applicable to the context of intergenerational conflict, provides insights into the extent and nature of conflict, and also relates to cultural factors, as well as individual and familial adaptation. This study extends existing intergenerational conflict research by using a well-established and widely used theoretical framework as opposed to relatively ad hoc conflict management ideas. Using consistent theories and nomenclature will enhance our ability to integrate and synthesize the research fields and allow for clearer interpretation of intergenerational conflict research.

The results of our studies suggested that immigrant Arab families in Canada do not experience very high levels of intergenerational conflict. It is possible, however, that the extent of intergenerational conflict experienced by this population is underestimated by existing measures. Indeed, the results of both studies extended the literature by identifying culturally specific conflict issues beyond Chung's (2001) areas of conflict. For example, immigrant Arab emerging adults in Canada reported conflict around issues that were often intertwined with individual and familial honor, such as curfew, friendships, and clothing. This is consistent with the idea that honor and reputation are salient aspects of Arab culture, and that those who do not conform bring shame to themselves and their families (Uskul et al., 2010; Wikan, 1984). Future research—particularly with minority and majority Arab populations—should add items to Chung's instrument to reflect curfews and whereabouts, friendships, choice of clothing, and religious commitments to more exhaustively measure conflict within Arab families.

The low level of conflict is also an important finding because most immigration research has been guided by the deficit perspective, focusing on treatment strategies and risk-based prevention programs (Park, 2004) as opposed to strengths-based programs and services that could facilitate immigrant emerging adults and families' positive adjustment in Canada. As found in this study, immigrant Arab emerging adults in Canada did not experience high levels of conflict, and many frequent conflict situations related to issues that could be resolved by working with families. For example, one of the main conflict issues in both the quantitative and qualitative studies was choosing a university major. Generally, parents preferred their children to study engineering, business, or the hard sciences as opposed to the social sciences and liberal arts. In every instance, participants stated that their parents preferred these majors as they felt it would allow their children to have a successful career and gain economic independence. From this, it is clear that

parents strongly value the role of academic choices and accomplishments in determining future success. Practitioners can help families navigate these issues by identifying and educating parents on strong trajectories across a variety of career paths.

The findings of these studies make an important contribution to our knowledge of conflict in this context. Specifically, immigrant Arab emerging adults in Canada preferred to use the oblige conflict handling style in Studies 1 and 2. Our qualitative findings further revealed that oblige can take one of two distinct forms. The first form is consistent with the traditional definition of oblige, as it relates to overtly acquiescing to the demands of the other to mitigate conflict. The second form of oblige is consistent with covert disobedience, as it relates to deliberately concealing information as a means of mitigating conflict. This form of oblige is similar Phinney et al.'s (2005) notion of deceitfulness that was ultimately dropped due to a small number of observations. It is also consistent with the information management literature, which has found that deliberately concealing information is associated with poor family relationships and more problem behavior (Smetana, Villalobos, Rogge, & Tasopolous-Chan, 2010) in contrast to disclosure (i.e., sharing unsolicited information), which is associated with stronger family relationships and less problem behavior (Tasopolous-Chan, Smetana, & Yau, 2009). The role of secrecy versus disclosure as a means of managing conflict should be explored in future studies.

The finding that emerging adults used different manifestations of the oblige style is important to consider within future cross-cultural intergenerational conflict research. The Western definition of oblige as a win–lose style may not be sufficient in the context of Arab families. Indeed, the use of deceitful obliging can be considered an integrative win–win approach in that the parents "win" because they think they are getting what they want and the emerging adults "win" because they get what they want. Value is in actual fact created in the situation by information management leading to positive intangible outcomes for both parties.

We found that participants' preferred conflict handling style is related to cultural factors. The more oriented to Arab culture that emerging adults perceived their mothers to be, the less likely they were to use the dominate style. This is consistent with the idea that dominate is a conflict handling style that is preferred by Arab parents as opposed to emerging adults. We also found that emerging adults who were aware that their perspectives differed to their parents' were more likely to avoid the conflict or oblige their parents to circumvent conflict. The idea that emerging adults who perceived differences between their orientation to the Arab society compared with their parents are more likely to oblige and less likely to dominate is consistent with past studies, which have found that differing perspectives can trigger intergenerational conflict (Tsai-Chae & Nagata, 2008) in part due to a weakened bond (Choi et al., 2008). It is possible that emerging adults in this study chose to oblige and not dominate their parents when faced with differing perspectives because they did not have the relational tools to manage conflict more effectively and wanted to mitigate further conflict. The mechanisms underlying this process should be explored in future studies.

The oblige style was found to be the most preferred conflict handling style and was also associated with positive individual and familial outcomes. This is consistent with the idea that obedience and submission are the cornerstones of Arab parent–emerging adult relationships (Hofstede, 2001). Arab youth in the Middle East favor the notion of "absolute submission" to their parents (Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie, & Farah, 2006) and internalize their parents' beliefs across a wide variety of domains (Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie, Farah, Sakhleh, et al., 2006). The role of obedience and submission as motivators for each type of oblige should be disentangled in further studies. The results of Study 1 also suggested that conflict domain affects preferred conflict handling style. Interestingly, emerging adults preferred to avoid conflict when it came to education and career issues as opposed to either family expectation or dating and marriage issues, and preferred

to oblige their parents when it came to dating and marriage issues as opposed to family expectations or education and career issues. Future research should further examine these differences, and the extent to which conflict handling style across domains is driven by obedience and submission.

The present studies also highlight the importance of mixed-method approaches when examining culturally laden concepts. Taking either of the quantitative or qualitative studies separately would result in significantly less clear insight into the difficult issue of intergenerational conflict within immigrant families. As an example, the two different forms of the oblige style used by the emerging adults in the present study would not have been identifiable from the quantitative data alone. Similarly, it is difficult for emerging adults to qualitatively articulate the relation between conflict handling style use and their personal adjustment, yet the quantitative data clearly demonstrates this pattern. Future research should at the very least allow for qualitative answers within quantitative surveys, but ideally where possible this mixed-methods approach should be employed.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study is that Arabs in Canada were treated as a homogeneous group. Although Arabs across the region are united by their shared identity, language, and cultural traditions (Britto & Amer, 2007), there is some intracultural variation that future research should explore. Additional limitations include the use of a single informant and biased sampling procedures. Finally, the measures used in Study 1 had not previously been examined in samples of Arab adolescents or emerging adults. To overcome these limitations, future research should use multiple informants, a homogeneous sample, and recruit members of the immigrant community that are not involved in the post-secondary education system to extend the validity of our study.

Conclusion

An understanding of intergenerational conflict requires a multidisciplinary approach that is best served by integrating conflict management and psychology. We found that the widely used and well-established dual-concerns model is applicable to investigations of intergenerational conflict using immigrant Arab families in Canada as a context. Our mixed-methods study found that incorporating these two independent areas of conflict research can increase our understanding of the extent, nature, and resolution of intergenerational conflict.

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Notes

1. This finding is consistent with many other studies conducted with immigrant college students reporting levels of conflict that are below the midpoint of the scale, including the scale development article of the Intergenerational Conflict Inventory (ICI; Ahn et al., 2008; Chung, 2001; Tsai-Chae & Nagata, 2008).
2. A chi-square analysis found a significant difference in the proportions, $\chi^2(9) = 120.00$, $p < .001$.

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