INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.
Confrontation between friends

Stern, Lesa Ann, Ph.D.
The University of Arizona, 1994
CONFRONTATION BETWEEN FRIENDS

by

Lesa Ann Stern

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

1994
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Lesa Ann Stern entitled Confrontation Between Friends and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

[Signatures and dates]

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copy of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

[Signature and date]

Dissertation Director
Dr. Judee K. Burgooon
STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

This dissertation has been submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for an advanced degree at The University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

Brief quotations from this dissertation are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgement of source is made. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this manuscript in whole or in part may be granted by the head of the major department or the Dean of the Graduate College when in his or her judgment the proposed use of the material is in the interests of scholarship. In all other instances, however, permission must be obtained from the author.

SIGNED: [Signature]
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have had the privilege of working with one of the finest and brightest committees in the field, whom I respect and admire both intellectually and personally. They made committee meetings and graduate school more enjoyable (may I venture to say "fun"?) along the way.

Dr. Judee Burgoon. What can I say? I thank God for you. You are an example of excellence in research and scholarship. You have encouraged and guided my work with dedication and put lots of time into my training. You have been an advisor, mentor, and friend to me throughout the graduate school process. Your compassion and encouragement kept me going during difficult times when I felt like giving up. I could not have completed the Ph.D. without you.

Dr. Calvin Morrill. I appreciate your participation on my committees for these last six years. I could always count on you to get me thinking about context and the bigger picture of my work. I have benefited from your keen insight and broader perspective on conflict management, and enjoyed working with you and taking all your classes. Additionally, you have given hope to surfers and beach bums all over the world, that they too can get a Ph.D.

Dr. Sally Jackson. Not only do I thank you for your support, time, and comments on my committee, but also for your encouraging words over these last three years. Most recently, I particularly valued your close reading of, and helpful feedback on, my dissertation.

Dr. Carl Ridley. It has been a privilege working with you. Specifically, your help with the interdependence aspects of my dissertation was invaluable. I enjoyed your input at each stage; thank you for all your time and effort sacrificed for my scholarly pursuits.

Dr. Lawrence Aleamoni. I would like to thank you for your membership on my committee. I enjoyed your statistics classes and participation on my committee.

Dr. Mari Wilhelm. Graduate Representative extraordinaire. Thanks for sitting in on all the meetings and even jumping into the discussions every now and then. It has been a delight getting to know you along the way.

Mom, Mike, and the entire family. Thanks for encouraging and humoring me during graduate school, as well as allowing me to sleep during vacations.

I also have had amazing friends who saw me through the day to day mumblings, vax nightmares, sleepless nights, as well as the fun times (often sleep deprivation or coffee overdose induced), and celebrations of little and big victories along the way. I owe more than I can repay to Aileen Buslig, Alisa Wabnik, Cris Boyd, Lilys McCoy, Tracy Parizek, Vicraj Thomas, Clint Jeffery, Susie Wagner, Dave Yip, Barbara Hastings Cox, the Alderinks, Laura Guerrero, the GCF group, and the Vineyard Christian Fellowship. A special thanks to Aileen and Alisa, who went above and beyond the call of friendship on many an occasion.

I'd also like to acknowledge the faculty, graduate students, and staff at the U of A Communication Department, who provided the intellectual climate, if not the technical or social support, necessary for excellent graduate school training.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Howard H. Stern.

I wish he could have been here to see, and rejoice in, the completion of this project.

I am thankful to have had a good friend, a constant source of encouragement, laughter, and perspective, as well as a wonderful father, all in him.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confrontational Continuum</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependence</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Models</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chilling Effect</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Social Confrontational Model</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterson's Model of Conflict</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Dissolution Model</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confrontation Model</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions, Propositions, Hypotheses, and Research Questions</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 1</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 1</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 2</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 3</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 4</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE OF CONTENTS -- Continued

Research Question 2 ........................................... 46
Summary .......................................................... 46

II. METHOD ......................................................... 48
Overview .......................................................... 48
Pilot Study ......................................................... 48
Participants ....................................................... 48
Procedure ........................................................ 48
Interaction records ............................................. 48
Interdependence measures .................................. 51
Results of Pilot Study ........................................ 53
Interdependence ................................................ 53
Frequency of conflict ......................................... 54

Main Study ........................................................ 55
Overview .......................................................... 55
Participants ....................................................... 55
Procedure ........................................................ 57
Independent and Dependent Measures .................. 59
Interdependence ................................................ 59
Grievance occurrence ......................................... 60
Partner-receptivity to change .............................. 62
Frustration ........................................................ 62
TABLE OF CONTENTS -- *Continued*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated negative consequences</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental measures</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confrontation measures</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>III. RESULTS</strong></td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependence and Grievances</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Grievances</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Grievance</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of Others</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Friend's Behavior</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtness of Grievance</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis Tests and Research Questions</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental Analyses</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IV. DISCUSSION</strong></td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Research Findings</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis Tests and Research Questions</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Sample versus Community Sample</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependence</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of grievances</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths and Limitations</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directions for Future Research</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A: INTERDEPENDENCE SCALES</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B: SCALE ITEMS FOR PARTNER-RECEPTIVITY TO CHANGE, FRUSTRATION,</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTICIPATED NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES, DEGREE OF FORETHOUGHT, AND SATISFACTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX C: GRIEVANCE RESPONSE STRATEGIES AND ITEMS</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX D: HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1, Cronbach Alpha Reliabilities for Affective, Behavioral, and Cognitive Interdependence for Pilot and Main Studies ......................... 53

TABLE 2, Intercorrelations Between Affective, Behavioral, Cognitive, and Dyadic Interdependence Measures for Pilot Study ....................... 54

TABLE 3, Sample Characteristics by Community and Student Sample ........... 57

TABLE 4, Intercorrelations Between Affective, Behavioral, and Cognitive Interdependence Measures for Main Study ......................... 60

TABLE 5, Coefficient Kappa reliabilities for Open-Ended Responses ........... 61

TABLE 6, Number of Grievances in Three Weeks By Community and Student Samples .............................................................. 65

TABLE 7, Means, Standard Deviations, and T-Tests for Community and Student Samples on Interdependence by Relationship Type .......... 66

TABLE 8, T-tests, Means, and Standard Deviations on Interdependence by Sample and Gender ......................................................... 67

TABLE 9, Grievance Description Categories, Definitions, and Results ......... 69

TABLE 10, Percentages and Number of Respondents Utilizing Grievance Response Strategies Per Grievance ....................................... 73

TABLE 11, Percent of Grievance Response Strategy Use by Gender and Sample ... 74

TABLE 12, Discriminant Analysis with Anticipated Negative Consequences Predictive of Confrontation ............................................ 79
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1, Placement of Response Strategies on Confrontational Continuum . . . 18
ABSTRACT

This investigation presents a model to explain patterns of confrontation within relationships, with a special focus on friendships. Although much research assesses conflict strategies and their corresponding outcomes, few: (a) are theoretically driven, (b) pay any attention to the initial stages of conflict, (c) acknowledge that expressed conflict does not represent the entire spectrum of experienced conflict, or (d) focus on adult friendship conflict.

A communication based framework in which to examine confrontation patterns between friends is presented in this investigation. This confrontational model proposes that grievance responses differ according to friends' interdependence level, costs and benefits of confrontation, and communication goals operating in a given interaction. Communication goals included in this study are social influence attempts, relational maintenance, and emotional expression. It is proposed that friends attempt to minimize negative interactions with their friends and therefore primarily use tolerance and avoidance strategies when dealing with grievances. Only when friends are highly interdependent, extremely frustrated, see few costs as a result of being verbally direct, and believe their friend is willing to change will they use confrontational strategies.

Fifty-two respondents (24 students, 28 community members) participated in a three week study of grievance management in friendships. Respondents selected a casual to close friend upon which to base their participation in the study. They subsequently completed grievance management measures (assessing their interactions
with this particular friend) twice a week for three weeks. Thirty-eight respondents experienced one or more grievances during the three weeks, providing data for the test of the confrontational model.

The confrontational model presented in this investigation was partially supported. Results indicate that anticipated negative consequences of confrontation and partners' willingness or ability to change their behavior are related to confrontation. There was a trend toward greater overall interdependence and confrontation, while greater cognitive interdependence between friends was significantly associated with confrontation. The best predictor of confrontation was anticipated negative consequences; fewer anticipated negative consequences was associated with confrontation.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"The most firmly grounded relation may take a chance at discord, whereas good and moral but less deeply rooted relationships apparently follow a much more harmonious and conflictless course" (Simmel, 1955, p. 47).

As social beings, humans need interaction with one another. However, they may differ in when, where, with whom, how, and why they want to interact. This "social conflict," located in human needs and dependencies, is a universal condition of humanity (Mortensen, 1991). Because of the frequency and impact of conflict, research identifying types of conflict (Braiker & Kelley, 1979; Peterson, 1983), conflict management strategies (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Fitzpatrick, 1988; Newton & Burgoon, 1990; Rusbult, 1983, 1987; Rusbult, Johnson, & Morrow, 1986; Sternberg & Soriano, 1984), resultant relational outcomes (Canary & Cupach, 1988; Fitzpatrick, 1988, Margolin & Wampold, 1981; Newton & Burgoon, 1988), and other topics, fills the pages of journals and popular press alike.

The central foci of most conflict research are conflict management strategies and their outcomes. Little emphasis is placed on the initial stages of conflict, when conflicts of interest are perceived and people decide whether (or not) to confront their partners (Healey & Bell, 1990a; Newell & Stutman, 1988). Confronting one's partner may make the difference between a satisfying or dissatisfying relationship (Rusbult, 1983, 1987) in that confronting issues directly and managing problems may prevent them from recurring and causing further relational stress (Kelley, 1979; Lloyd, 1987). Without confrontation, it is unlikely that people can "resolve" their
misunderstandings and underlying problems. Thus, confrontation issues are important to study because of their impact upon relationships as well as self-esteem and health (Lazarus & Folkham, 1984).

Indeed, research on conflict between friends is sparse, particularly theoretically driven research (Adams & Blieszner, 1994; Blieszner, 1992; Rawlins, 1992). Considering that people have more friends in their lifetime than spouses, a large domain of conflict is ignored. Of the research that has been conducted on conflict between friends, only a few conclusions can be drawn. The main dissatisfactions and conflict-producing events in friendships have to do with violating basic friendship expectations such as criticizing and not helping and supporting the other (Argyle & Henderson, 1984; Blieszner, & Adams, 1992; Hays, 1988; Newell & Stutman, 1988; Rawlins, 1992; Rook & Pietromonaco, 1987). Additionally, it appears that friends do not go through "daily hassle" conflict management routines that romantics and married couples experience.

Among other theories, interdependence theory (Kelley & Thibaut, 1959; 1979) suggests that interdependence, the degree of connection and influence between people, is a crucial element in determining relational behavior patterns and resultant outcomes. Interdependence is a central theme within marital interaction, yet how interdependence affects friendship interaction has not been fully explored. Indeed, although marital relationships are presumed to be the closest relationships, Berscheid, Snyder, and Omoto (1989) found that when people were asked to identify their closest relationship, 47 percent were romantic relationships, 36 percent were friendships, and
14 percent were family relationships. Friendships may be increasingly important with people marrying later in life and with increasing divorce rates.

The present effort examines confrontation patterns between friends. After defining several key terms, several models of conflict and related research are reviewed. Then, a model of the confrontation process is presented along with an empirical test of derived hypotheses.

Definitions

Although some view conflict and grievances as synonymous, to help avoid the terminological confusion resulting from those who distinguish the two, the term "grievance" is a person's *perception* of an incurred wrong or disagreement of views or actions, rather than verbally explicit conflict between people. Whether one responds to this intrapersonal grievance by transforming it into an "open conflict" (Peterson, 1983) through confrontation or responds through a nonconfrontational strategy is at the heart of this study.

Confrontation is defined as direct (unequivocal) verbal communication between source and recipient in response to grievances (Morrill, 1991). Screaming over a problem and calm discussion of issues are both confrontational. Although the term often carries with it negative undertones, confrontation may be enacted gracefully and positively (connoting concern for the relationship) or aggressively and without concern for the other. The focus of this study is whether confrontation (a clear verbal message in response to a grievance) occurs, rather than its consequences or associated relational messages.
If one chooses not to voice one’s concerns, one may engage in a variety of nonconfrontational behaviors. Nonconfrontation includes a multitude of indirect and subtle (as well as not so subtle) verbal and nonverbal behaviors that convey one’s irritation or disagreement. One also may avoid or tolerate grievances (Morrill, 1991). Additionally, covert retaliatory acts (Morrill & King, 1992) may be included as nonconfrontational responses to grievances.

Confrontational Continuum

A quick perusal of the conflict literature, particularly of conflict management typologies, alerts one to the various responses to grievances and some of their commonalities and differences. A few dimensions or continua appear to underlie most of the response types: active-passive (Rusbult, 1987), constructive-destructive (Rusbult, 1987), aggressiveness, assertiveness, directness (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Morrill & King, 1992), and other-self concern (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974), to name just a few.

Although the current study primarily focuses on whether a confrontational or nonconfrontational strategy is enacted in response to grievances, in reality it may be more accurate to array these responses along a continuum of confrontation. Greater message clarity and behavioral overtness of the grievance response would define the confrontational end of the continuum, whereas tolerance (a lack of communicating irritation/disagreement) would anchor the other end of the continuum. Avoidance behaviors and subtle, equivocal nonverbal behaviors may be placed slightly toward the nonconfrontational end, while mixed messages, sarcasm, and verbally indirect
messages, such as joking and hinting may be placed more toward the confrontational end of the continuum (see Figure 1). This confrontational continuum appears to encompass Morrill and King's (1992) dimension of observability as well as the assertiveness dimension of many of the other typologies.

---

Figure 1. Placement of Response Strategies on Confrontational Continuum

**Confrontational**

Verbally direct statements  
(Aggressive/assertive statements, yelling, discussion)

Third party mobilization

Verbally indirect statements  
(Sarcasm, hinting, and joking about problem)

Nonverbal negativity and covert retaliation

Avoidance of partner

Tolerance

**Nonconfrontational**

As Figure 1 shows, many verbal statements may be placed toward the nonconfrontational end of the continuum. For example, if one asks a friend to talk to the offending party, then although a direct verbal statement was issued to the instigator of the offense, the recipient did not enact it directly. Thus, third party interventions are technically nonconfrontational, yet include confrontational events in response to the grievance.
Avoidance behaviors, depending on how they are enacted, also may vary along the continuum. For example, avoiding contact with the offending party and controlling the offending party's accessibility to self (e.g., privacy management, see Stern & Buslig, 1992) may be more direct if one overtly denies the partner contact or access to oneself (i.e., Rusbult's *exit* strategy). Additionally, even avoiding heated issues (e.g., "taboo topics") can vary along this continuum; one may be more direct by telling the other, "I don't want to talk about it," or may be more subtle and nonconfrontational by simply not bringing up a hot topic or by neglecting the partner or relationship (i.e., Rusbult's *neglect* strategy).

Tolerance, or behavioral inaction in response to a grievance (Morrill & King, 1992), is also a nonconfrontational response. This type of grievance management encompasses all those tactics one uses to pretend that there is no grievance. Tolerance may be very similar to Rusbult's *loyalty* strategy, whereby one waits for the situation to get better. Therefore, nonconfrontation can be active or passive; one can actively avoid a partner by rearranging one's daily schedule or one can passively ignore a grievance.

There are a multitude of ways in which people deal with their grievances. One can deal with the offending party confrontationally or nonconfrontationally, or use a mixture of both types of tactics. Additionally, although not a focus of this paper, one may reframe the grievance event such that one no longer feels aggrieved (Planalp & Surra, 1992; Rawlins, 1992). For example, one may rationalize that there must be a good reason for a friend not making an expected phone call. Indeed,
Rawlins (1992) suggests that this cognitive reframing, or as he puts it, "giving the other the benefit of the doubt" frequently takes place in friendships. Indeed, over the course of a relationship, our attitudes and preferences may be transformed toward the direction of our partner's attitudes and behaviors such that conflicts in these domains are infrequent. Therefore, both people reap maximum benefits because of their convergence (Borden & Levinger, 1991).

A few crucial problems with relying on specific tactics, and their corresponding placement on the confrontational continuum, have prompted the reliance on the broader categories of confrontation and nonconfrontation in this study. One main concern is that participant self reports of specific nonverbal behaviors and subtle tactics are suspect, i.e., participants cannot name the specific behaviors they used while enacting a larger strategy (Palmer & Simmons, 1993). Additionally, depending on how the behaviors are enacted, they will fall at different places on the continuum. Thus, subjects may be accurate informants as to whether they clearly verbalized their grievances to their partners, but may not be reliable when reporting more subtle tactics (Bernard, Killworth, Kronenfeld, & Sailer, 1984).

Interdependence

Interdependence refers to the connectedness or the degree of influence between partners (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). They may influence each other affectively, behaviorally, and cognitively (Surra & Ridley, 1991).

Affective interdependence is present to the degree that partners influence or are connected to one another emotionally. The degree of felt closeness and the intensity
with which they influence each other's moods and emotional states are aspects of this
dimension. People with high affective interdependence are people with whom we feel
close or those who are important to us, regardless of how frequently we interact.
When we have personal problems or need support or affection, we tend to call upon
these people (Surra & Milardo, 1991). Family members and high school best friends
often have high affective interdependence.

*Behavioral* interdependence refers to the degree to which one partner's actions
influence the other partner's actions. The more two people must coordinate their
actions in order to achieve their goals, the more behavioral interdependence in their
relationship. Behavioral interdependence is characterized by frequency, duration,
intensity, consistency, and diversity of impact between partners (Kelley, 1986; Surra
& Milardo, 1991). The greater impact or connection across these dimensions, the
greater the interdependence. Relationships with limited interdependence are
associated with a limited range of interaction. Some relationships, such as tennis
partners and study partners, are confined to those particular situations and do not
extend beyond them. Conversely, greater behavioral interdependence is expected
between people who interact in a variety of settings.

*Cognitive* interdependence may be conceptualized as the degree to which
people are influenced by or are connected to one another in the cognitive or
intellectual realm. Although Surra and Ridley (1990) suggest that cognitive
interdependence is the degree of shared knowledge, it may be better conceptualized as
the degree of influence or connection to another because of their knowledge, opinions,
or information. That people seek out others with complementary knowledge, or create a division of labor based on knowledge and skills, is not uncommon (Reis, 1990). For example, a wife may count on her husband’s knowledge of car maintenance items, whereas the husband may count on the wife knowing their financial situation. Additionally, their opinions, viewpoints, and feedback to one another may be particularly valued. This new conceptualization of cognitive interdependence being advanced here allows for these complementary connections that Surra and Ridley’s (1990) does not.

Cognitive interdependence is distinct from both behavioral and affective interdependence. First, connections based on information and cognitions do not necessarily translate into affective or behavioral coordination and influence. For example, in the prior example, the wife does not have to coordinate her actions with her husband as far as car maintenance is concerned. The wife depends on the husband to know the state of affairs with the car, and to let her know when she needs to have it taken into the mechanic. Likewise, many work relationships are built around behavioral and cognitive (information) connections, but remain relatively formal and emotionally distant.

Review of Models

Although several models, theories, and typologies of conflict could potentially be reviewed, only a few that are particularly relevant to confrontation are examined for their contributions to understanding this initial stage of the conflict process.
The Chilling Effect

Roloff and Cloven's (1990) chilling effect (CE) is probably the most germane to the study of nonconfrontation, although the point of departure between their work and the present effort is relationship type—they focus on romantic couples, which may not be applicable to friends. The central concept in CE is power. Roloff and Cloven argue that the person with higher power (defined as having many alternative relationships) may use a variety of active conflict management strategies, such as direct verbal confrontation and leaving the relationship. On the other hand, those in lower power positions, due to their tentative position in the relationship, are more inclined to use nonconfrontational tactics and avoidance in response to conflict.

In essence, lower power individuals fear the consequences of confrontation—that their higher power partner may abandon them or respond negatively (i.e., with disagreement and criticism). The chilling effect is defined as the "decision to keep one’s dissatisfactions with the partner’s behavior to oneself (i.e., "not speaking one’s mind" or feeling "inhibited from even initiating influence attempts") (Roloff & Cloven, 1990, p. 51). It is the result of the fear of negative consequences, primarily relational termination.

One of the most useful components in CE is the notion that people's decisions to avoid confrontation are based upon the fear of negative consequences. Rather than look toward what might be gained in a confrontational episode, it appears that people place greater emphasis on what might be lost or aggravated by such an attempt. Additionally, the role of power in conflict avoidance is a useful element. If one feels
powerless in a relationship, relational maintenance that is relatively risk-free may be the preferable mode of operating.

Although CE presents a useful view of nonconfrontational episodes in relationships with unequal power, it is not able to address confrontation in relationships between people of relatively equal power. Additionally, even within unequal power relationships, fear of partner abandonment may not be the crucial issue determining whether lower power individuals avoid expressing problems; conflict avoidance occurs even among nondistressed couples whom we would assume do not fear abandonment (Roloff & Cloven, 1990). Putting aside the fear of abandonment issue, CE may not be able to predict conflict engagement or avoidance in equal power relationships because of the centrality of the power concept.

It appears that CE may be most applicable to lower power individuals in severely distressed couples. Relational dissolution fears may be paramount when confronting extremely consequential issues or when the relationship is tenuous in the first place. Thus, the limited applicability of CE to differential power relationships makes it too narrow to apply to many relationships (particularly friendships that are based on equality) and people's decision to confront.

The Social Confrontational Model

Newell and Stutman's (1988) Social Confrontational Model (SCM) focuses on those cases of confrontational behavior where one person alerts a relational partner that a relational or social norm has been violated. Newell and Stutman found that disagreement with partner ideas differed from disagreements about partner behavior;
people could much more readily avoid confrontation about ideas than behaviors. Disagreements over behaviors led to "perceived interference in achieving one's goals" (Newell & Stutman, 1988, p. 271) whereas differing ideas did not necessarily cause goal interference. Therefore, Newell and Stutman limited SCM to violations of behavioral expectations.

The SCM episode is conceptualized as an "argument" advanced by the confronter. It is "issue-driven: Whatever is a point of controversy between the participants determines the line of development the episode will take" (Newell & Stutman, 1988, p. 275). Thus, SCM does not assess when confrontation will occur, but rather the argumentative stances taken within a bound confrontation episode. The main issues addressed within SCM are: "nonlegitimacy (the implied rule is not acceptable), (2) superseding rule (the confrontee argues that this is a "special" situation, and invokes a higher-order rule), (3) denial of behavior (the accused denies performing the behavior in question), (4) denial of rule violation (the confrontee argues that the behavior does not constitute a rule violation), (5) denial of responsibility (the accused offers an excuse), and (6) acceptance of responsibility (the confrontee accepts responsibility for his/her behavior)" (Newell & Stutman, 1988, p. 275).

Depending on the argument advanced in each of these issues, several of five resolution strategies are utilized: Legislation, remediation, reaffirmation, remedy, or no resolution. Legislation is the creation and negotiation of a relationship rule, whereas remediation is the clarification and redefinition of a rule. Reaffirmation is
the verbal statement of commitment to follow a rule. Resolutions are designed to end an SCM episode in the form of remedy or redress and possibly clarify the rule for future interaction. Remedies include: agreeing to cease the behavior, expressing remorse over an offense, redressing the problem, and receiving punishment (Newell & Stutman, 1988, p. 277).

Some of the limitations of SCM are that not all small irritations and disagreements are encompassed under the "relational expectation" umbrella and therefore are not accounted for within this model. Additionally, indirect strategies of social confrontation are systematically excluded, although they may function in the same manner as verbally direct statements. Although limiting SCM to direct verbal confrontation is an advantage due to the problems inherent in addressing more subtle confrontational behaviors, it may be the subtle and indirect strategies that are most common in response to relational rule violations. Newell and Stutman also concede that their model is not predictive--it is merely descriptive of the types of behaviors and arguments that may be advanced in a confrontational episode.

One contribution of SCM is the exploration of the different issues that may emerge during explicit negotiation of relationship rules. However, although SCM may be useful for the types of arguments and claims people may address within an issue-driven confrontational episode, SCM does not address the conditions under which such a direct confrontation is likely to occur.

Peterson's Model of Conflict

Peterson's (1983) model of conflict is a comprehensive model tracing conflict
from predisposing conditions to the actual outcome of conflict. His model is broad enough to apply to any relationship. Peterson classified the many irritations that may precipitate an open conflict into four broad categories of events: criticism, illegitimate demand, rebuff, and cumulative annoyance. Criticism and illegitimate demands encompass verbal and nonverbal acts that are perceived negatively; statements or behaviors are seen as unwarranted, injurious, or unfair. Rebuff, however, captures those events that produce conflict because a partner failed to meet relational or partner expectations. Lastly, cumulative annoyance captures a host of smaller irritations that predispose a partner to open conflict.

Of particular importance to this study, however, is Peterson’s (1983) pre-conflict stage, the outcome of which is conflict engagement or avoidance. Peterson claims that issue importance, solvability, and risk are the primary determinants of whether people engage in or avoid open conflict. He posits that issues that are important, solvable, and of low risk (low severity of consequences for engaging in conflict) influence one to engage in open conflict with one’s partner. Conversely, relatively inconsequential offenses that are not likely to be solved, combined with severe consequences of conflict engagement, are avoided.

Once both parties are engaged in conflict, however, both positive and negative patterns may ensue. Partners may engage in positive conflict management through the use of direct negotiation or may escalate the conflict into reciprocal hostilities. Once this negative cycle has begun, coercion, threats, deception, and power plays become more prominent.
In order to deal with an escalated conflict, Peterson (1983) argues that reciprocal conciliation must take place in order to move the conflict back onto the issue rather than personal attacks as well as to reestablish trust in the partner. After a deescalation, the conflict process may be dealt with in a positive manner or degenerate into hostilities once again.

The final stage of Peterson's (1983) model addresses how the conflict is terminated, whether it be through withdrawal, imposed solutions, or mutual agreements. The manner in which the conflict is terminated largely determines partner satisfaction as well as the likelihood of conflict recurrence. For example, unresolved conflicts (where parties withdraw from the conflict prior to an agreement) and imposed solutions (often through threat, dominance, and coercion) are more likely to recur than conflicts where both parties are able to achieve partial or full goal attainment.

It is important to note that Peterson's first two stages of his model rely upon rational decision making to determine behavior. There is very little room for emotional, habitual, or impulsive acts within the pre-conflict stage where people choose their best behavioral options. Although there are indeed times when people do engage in this form of decision making, the marital literature in particular indicates that emotional and noncognitive bases of behavior choice often guide behaviors in conflict. For example, negative affect cycles (Gottman, 1979) that result in escalation of conflict are common "costly" patterns that are driven by arousal and emotion rather than intellectually sound decisions. A model that incorporates both strategic and
nonstrategic processes, leading to confrontation or avoidance, is necessary. Currently, Peterson’s (1983) model of conflict cannot be endorsed wholeheartedly.

**Relational Dissolution Model**

Duck's (1982, 1985) model of relational dissolution addresses the issues people encounter as they incur costly grievances in a relationship and the behavioral patterns (dissolution stages) that result from how they deal with the issues presented in the model. Duck's model is included in this review because the first two stages are particularly germane to pre-conflict management; the first two stages of Duck's model incorporate incurred grievances, cost-reward assessments, and interdependence elements.

Disengagement potentially starts with conflict experienced by at least one person in the dyad, which is Duck’s intrapersonal grievance stage, otherwise known as the "breakdown." Then, during the intra-psychic stage, Duck suggests that (a) people focus on the partner’s behavior and whether it meets appropriate role behavior, (b) assess whether they are maintaining profitable interactions, (c) consider the costs associated with withdrawal from the relationship, (d) assess the rewards associated with alternative relationships, and (e) undergo a "face express/repress dilemma" (deciding whether to express one’s true feelings and opinions).

When one cannot tolerate the conflict (or accumulated grievances and the net costs associated with them), one goes through the "confront/avoid dilemma" and may eventually confront the partner with the problems and the possibility of relational dissolution. If one openly confronts the partner, then the people have progressed to
the dyadic stage and both people are now able to assess the state of the relationship and give input on what to do next. The main issue faced by people in this stage is whether they will work through their problems or break off their relationship.

If the couple decides to dissolve the relationship, they enter the social stage and they turn to their social networks for support. And lastly, disengaged couples eulogize their relationship and form "their stories" of the break-up, which is Duck's "grave dressing stage."

This model has several key elements that may be extended to interactional conflict. Duck's model is based in social exchange; it encompasses a cost/benefit analysis that allows people to factor in their commitment, investment, and anticipation of the relationship improving. This model also contributes to the understanding of how grievances are handled by including role appropriate behavior comparisons and accumulated grievances as factors that impact the decision to confront. Duck's model is designed to account for relationship deterioration or termination, yet it is applicable to single grievance episodes as well.

**Assertiveness**

This body of literature sheds light on how people communicate (or fail to communicate) their thoughts, feelings, and opinions with others. Although assertive communication can be positive, as when expressing thankfulness or support for another, scholarly and laypeople's attention tends to focus on negatively valenced messages--those typically difficult to voice.
Studies have found that assertive communication is perceived negatively; that is, as dominant, unpleasant, and aggressive, among other attributes (Delamater & McNamara, 1986; Epstein, 1980; Hollandsworth, 1977; Keane, Wedding, & Kelly, 1983; Levin & Gross, 1987). While assertive communication often is evaluated positively for handling task-oriented difficulties in the workplace, it has less than desirable evaluative consequences when managing relational difficulties. Direct communication is perceived as threatening to the partner and often mistaken for aggressive communication (Levin & Gross, 1987; Lewis & Gallois, 1984; Stern, 1990; Wilson & Gallois, 1993).

Communication about differences in opinion, disappointments, and other negative relational messages are often desired, but when it comes to encoding these messages, often people's intentions are stifled. Assertive messages are influenced by individual skill as well as immediate contextual factors that set the stage for the appropriateness, form, and timing of assertive communication (Wilson & Gallois, 1993). A person may have the intention or desire to confront a partner, but this may not translate into actual behavior; one may not be able to find the nerve or the words to confront a partner (Young, 1986). Situations may also call for differing levels and types of confrontational behavior. For example, although a wife may disagree with her husband's comments to their children and want to say something to him, she may shoot him a quick, meaningful glance for the time being and wait until she is alone with her husband to discuss the issue.
Degree of assertiveness underlying one's response is inherent in many conflict management typologies. Among those reviewed earlier (e.g. Blake & Mouton, 1964; Fitzpatrick, 1988; Morrill & Thomas, 1992), most included unassertive strategies (such as avoidance and nonconfrontation) through more aggressive or assertive strategies (such as competing, distributive, and collaborating). Thus, assertiveness plays a significant role as an underlying dimension of conflict management.

The assertiveness literature, while useful for describing perceptions of assertive and unassertive messages, does not make useful theoretical contributions to the study of confrontation and avoidance. Additionally, the emphasis tends to be on verbal statements and their accompanying perceptual evaluations rather than on varying degrees of assertiveness or nonverbal behavior.

Summary

Although each of these models or areas offers useful insights and tackles one piece of confrontation and avoidance, the lack of formalized theory specifically addressing confrontation between friends makes prediction and explanation difficult. In the model to be advanced here, several useful features are retained from the prior models. First, a social exchange orientation of examining costs and rewards associated with confrontation is preserved (e.g., CE, Duck's relational dissolution model, and Peterson's model). Assertive and avoidant responses must also be incorporated into a model of confrontation.

The model of confrontation presented next addresses confrontation between friends from a communication perspective. General and specific interactional and
communication goals are addressed in this model. These goals encompass intentional and more spontaneous communication and allow for rational and emotional bases of behavior. The confrontation model that follows also includes indirect responses to grievances that have been ignored previously.

Confrontation Model

Assumptions, Propositions, Hypotheses, and Research Questions

Assumption 1. People are motivated by costs and rewards in interactions: They seek profitable interactions and relationships.

This assumption is borrowed from social exchange theories which liken human relationships to economic ones and assume that people are utilitarian in their interactions with others (Homans, 1950) and therefore make informed choices based on the most rewarding actions from a wide variety of potential actions. Thus, people are motivated to maximize their rewards while minimizing their costs.

Although criticisms have been leveled against assumptions that people operate according to profit-based motives, Turner (1974) summarizes the main criticisms and presents revised assumptions, respectively:

(a) rarely do men attempt to maximize profits; (b) men are not always rational; (c) their transactions...are not free from external regulation and constraint; and (d) men do not have perfect information on all available alternatives. Recognition of these facts has led to a series of alternative utilitarian assumptions: (1) While men do not seek to maximize profits, they always seek to make some profit in their social
transactions with others. (2) While men are not perfectly rational, they engage in calculations of costs and benefits in social transactions. (3) While men do not have perfect information on all alternatives, they are usually aware of at least some alternatives, which form the basis for their assessments of costs and benefits. (4) While there are always constraints on human activity, men compete with each other in seeking to make a profit in their transactions. (pp. 212-213)

When choosing from among behavioral options, it is an individual’s perception of anticipated overall profit that determines his or her actions. Thus, the overall "rewardingness" of behavior choice is an intrapersonal phenomenon that may be accurate or highly inaccurate. Rewards are conceptualized as those actions that provide pleasure, fulfill needs, or foster positive psychological states. Tangible rewards might include use of a partner's car, gifts, and information; intangible benefits might include intimacy, enjoyment of the other, love, and feelings of security and acceptance (Foá & Foá, 1974; Kelley, 1979; Turner, 1974). Conversely, costs are those factors that inhibit or deter behavior. Costs include material expenditures, negative emotions such as embarrassment, as well as high mental or physical efforts.

Whether one uses confrontational or nonconfrontational tactics may be influenced by the timing and sequencing of behaviors, which impact costs and rewards (Kelley, 1981). Whereas tolerance and avoidance of issues may be first attempts at dealing with conflict, they might not be utilized over the long haul. One's costs may accumulate and eventually outweigh one's rewards through repeated
avoidance or tolerance (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). This accumulation of costs and dissatisfaction may therefore provide the impetus for people to confront their partners (Nader, 1980; Merry, 1979; Wilmot & Wilmot, 1978). Relational dissolution research provides evidence that when costs weigh too heavily, people are more motivated to act; people often state, "I just can't take it anymore" (Duck, 1985). The tolerance threshold has been surpassed and a confrontational manner of dealing with conflict is adopted.

**Proposition:** Confrontation is a function of the anticipated costs associated with it.

Due to the general expectancy of positive interactions in friendships, research indicates that negative events carry more "weight" than do positive ones (Kellerman, 1991; Rook & Pietromonaco, 1987). Therefore it is posited that avoiding negative interactions (costs) is more salient than seeking positive interactions (rewards) which are actually expected.

**H1:** The greater anticipation of negative relational consequences (as a result of confrontation), the less friends will use confrontation.

**Assumption 2.** Societal and relational norms influence interaction patterns.

Both societal and relational norms may provide the basics for managing friendship grievances. For example, *societal norms* dictate enacting basic politeness behaviors towards others. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory suggests that ingrained social-politeness rules protect people's "face needs," which consist of remaining unimpeded by others (negative face) and wanting to be approved of by others (positive face). Interactions are therefore governed by politeness norms
whereby people satisfy their own goals while affirming (providing rewards) and causing minimal "costs" for others. Thus, communication is used to satisfy both instrumental and relational maintenance goals simultaneously.

Brown and Levinson focus on what is said on the surface level versus what is implicated (the real content of the communication). A parallel may exist between these politeness norms/rules and responses to grievances. For example, people may be inclined to follow politeness norms by using indirect or subtle confrontation strategies; face needs are preserved while conveying true desires.

Along with societal norms, our expectations of relationships are important determinants of behavior. Role schemas provide relational expectations that guide behavioral choices and that are "used to process information pertaining to social roles such as friendship" (LaGaipa, 1987, p. 134; Duck, 1985); They influence choice of role-appropriate behaviors and help people to interpret others' behaviors. LaGaipa (1987) distinguishes between two types of relational expectancies: prescriptive and predictive. Prescriptive expectancies are the general social norms associated with specific roles. These might also be considered rules or the "shoulds and musts" of relational behavior (Metts, 1993). A prescriptive expectancy of a friendship might be "friends should provide emotional support and comfort." Predictive expectancies, however, pertain to situation- and person-specific expectations of behavior.

Supportive behavior is one prescriptive expectancy of most relationships (Barbee & Yankeelov, 1992; Davis & Kraus, 1991; Duck & Miell, 1986; LaGaipa, 1987; Miller & Ray, 1992; Rook & Pietromonaco, 1987; Solano, 1986). For
instance, instrumental aid, identity confirmation, emotional expression, and empathic understanding are common to all personal relationships. Even from acquaintances we expect responsiveness, reciprocal self-disclosure, reservation, and politeness (Miell & Duck, 1986). Friendships, which encompass nonromantic relationships among nonkin, who are typically peers of approximately equal age and status (Winstead & Derlega, 1986), are no exception. Although friendships are commonly noted as the most variable type of relationship, one common theme is their positive tone.

Despite great variety across friendships, people tend to have highly similar relational needs, expectations, and "rules" of friendships (Argyle, 1986). Friends are expected to meet security, self-esteem, affection, freedom, and equality needs (Knapp, 1984; Knapp & Harwood, 1977). Security and self-esteem needs refer to desires for psychological security (validation of identity), comfort, and affirming one's worth while affection needs encompass the "belonging" needs, such as affiliation and moderate emotional attachment. Meeting these needs gives friendships a socio-emotional focus rather than an instrumental one (Hays, 1988). The "rules of friendship" corresponding to these needs include: give emotional support, offer help, pay compliments, try to make other happy, don't criticize other, and don't nag (Argyle, 1986; Argyle & Henderson, 1984; Blieszner & Adams, 1992; Hays, 1988; Rawlins, 1992).

Freedom needs center around the ability to spend time together and enjoy each other when the desire is mutual (i.e., on a flexible basis) rather than out of obligation and dependence (Knapp, 1984). Although flexibility appears to be a major
component of friendships as opposed to romantic and family relationships, no specific relationship "rules" are associated with freedom needs. Although friendships have many expectations and accompanying rules, Rawlins (1992) notes that, "Friends' expectations are rarely stated explicitly... [which can] generate uncertainty and ambiguity regarding the actual extent of their shared availability and obligations" (p. 214). The implicit rules associated with providing support (helping and sacrificing for a friend) may conflict with "freedom" needs. Therefore, freedom needs may govern only those situations where a friend does not anticipate help or companionship.

Equality needs refer to interaction between friends where neither one dominates the other (Knapp, 1984). Indeed, the very nature of friendship as an equal status/peer relationship may equalize behaviorally any actual power differences that exist (Blieszner & Adams, 1992; Winstead & Derlega, 1986). Equality in relationships implies a give-and-take between partners; repaying favors and debts (Argyle & Henderson, 1984; Roloff, 1987) is one rule that helps maintain balance between partners and discourages exploitation (Rawlins, 1992). Over the long haul, therefore, the rules of equality or at least equity should ensure some degree of mutual profit (Hatfield, Traupmann, Sprecher, Utne, & Hay, 1985). If not, a friendship may deescalate into a superficial, acquaintance-like relationship.

It is against this supportive relational atmosphere and expectations that negative behavior, such as confrontation, is evaluated. Rook and Pietromonaco (1987) and Kellerman (1991) argue that a positivity bias in friendships sets up a contrast effect for negative interactions; one instance of negativity, such as criticism
and rejection, disproportionately affects the recipient. Experientially, one negative comment can override an evening of positive experiences between friends.

People may be particularly sensitive to negative experiences such that they are perceived as more negative and aggressive than an "objective" view permits (Infante, Hartley, Martin, Higgins, Bruning, & Hur, 1992; Rook & Pietromonaco, 1987; Stern, 1990). Indeed, Stern (1990) found this same negativity bias at work even in situations where people deserved criticism (such as failing to complete one's part of a joint task).

On the whole, confrontational behavior goes against the grain of prescriptive friendship expectations that deemphasize differences, minimize conflict, and provide relational support (Blieszner & Adams, 1992). Newer, tentative relationships are mostly governed by these expectancies that function to enhance relational trust and provide a positive foundation on which relationships are built (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Knapp, 1984).

Because friendships may be maintained at this more cursory, friendly level rather than becoming more personal, length of time is not the best index of relational closeness. Interdependence may be the most important element to predict closeness as well as behavior patterns (Kelley, 1986; Surra & Ridley, 1990; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). People with little interdependence (little intimacy, behavioral interaction, and intellectual input) are therefore expected to use nonconfrontational responses prescribed by politeness and relationship norms. Research conducted by Baumgartner (1992) suggests that low interdependence (although she uses the terminology of equal
status and weak ties) is associated with avoidance and tolerance. Additionally, Roloff and Cloven (1990) found that people accounted for their conflict avoidance by pointing to lack of relational intimacy (affective interdependence), i.e., "the relationship is not of sufficient intimacy to warrant or justify complaining" (p. 62).

Along with relational expectations, less interdependence may lead to nonconfrontation because it may be less costly to avoid or ignore grievances than to chance the relational risks associated with confrontation, particularly if coordination with another is unnecessary; people with fewer connections are able to avoid each other without being highly inconvenienced by the lack of contact.

Nonconfrontational strategies appear to be a highly used mode of dealing with grievances. Many of the conflict management dimensions reviewed earlier suggest that there are many ways in which to nonconfrontationally deal with grievances; for example, one may use avoidance, tolerance, neglect of relationship, or covert retaliation, among others. A research question is posited to assess the relative frequency of several of these nonconfrontational tactics.

RQ1: Which specific nonconfrontational tactics are used most often and least often in response to grievances?

Whereas more superficial relationships are governed by politeness rules, more personal relationships are less scripted and more dyadically negotiated (Rawlins, 1992; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959; 1979). Personal relationships also are associated with greater breadth and depth of connection between friends. Along with the positive aspects of a deepened friendship, however, increased negativity, judgment, and
criticism is introduced (Knapp, 1984). Therefore, in highly interdependent relationships, confrontation is expected most. This is not to say that interactions are primarily negative and critical between friends. We would expect a lot of nonconfrontational behaviors in addition to confrontational ones.

Therefore, interdependence may affect the number of grievances and the way they are managed in several ways. The more interdependence, the greater number of grievances expected on average (Hays, 1988; Kelley, 1986). That is, if two people’s affective, behavioral, and cognitive patterns are enmeshed, there is greater opportunity for conflicting interests. More grievances, in turn, result in more opportunities to engage in confrontation.

Greater interdependence also may be associated with greater motivation to confront one’s partner (Kelley, 1986). If one’s outcomes are closely tied to another’s actions because the other has a high degree of influence over one’s rewards and satisfaction, then one might expect behavioral coordination to produce maximum profits for both partners (Kelley, 1986; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Thus, confrontation may lead to greater mutual profit.

It is worth noting that research so far has primarily relied on affective and behavioral interdependence. How interdependence (consisting of affective, behavioral, and cognitive connections) relates to confrontation in relationships is, as of yet, untested.

H2: The greater degree of interdependence between friends, the greater use of confrontation.
Assumption 3. Behavior may serve multiple functions as well as may be strategic or nonstrategic.

Although several functions may operate within any given interaction, social influence, relational maintenance, and emotional expression may be the most germane to conflict situations. The distinguishing feature between these functions is that of focus: (a) social influence has a focus on changing the partner, (b) emotional expression has an emphasis on the self (i.e., for catharsis, self-preservation, or self-expression reasons), and (c) relational maintenance has a focus on preserving the relationship.

Social influence, in relation to confrontation, occurs when people confront their partners in order to change the other’s beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors. If social influence is a primary motivating goal, people must believe they have some control over changing their partners. Social influence may serve to enhance their own situation (i.e., for self benefit) such as eliminating the partner’s annoying behaviors, or to benefit partners, such as trying to stop them from doing things that may cause them emotional or physical harm.

The potential rewards of confrontation must outweigh the risks and costs associated with confrontation. In general, people fear inciting negative partner reactions (Roloff & Cloven, 1990) through confrontation and find grievance discussion unpleasant. In order to offset such costs of confrontation, one must believe that the partner is able or willing to change. If one desires the other to change, but feels that the other cannot do so, then the confrontation as social influence would be
impotent—and too costly (Peterson, 1983).

Proposition: Confrontation for the purpose of social influence is a function of the degree to which the partner is willing or able to change.

H3: Greater partner-receptivity to change is associated with a greater use of confrontation.

Emotional expression is assumed to be a common goal of confrontational episodes as well. The assertiveness and relational dissolution literature suggest that people confront their partners in order to lessen the burden of carrying multiple grievances—to get them out into the open. The main goal is self-expression and perhaps cathartic release (Curtis, 1982), with possible secondary goals of influencing the partner or maintaining the relationship.

Emotional expression may be nonstrategic or strategic. Whereas social influence may be primarily strategic, emotional responses to conflict situations may evoke automatic behaviors. For example, when experiencing conflict, arousal levels may heighten such that one reverts to more automatic fight or flight responses; in heated situations, confrontation and aggression may result.

On the other hand, emotional expression may be more calculated, as evidenced by those people who expend great effort in confronting their partners. Some people go to great lengths, such as assertiveness training, in order to learn how to express their wants and desires more clearly. In these cases, confrontational behavior is more deliberate and perhaps even contrary to people's natural tendency to shy away from conflictual situations. Yet, there are others for whom confrontation is not so
exasperating; it is a part of their behavioral repertoire, ready to use as the situation demands.

It may be that people avoid conflict until a threshold is reached--the "straw that broke the camel's back" notion. Indeed, gunnysacking (unloading of multiple grievances [Baumeister & Stillwell, 1992]) is a common response to frustration experienced because of prolonged toleration of grievances. Although toleration may be the first reaction to conflict (Baumgartner, 1984), when conflicts pile up and exceed one's threshold, indirect and direct means of conflict management become more likely (Merry, 1979; Nader, 1980; Wilmot & Wilmot, 1984).

It may be that people have different thresholds of grievance tolerance. For some people, relatively few grievances are highly frustrating and unbearable without confronting. For others, numerous grievances may be tolerated before frustration with their costs drives them to confrontation. Therefore, the degree of fear associated with confrontation and level of frustration may affect the likelihood of confrontational behavior. Those who are highly intolerant of conflict situations may withhold expression of grievances until such a point that the difficulty of confrontation is offset by the emotional release and possible change in the situation resulting from confrontation.

**Proposition:** Willingness to confront is a function of the degree to which one is frustrated by the grievance(s).

Once again, interdependence may play a role in the degree to which people become frustrated. In highly interdependent relationships, costs and frustrations may
accrue quickly due to high levels of emotional investments or behavioral coordination. The more intense the connection, the more intense the reaction to conflict.

H4: The greater frustration associated with a grievance, the greater degree of confrontation.

Lastly, if the relational maintenance function is the primary function in an interaction, then a range of supportive or critical behaviors may occur in order to improve or stabilize the relationship. Relational maintenance may produce the most varied behavioral response to conflict. For example, some people may feel avoidance and tolerance of disagreement is the best way to maintain their relationships (Roloff & Cloven, 1990). Others may confront in a joking or subtle manner to get the message across, yet others may directly confront to make their grievances known. People’s perceptions of how these attempts will be received, combined with their anticipated effects, may be the most pertinent predictors of confrontational behavior.

*Proposition:* Willingness to confront is a function of perceptions of how best to maintain their relationships.

Due to the varied responses people are expected to have in maintaining their friendships relationship maintenance may be more a function of the anticipated negative consequences associated with how confrontation will be received by the friend (hypothesis 1).

Social influence, emotional expression, and relationship management goals may operate simultaneously in a given interaction. Do they together predict confrontation, or does one goal tend to override the presence of the other two?
RQ2: Do partner-receptivity to change, frustration, and anticipated negative consequences together predict confrontation?

Assumption 4. *Individual abilities and skills affect responses to confrontation.*

The assertiveness literature provides insight into people's ability to confront their partners when they desire to do so. Despite the intent to confront, anxiety, fears, situational factors, and lack of behavioral options in their repertoire may stifle intended confrontation during the interaction. Thus, the intent to confront and actual behavior enacted during interaction are not isomorphic. Similar to the inability to directly confront may be the inability to break a habitual hostile-confrontational cycle. Despite intentions to avoid open conflict, people may aggressively confront their partners while on "automatic pilot" during interaction--fueled by their frustration, arousal, or anger. Frustration (and the associated need to express dissatisfaction) as well as anticipated negative consequences (cost/benefit analysis) may encompass some of these individual differences among people. Individual abilities are not addressed in the present effort, but may be captured in people's behavioral responses to confrontation.

Summary

Established and highly interdependent relationships are just the "type" of relationships that allow people to influence one another such that they are more likely to confront. Or perhaps they are longer lived than others, such that grievances accumulate, frustration increases, and therefore, grievances are addressed rather than ignored (Duck, 1985). Additionally, communication goals, such as emotional
expression, social influence, and relationship management affect one’s response to a given grievance.
CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Overview

Two studies were conducted utilizing self-report questionnaires to assess relational interdependence and confrontation patterns between friends. A pilot study was undertaken to create and refine interdependence measures and to estimate the time frame necessary for the main study’s hypothesis tests. The main study was conducted in order to assess the relationship between interdependence, communication functions, and confrontation patterns.

Pilot Study

Participants

Ninety-five participants were recruited from communication courses at a large southwestern university. As part of a class assignment, participants were required to keep daily interaction records (designed for this study) over the course of two weeks. At the end of this time period, they were offered extra credit for submitting a copy of their interaction records and completing additional measures.

Twenty-nine males and 66 females participated in the study. Most of the participants (78%) were between the ages of 20 and 22; four percent were sophomores, 54 percent juniors, and 37 percent seniors.

Procedure

Interaction records. Participants were required to complete interaction records for each conversation held for two weeks as part of their course requirements. They
either completed records after each interaction or at the end of each day in order to acquire reasonably accurate data for each interaction. The interaction record gathered information such as the interaction partner and the participant's relationship with him/her, time of day, duration of interaction, the nature of the interaction (task, social, mixed), tone of the interaction, support given and received by participant, as well as two main conversational topics they discussed.

Interactions were defined as interactive communicative situations that were more substantial than brief greetings and superficial conversations with people they had "run into." In particular, respondents were asked to focus on recording interactions with friends, family, and romantic partners, rather than with strangers and to omit "work-related" interactions with coworkers and customers. However, exceptions could occur, such as having lunch with a friend who also happens to be a coworker (then they should record the interaction). The decision to exclude co-worker or customer interactions was based on the assumption that the rules for these kinds of interactions are more formal than and different from interactions outside of the work environment. Thus, a social outing with a friend/coworker would be included in the interaction record, but on-the-job interactions would be excluded.

Although prior interaction studies have used a ten minute "rule" to define an interaction, the present study only used that rule if the respondent was interacting with a stranger or acquaintance. Shorter interactions with friends, family, and romantic partners (that were more than just "hello's") were to be recorded because significant events might transpire within a few minutes. For example, one might have a
disagreement within the first few minutes of the interaction and then abandon the interaction as a consequence. Because this study examines negatively valenced interactions which may be more quickly terminated, the inclusion of these shorter, but potentially significant (meaningful), interactions must be allowed.

The interaction record was designed to assess a wide array of interaction behaviors. However, one of the main purposes of undertaking this pilot was to determine the frequency of grievances with friends over the course of two weeks in order to estimate the time frame necessary for the main study. The item on the interaction record used to assess grievances was the degree to which there was any disagreement or disappointment with the interactional partner during the interaction.

After the participants completed their interaction records (as part of their class requirements), they were given the opportunity to participate in this study by submitting a copy of their records as well as completing additional questionnaires. Subsequently, participants reported to a communication seminar room and were informed that this study assessed relationship maintenance and how people deal with the irritations, disappointments, or disagreements they have with friends.

The researcher selected a conflictual interaction from the respondent's interaction record upon which participants were to base their responses. The selected interaction met the following criteria. First, a grievance had to be present. An interaction was defined as having a grievance if there was a score of 3 or higher (on a one-to-seven scale, with one being no disagreement to seven being extreme disagreement) on the item "degree of disagreement/disappointment" from the
interaction record. The most recent conflictual interaction was selected to help insure that the interaction was relatively "fresh" in memory for the respondent. Next, the interaction was selected if the partner was a friend or close friend of the same sex. If there was not a recent same-sex conflictual interaction, then the record was scanned again for the most recent conflictual interaction with an opposite-sex friend. This process was continued, defaulting to a romantic conflictual interaction or lastly, a family member conflictual interaction.

After the researcher selected a conflictual interaction, the respondents reviewed it from their records, identified the friend with whom they interacted, and completed questionnaires assessing interdependence. Subsequently, respondents were thanked for their participation and debriefed.

**Interdependence measures.** The pilot study was undertaken in large part to pretest newly constructed interdependence measures. Three different questionnaires were utilized to assess respondent perceptions of three types of connections (see Appendix A): their own connections to their friend (labeled *subject interdependence*), their perceptions of their friend's connections to themselves (labeled *partner interdependence*), and their perceptions of a dyadic connection (labeled *dyadic interdependence*). The pilot study sought to determine whether perceptions of dyadic interdependence were similar to or different from the average of the subject and partner interdependence scores. The subject, partner, and dyadic interdependence scales included the same (apart from the idiom) twenty-nine items that measured affective, behavioral, cognitive, and global interdependence (See Appendix A).
Affective interdependence was assessed utilizing ten seven-interval Likert-type items that measure the degree of emotional connectedness. Items were created or modified from previous measures (Berscheid, Snyder, & Omoto, 1989; Dillman, 1994; Kelley, 1986). Examples of affective interdependence items include, "I feel close to him/her," "His/her emotional support is important to me," and "His/her mood does not affect my mood/emotional-state." Cronbach coefficient alpha reliabilities for the pilot (and the main study) are reported in Table 1.

Behavioral interdependence was assessed utilizing eight seven-interval Likert-type items that measure the frequency, duration, breadth, and consistency of interaction (Berscheid et al., 1989; Kelley, 1986). Examples of such items include, "I do a wide variety of activities with him/her" and "I see him/her (or talk to him/her) almost every day." The pilot study yielded high Cronbach coefficient alpha reliabilities (see Table 1).

Cognitive interdependence was assessed by constructing eight items that measure the degree to which one is connected to, or is influenced by, the partner’s information, feedback, or alternative viewpoints. Examples of such items include, "The information I get from him/her is important to me," He/She shows me different ways to view situations," and "The feedback he/she provides me is useful." Cronbach coefficient alpha reliabilities are reported in Table 1.

Lastly, global interdependence was included to assess how participants perceive their connection to their partner in general, rather than specifically in the affective, behavioral, or cognitive domain. Three seven-point Likert-type items were
constructed to match the conceptual definition of interdependence (See Appendix A).

The pilot study yielded a Cronbach coefficient alpha reliability of .87 for global interdependence.

---

Table 1

Cronbach Alpha Reliabilities for Affective, Behavioral, and Cognitive Interdependence for Pilot and Main Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Affective</th>
<th>Behavioral</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of Pilot Study

**Interdependence.** The high reliability of the interdependence scales (as reported in Table 1) allowed for their inclusion in further analyses. Pearson product-moment correlations between the dimensions of interdependence were computed (see Table 2). All correlations were significant at $p < .01$, suggesting that friends' affective, behavioral, and cognitive connections are all highly related to one another.

Due to the high correlations among dimensions of interdependence, dimensions were collapsed into a single interdependence scale. Resultant reliabilities for the pilot study yielded .97 for subject interdependence, .96 for partner interdependence, and .97 for dyadic interdependence.
Table 2

Intercorrelations Between Affective, Behavioral, Cognitive, and Dyadic Interdependence Measures for Pilot Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>SB</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>PB</th>
<th>PC</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>DB</th>
<th>DC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DB</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA = subjects' affective interdependence, SB = subjects' behavioral interdependence, SC = subjects' cognitive interdependence, PA = partners' affective interdependence, PB = partners' behavioral interdependence, PC = partners' cognitive interdependence, DA = dyadic affective interdependence, DB = dyadic behavioral interdependence, DC = Dyadic cognitive interdependence. All correlations are significant at p < .01.

Frequency of conflict. Number of grievances was assessed from the interaction record by totalling up the number of interactions that respondents indicated had at least a modest level of disagreement. Results indicate that on the average, participants experienced 1.72 grievances with their friends during a two week time period. An equal amount of grievances occurred between casual (M=1.62) and close (M= 1.82) friends during this two week time period. The low frequency of grievances among close and casual friends may affect the confrontation process in that frustration may not accrue to force the expression of grievances. Time may allow for some of the frustration with the friend to dissipate such that tolerance is a viable option. As such, more nonconfrontational responses may be operating among friends.
Main Study

Overview

The main study utilized self-report questionnaires to assess grievances and subsequent responses between friends. Participants selected a "casual to close" friend with whom they talk at least once a week. Upon selecting their friend, participants completed interdependence and demographic questionnaires. Subsequently, for three weeks, respondents completed grievance management questionnaires every Sunday and Wednesday.

Participants

A total of fifty-two participants (18 male, 34 female) completed the study. A university sample \( n = 24 \) and an adult, community sample \( n = 28 \) were recruited.

The student sample was recruited from four small group communication courses at a large southwestern university in return for extra credit applied towards that course. Although thirty-six students agreed to participate, completed interdependence measures, and received their materials for the study, only twenty-four (7 males, 17 females) students completed the study. Forty-six percent were communication majors, 29 percent were majors other than communication, and twenty-five percent were either undeclared or did not indicate their major.

The community sample was reached through snowball sampling from a local church and from a large company in the midwest. It was comprised of eleven men and seventeen women ranging in age from 23 to 69 years. Their highest education achieved ranged from a high school degree through an advanced (masters, PhD, or
JD) degree. The majority (78%), however, held a college degree.

Table 3

Sample Characteristics by Community and Student Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Community (n = 28)</th>
<th>Student (n = 24)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in years)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>married</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>divorced/widowed</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target Friendship</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual Friend</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close/Best Friend</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Friendship</strong> (average, in months)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual Friend</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Friend</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Number of Friends</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 illustrates the two samples are similar in that more women than men completed the study (although it was more pronounced for the student sample) as well
as the majority of both samples were white. As for their social networks, both samples had an average of 5 close friends.

The samples differed on several factors, including age (20 year difference) and marital status (students being single, community people showing more diversity, with a majority being married). The community sample also had more work friends than the student sample, while students tended to have almost three times more casual friends than the community people. A striking contrast between the two groups is that the community group knew their target friend much longer than did the student group (see Table 3).

Procedure

Participants were informed that the purpose of the study was to examine how people manage their personal relationships--dealing with the small irritations to larger disagreements in friendships; these grievances could be in the form of something that their friend did or said as well as something that the friend "should have" said or done.

At the time they agreed to participate, respondents were given a packet that contained all the questionnaires for the three week study and verbal and written instructions. Respondents were randomly assigned to two friendship type "conditions" to help ensure a range of casual to close friends; thus, some were asked to select a casual friend, while others were asked to select a close friend. Then they completed an interdependence measure (which was labeled as the "friendship evaluation questionnaire" in the respondents' packets) and a demographic
questionnaire. Respondents were asked to refrain from disclosing their participation in this study to their friend, in order to prevent undue influence on the study. Then, participants completed grievance questionnaires (discussed shortly) every Wednesday and Sunday for three weeks. At the end of the three weeks, they were asked to return their packets.

A three week time frame for this study was chosen for several reasons. First, because of the length of the study, daily assessment would be too taxing on the participants and a high mortality rated was anticipated. Therefore, completion of measures twice a week appeared to be often enough to capture a relatively accurate assessment of grievances, but not so often that participants would be fatigued. Second, people may not have daily interactions nor daily "expectations" of friends. For example, it may not be problematic that a friend did not call on any given day, but rather that over the course of a week, the friend did not make contact with the participant. The three/four day time lapse therefore probed more extended expectations and conflicts that may not show up on a daily interaction record.

The three week extended duration was also chosen based on the pilot study. Almost all respondents in that study had some sort of conflictual interaction with a friend in the two week time span. To allow for additional time for conflicts to develop, particularly with a community sample who may not interact with their friends as often as college students, an additional week was added to the time frame.

Lastly, the three week time span and dependent measure administration was chosen in order to heighten the willingness of people to participate in this study.
Agreeing to participate in a month long study seemed much more aversive than a three week study (i.e., the $9.99 phenomenon). Also, the researcher was able to call or email the respondents to remind them to complete their questionnaires every Wednesday and Sunday night, something that would not be feasible with more frequent administration.

Although dyadic data would have been ideal to collect in order to assess "actual" interdependence as well as both friends' perceptions of grievances and subsequent responses, limitations necessitated the use of only one person's responses. First, it would be difficult to recruit community people to participate in this three week study, without having to limit the subject pool even more by the additional requirement of having their friend also agree to participate. Second, the friends most likely to participate would probably be "best" friends--which would severely limit the range of variance in interdependence. Limiting variance in interdependence would not allow for adequate hypothesis tests, particularly those based on correlations that require a moderate degree of variability, as well as those contrasting slightly and highly interdependent friends.

Independent and Dependent Measures

Interdependence. Due to their high reliability (see Table 1), the subject and partner interdependence measures utilized in the pilot study were utilized again in the main study (see Appendix A). The dyadic and three-item global measure of interdependence were not used in the main study because it was not worth the respondent's time and possible fatigue in completing measures that did not provide
information over and above what could be assessed from the subject and partner measures (i.e., they provided redundant information).

Due to the significant positive correlations between affective, behavioral, and cognitive interdependence (see Table 4), they were combined to form a global interdependence score. Then, a dyadic interdependence score was obtained by averaging subject and partner global interdependence. This global dyadic interdependence score was utilized to test hypothesis 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>SB</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>PB</th>
<th>PC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td></td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB</td>
<td></td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA = subjects' affective interdependence, SB = subjects' behavioral interdependence, SC = subjects' cognitive interdependence, PA = partners' affective interdependence, PB = partners' behavioral interdependence, PC = partners' cognitive interdependence. N = 52. All correlations are significant at p < .01.

Grievance occurrence. A questionnaire assessing whether the participants experienced any grievances with their friends was constructed (see Appendix B). Open-ended questions were utilized first to allow respondents to give an account (in their own words) of their grievance. The open ended questions were then coded to provide descriptive information about the nature of the grievances. Responses were
coded for: the type of grievance, setting, presence of others, directedness of behavior, emotional arousal, duration of grievance, issue, how grievance was incurred, and the fullness of the written response. Coefficient kappas (Brennan & Prediger, 1981) were calculated for each of the variables (see Table 5). Definitions of the categories and results are combined and therefore presented in Table 9 in the results section.

Table 5

**Coefficient Kappa reliabilities for Open-Ended Responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kappa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grievance Type</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public-private</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal-informal</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of Others</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Directedness</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Arousal</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grievance Incurred (direct-indirect)</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Response (restricted-elaborated)</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to Grievance</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Multiple Response</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Partner-receptivity to change.** Partner-receptivity to change was assessed utilizing seven-point Likert-type questions. Three items were created to capture the degree to which respondents felt they could change the target friend's opinions or behaviors (See Appendix B) and were used to test hypothesis 3. This three-item measure yielded a Cronbach alpha coefficient reliability of .89.

**Frustration.** Four 7-point Likert-type items were developed to measure respondents' degree of frustration associated with a grievance. This scale, which was used to test hypothesis 4, had a Cronbach coefficient alpha reliability of .85.

**Anticipated negative consequences.** Three 7-point Likert-type items were constructed to assess the degree to which the respondent anticipated negative consequences as a result of discussing the grievance with the target friend. This scale had a Cronbach coefficient reliability of .71 and was used to test hypothesis 1.

**Supplemental measures.** *Degree of forethought* (the degree to which respondents thought about and assessed the costs and benefits of their grievance response prior to enacting their response [see Appendix B]) was assessed through eight 7-point Likert-type items. Because questionnaires were completed after the grievance episode, these items asked respondents to think back to the time of the grievance and estimate their thought and behavior process at that time. The resultant Cronbach alpha coefficient reliability was .89. Because much of the cost/benefit analysis may involve conscious deliberation over grievance responses, this forethought measure was included for supplemental analysis consideration.

Additionally, a satisfaction measure was included to examine whether there was
an association between satisfaction and confrontation. This 3-item Likert-type scale had a Cronbach coefficient reliability of .82.

Peterson's (1983) model posits that greater seriousness of the grievance, fewer risks associated with confrontation, and greater solvability lead to conflict engagement. In order to assess whether Peterson's (1983) model would be supported as opposed to the confrontational model presented, a 7-point scale, anchored by small irritation and serious matter, was included.

**Confrontation measures.** Open-ended questions allowed respondents to give their accounts of how they responded to their grievances. These accounts were then coded by the same two coders into four categories: nonconfrontation only, confrontation only, and two categories that allowed for both: nonconfrontation followed by confrontation, and confrontation along with nonconfrontational strategies. The marginal coding reliability (kappa = .70) primarily resulted from problems in coding data into the mixed categories. Therefore, data were recoded into two main categories: confrontation (confrontational strategies only and confrontational combined with nonconfrontational behaviors), and nonconfrontation (nonconfrontational only). This two-category structure provided the dependent measure for the hypothesis tests and research questions. Additionally, responses were coded for whether the respondent used single or multiple tactics in their response to the grievance. Coefficient Kappa reliabilities are presented in Table 5.

To answer research question 1 (assessing the frequency of nonconfrontational tactics), respondents completed forced-choice (yes/no) questions assessing whether
they enacted various types of conflict management behaviors. A majority of these items were modified from Morrill and Thomas (1992), while a few were constructed to capture additional types of grievance responses. The different strategies captured by this measure were: direct verbalization, third-party mobilization, overt retaliation, covert retaliation, indirect verbalization, nonverbal negativity, toleration, and avoidance (See Appendix B). Three items (representing different manifestations/tactics of the strategy) were included in the measure, such that use of any one or more of the tactics representing each strategy was scored as a single count of that strategy.
CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

In addition to testing the hypotheses and answering the research questions, data are provided for (a) comparing and contrasting the student and community samples, (b) describing the nature of grievances among friends, and (c) describing the types of confrontational and nonconfrontational strategies used in response to grievances.

Interdependence and Grievances

Of the 52 people who completed this study, 14 had zero grievances, 17 had one grievance, 10 had two grievances, 7 had three grievances, and 4 had four grievances. The number of grievances experienced differed for the student and the community samples; all but one student had a grievance, whereas almost half of the community participants did not have a grievance (see Table 6).

Table 6

Number of Grievances in Three Weeks By Community and Student Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Grievances</th>
<th>Community (n=28)</th>
<th>Student (n=24)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because interdependence is the foundation of this study, means were inspected to see if those who did not experience grievances had a different level of
interdependence than those who had grievances; there was no difference in
interdependence between those who did \((M = 5.00)\) and did not \((M = 5.28)\) have a
grievance, \(t(1,50) = .78, p = .44\). Only those people who experienced a grievance
are included in the hypothesis tests and research question analyses.

Table 7

Means, Standard Deviations, and T-Tests for Community and Student Samples
on Interdependence by Relationship Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Community</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>(sd)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>(sd)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Friend</td>
<td>4.11 (.72)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.39 --</td>
<td>4.48 (.91)</td>
<td>4.48 (.75)</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual Friend</td>
<td>5.27 (.61)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.67 (.47)</td>
<td>6.22 (.13)</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Friend</td>
<td>5.75 (.44)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: \(p\)-values are for a one-tail test. A \(t\)-test could not be conducted on the work friend
groups because \(n = 1\) for the student sample.

Interdependence may vary within each relationship type as well as between the
two samples. Therefore, means were inspected and \(t\)-tests conducted to assess
whether the two samples were similar or different in their levels of interdependence
(see Table 7). Because community members were primarily married and mostly
worked full time jobs, it was expected that their friendships would be less
interdependent than students who were single and who might have more time to spend
with their friends. Student and community samples showed a striking similarity in
interdependence with their work and casual friends. As anticipated, student and
community samples differed in interdependence with their close friends. However,
due to the similarity of interdependence on three of four relationship types and overall interdependence (see Table 8), and due to the small size of the student and community samples, the samples were combined for hypothesis tests and research questions.

Table 8

T-tests, Means, and Standard Deviations on Interdependence by Sample and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M (sd)</td>
<td>M (sd)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>4.66 (.83)</td>
<td>5.38 (.77)</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>4.38 (1.04)</td>
<td>5.51 (.79)</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>4.18 (1.20)</td>
<td>4.90 (1.28)</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>5.41 (.75)</td>
<td>5.71 (.71)</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>5.03 (.79)</td>
<td>5.24 (.92)</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>5.06 (1.12)</td>
<td>5.20 (.93)</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>4.32 (1.10)</td>
<td>5.04 (1.41)</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>5.70 (.76)</td>
<td>5.50 (.70)</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N = 52. p-values are for a two-tail test.

To assess whether there were gender and sample differences between affective, behavioral, and cognitive interdependence and overall interdependence, t-tests were conducted (see Table 8). Males were less interdependent that females on overall interdependence as well as affective interdependence, and marginally less behaviorally interdependent as well. Cognitive interdependence was the only dimension where men and women were similar. Although there were differences in interdependence,
all respondents were moderately interdependent with their target friend (average interdependence ranged from 4.18 to 5.71 on a seven-point scale, which is neither high nor low interdependence).

Although there were quite a few gender differences, only one significant difference between students and community members was obtained, on behavioral interdependence. Students interacted with their friends more often and in more varied ways than did community members. As with gender, however, everyone was moderately interdependent.

Description of Grievances

Respondents gave their written account of the nature of their grievances and their subsequent responses. These accounts were then coded along various dimensions (see Table 9). Although one may refer to the table for more complete information, a brief summary of the nature of the grievances is provided for an overall picture of the types of grievances respondents experienced.

Type of Grievance

Grievances were coded into two broad categories as to whether they were differences in opinion or values (differences with the friend occurred through discussion of thoughts and opinions) or grievances with how the target friend behaved. The majority of grievances had to do with the target friend's behavior. It may be that differences in opinion were not perceived as grievances in the first place.
Table 9

Grievance Description Categories, Definitions, and Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grievance type: Opinion - Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 21%  
Opinion/value differences: Conflicts that centered around differences of opinion that did not translate into behavior performed by the friend.  
Example: "We disagree regarding our work director's behavior. She and I are in total disharmony with the present direction from our boss." |
| 79%  
Behavior performed by friend  
Example: "She stabbed me in the back by lying to another girl and saying that I said things about the other girl. My supposed friend denied ever doing it, but I know she did because several eye witnesses saw her telling this girl the lies." |

Setting

42% Public  
58% Private  
Settings that are accessible to many are considered public whereas private settings are inaccessible to many. There are restrictions over who may enter private settings.

16% Formal  
84% Informal  
Formal settings are defined as those that have rules or prescribed behavior associated with them. People in formal settings tend to follow the conventions of what the setting dictates as appropriate behavior. Informal settings, in contrast, may not be as highly regulated and have fewer behavioral rules associated with them.

Presence of others during the grievance

55% Only target friend and respondent present  
13% Strangers/Acquaintances: Others in the setting that are not explicitly identified as friends (including romantic partners) or family are placed in this category. It is with strangers and acquaintances, people we do not know well, that we are more likely to act in socially appropriate ways.  
21% Friends: People identified as friends, romantic partners, or family are placed into this "friends" category. It is assumed that around our friends and family, we will have more freedom of action.

Friend's behavior was directed toward:

58% Respondent: The friend's behavior (verbal, nonverbal, or action) was "aimed" at the respondent  
Example: "it wasn't really a fight, but she has this problem where she ignores what people say. I asked her a question about a movie we were watching and I asked it 4 times before she even acknowledged me."
Table 9 (continued)

Another example: "The disagreement that I had with my friend was that she borrowed some clothes of mine; she packed to go away for the weekend and decided to pack my closet instead of hers."

24% **Third party:** The friend’s behavior was directed toward a person other than the respondent.
Example: "I disagreed with something my friend said....he was talking about a conversation he had with his son. His son is applying for a job and my friend asked him if he could do what he was asked to do on the job. His son said, 'No problem,' and [the father then] said to his son, 'Then why can’t you obey what simple things we ask of you?’ I reacted to his criticism in light of the fact it could have been an opportunity to praise his son."

5% **Self:** The friend did something that was directed toward him or herself, such as self-destructive behavior.
Example: "My grievance is that [target friend] has a big problem with getting motivated to do her school work. Meanwhile I study and get my work done. It’s very aggravating because when she says she is going to study, she procrastinates...."
Another example: "My friend was going to begin dating a guy that I knew was NO GOOD for her and I told her what I felt and why. She disagreed and we argued about it...."

13% **Other:** The friend’s behavior was directed toward an object or was a difference of opinion that was not "directed towards" anyone. This category encompasses all those grievances that do not fit under respondent, third party, or self.
Example: "I got very upset at my friend (neighbor) when he constructed a horse stable in a place on his property that restricted my view of the Tucson Mountains."
Another example: "[He] did not order the correct parts for a job I'm expecting to repair...Once people leave the work force and go into management, their brains get all screwed up. I've seen this happen too many times to call it consequences (sic). I won't go into management..."

**Overtness of Grievance:**

84% **Directly:** The grievance was experienced directly from the target friend.
Example: "When we went out to dinner, she used very foul language and it didn't even seem like she noticed."

16% **Indirectly:** The grievance was not a result of the target friend’s overt actions toward the respondent.
Example: "I said something over the phone to his [the target friend’s] wife (as a joke) which she (apparently) took seriously. She gave him grief over it. Rather than confronting me about it (or ever mentioning it), he 'yelled' at my wife and told [her] that she had a 'nutty' husband. He did not mention it to me."
Setting

Settings in which the grievances occurred were coded as to whether they were private or public and formal or informal. Although grievances were found equally in both public and private settings, most grievances occurred in informal settings. Public formal settings may be so well scripted and routinized that fewer rule violations, hence grievances, occur.

Presence of Others

In a majority of cases, the respondent and target friend were alone when the grievance occurred. The presence of others, particularly strangers, may heighten more polite behavior.

Target Friend's Behavior

The majority of grievances with a target friend related to something the friend said or did to the respondent, along with a sizable number of grievances arising out of something the target friend said or did to another person. The least common grievances revolved around abstract issues.

Overtness of Grievance

Most of the grievances were a result of overt behavior by the target friend toward the respondent. However, a small portion of respondents were aggrieved because they found out about something that the target friend did or said through a third party. For example, one respondent found out from a different friend that her target friend passed on a confidential piece of information she had given her.
Hypothesis Tests and Research Questions

Hypothesis 1 was tested using a biserial correlation between anticipated negative consequences and confrontation. Results support the hypothesis, $r (35) = -.36, p < .05$. The more negative consequences anticipated as a result of confrontation, the less likely one is to confront the partner.

Research Question 1 queried which nonconfrontational strategies were used in response to grievances. If respondents indicated that they utilized one or more of the tactics per grievance management strategy, they were credited with using that strategy. No distinction was made between people who used one, two, three, or four different tactics within a single strategy. Table 10 presents the number of people, for each grievance, who indicated they utilized any of the eight different strategies—both confrontation and nonconfrontational.

It should be noted that the findings presented here represent respondent self reports of their behaviors. By having respondents first provide a written account of how they responded to their grievance and subsequently completing a "yes" or "no" checklist questionnaire as to whether they enacted specific behaviors for their grievance, it was hoped that response biases (social desirability and typical response patterns) would be minimized. For example, providing specific details of their responses on the open-ended account section was intended to encourage respondents to write about the particular incident as well as to cement in their minds their actual responses for the checklist questionnaire. As with all checklist methods, however, these results should be interpreted with their strengths and weaknesses in mind.
Additionally, respondents simply checked if they did or did not enact specific behaviors, and therefore could have enacted all or none of them. Results are presented in terms of overarching strategies rather than the specific behaviors.

Table 10

Percentages and Number of Respondents Utilizing Grievance Response Strategies Per Grievance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G #1 (n=38)</th>
<th>G #2 (n=21)</th>
<th>G #3 (n=11)</th>
<th>G #4 (n=4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td>74% (28)</td>
<td>90% (19)</td>
<td>8% (9)</td>
<td>100% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>48% (18)</td>
<td>62% (13)</td>
<td>55% (6)</td>
<td>75% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Indirectness</td>
<td>34% (13)</td>
<td>29% (6)</td>
<td>18% (2)</td>
<td>50% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbal Negativity</td>
<td>48% (18)</td>
<td>33% (7)</td>
<td>45% (5)</td>
<td>50% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covert Retaliation</td>
<td>5% (2)</td>
<td>19% (4)</td>
<td>27% (3)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Party Mobilization</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
<td>5% (1)</td>
<td>9% (1)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overt Retaliation</td>
<td>8% (3)</td>
<td>19% (4)</td>
<td>18% (2)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Directness</td>
<td>61% (23)</td>
<td>52% (11)</td>
<td>64% (7)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages reflect people who utilized each strategy out of total number of people for each grievance. The number of people who used each strategy is also included beneath the percentages in parentheses.
Additionally, Table 11 presents strategy use by gender and sample type. One will note that there were almost twice as many females \( (n=33) \) as males \( (n=18) \) in the sample, as well as more students \( (n=23) \) than community members \( (n=15) \) represented in these tables. Thus, discrepancies in percentages may reflect sample composition rather than actual gender or sample type differences. Additionally, because respondents could indicate that they used multiple strategies per grievance, percentages across the different strategies is greater than one hundred percent. Therefore, these percentages should be interpreted with these caveats in mind.

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Grievance Response Strategy Use by Gender and Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toleration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbally Indirect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbal Negativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covert Retaliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Party Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overt Retaliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbally Direct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The most striking finding is that most respondents indicated that they tolerated their grievances; toleration was the most used response of all strategies. Seventy-four percent to 100 percent of respondents (across the four grievances) pretended they were not aggrieved. The percent of tolerance use rose with each grievance, with the exception of the third grievance, where avoidance, nonverbal negativity, and verbal confrontation occurred with high frequency. One should note that everyone who experienced a fourth grievance indicated use of tolerance. Additionally, students, community members, males, and females used toleration with similar frequency.

Avoidance also was used frequently and with regularity; more than half of the respondents used it at any given time. Avoidance entailed avoiding the target friend or avoiding the grievance issue during interaction, which captured different types of avoidance. Men and women used avoidance with equal frequency, but students tended to use avoidance more than community members, \( \chi^2 = 3.51, p = .06 \).

The verbally direct strategy, or confrontation, was the third most frequently used. It is interesting to note that more than half of the respondents simultaneously indicated that they used tolerance, avoidance, and verbally direct statements in response to their grievances. Respondent accounts indicate that sometimes they downplayed their frustration and avoided the grievance then confronted their target friend. Some respondents who confronted their target friends avoided them after the confrontation.

Nonverbal negativity was utilized in about half of all grievances. This strategy encompassed all those nonverbal behaviors that indicate displeasure with the target
friend. Account data suggest that glaring, giving the friend the "cold shoulder," and facial unpleasantness were the main ways in which negativity was displayed. Nonverbal negativity was often used in conjunction with confrontation as well as being the sole means of grievance response. Men and women were nonverbally negative with equal frequency, yet students tended to be more nonverbally negative than community members, $X^2 (1, 37) = 5.74$, $p = .02$.

The least used strategy was third party mobilization, which only occurred three times. Covert and overt retaliation were also infrequently used. Although these latter strategies probably were the most socially undesirable of all strategies and therefore may be underestimated in the data, respondents did indicate some use of them. Across all responses, each was used nine times. It is interesting to note that overt retaliation primarily occurred among men (despite more women respondents).

Because respondents often had up to four days between a grievance and completing their dependent measure, multiple strategies across time were recorded. Sixteen percent of respondents indicated that they initially enacted nonconfrontational responses before they confronted their target friends. An additional five percent indicated that they used avoidance or tolerance after confronting their target friend. It is increasingly clear that people use a variety of strategies over time. Some people used time to "cool off" so they would not say anything in haste, and others thought they could ignore the issue, but ended up confronting because they continued to feel bothered by the grievance.
The account data provided a larger context and better understanding of the participant's experience of their grievances and subsequent responses. The finding of multiple and varied strategies suggests that grievance management is highly complex and not necessarily captured by questionnaires that force responses into a single category. The use of accounts combined with the checklist method, however, enabled assessment of toleration, avoidance, and other subtle strategies; the checklist may have gleaned additional information, such as these subtle nonverbal, avoidance, and tolerance strategies, that may have been omitted in the account data.

Hypothesis 2 was tested utilizing a Pearson product-moment correlation between interdependence and the proportion of confrontations to total number of grievances. Because confrontation is an infrequently occurring event, which tends to distribute nonnormally (Snedecor & Cochran, 1967), an arcsine transformation was conducted on the proportions (to normalize the distribution) before calculating correlations. Although the correlation, \( r (36) = .21 \), was not significant at the conventional \( p > .05 \) level, it was significant at \( p < .10 \), indicating a trend toward supporting the hypothesized increase in confrontation with greater interdependence.

Supplemental analyses, conducted to assess if a nonlinear relationship between interdependence and confrontation existed, yielded nonsignificant results. Nonlinear trends were assessed by dividing interdependence into five levels at .5 intervals, and subsequently into three levels of approximately equal numbers of subjects per level. Eta in these analyses did not differ significantly from \( r \). Additionally, inspection of the means indicated a linear rather than a nonlinear trend. A supplemental analysis of
variance was conducted to examine the relationship between interdependence and all grievance responses \((N = 52)\). In this analysis, those who did not confront because they reported no grievances, those who did not confront but experienced a grievance, and those who did confront in response to a grievance formed three levels of the confrontation variable. There were nonsignificant differences between groups on interdependence, \(F(2,50) = .55, p > .05\).

Follow-up correlations between affective, behavioral, and cognitive interdependence and confrontation were also conducted to examine whether a specific dimension of interdependence was associated with confrontation even though the overall measure was not. Correlational analyses yielded one significant correlation between cognitive interdependence and confrontation, \(r(36) = .29, p < .05\). Greater cognitive interdependence was associated with the use of confrontation. Affective and behavioral interdependence were not associated with confrontation.

Hypothesis 3 was tested by computing a biserial correlation between partner receptivity to change and confrontation. Results supported the hypothesis, \(r(35) = .35, p < .05\). Greater partner receptivity to change was associated with confrontation, while partners' unwillingness to change was associated with nonconfrontational behavior.

A biserial correlation between degree of frustration and confrontation, to test hypothesis 4, was nonsignificant, \(r(35) = .12, p > .05\). Thus, the bivariate correlation revealed no association between degree of frustration and confrontational responses. It may be that the context overrides or channels emotional expression.
Table 12

**Discriminant Analysis with Anticipated Negative Consequences Predictive of Confrontation**

### CANONICAL DISCRIMINANT FUNCTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Percent of Variance</th>
<th>Canonical Correlation</th>
<th>Wilks Lambda</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.15</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GROUP CENTROIDS**
- Group 1: Nonconfrontational: .43
- Group 2: Confrontational: -.33

### CLASSIFICATION MATRIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual Group Membership</th>
<th>Predicted Group Membership</th>
<th># of Cases</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

70 Percent of Grouped Cases Correctly Identified

Note: n = 37. One case was omitted because it lacked a discriminating variable.

Research Question 2 asked whether partner receptivity, frustration, and anticipated negative consequences together predict the use of confrontation or nonconfrontation. A discriminant function analysis was conducted, using Wilks' method of entry, to assess whether one, two, or all of these factors could separate the groups. Results, presented in Table 12, indicate that only anticipated negative consequences entered the discriminant equation.

Utilizing respondents' anticipated negative consequences, one can predict with 70% accuracy whether they will enact confrontational or nonconfrontational responses. Thus, the fewer
anticipated negative consequences, the more likely one is to confront. When all three communication goals are entered into the discriminant equation, the predictive accuracy only increases to 73 percent. Therefore, anticipated negative consequences alone appears to be the most parsimonious and accurate in predicting confrontation.

Supplemental Analyses

Supplemental analyses were conducted to assess the degree to which respondents consciously planned their responses to their grievances (degree of forethought) and their link to confrontation. In particular, forethought was an exploratory measure to assess the degree to which grievance responses were the outcome of a thoughtful, cost/benefit analysis, or conversely, spontaneous and unplanned; both types of responses are included in the confrontational model. An inspection of the means show that respondents were moderately deliberate and thoughtful ($M = 4.16$) with their grievance response. A biserial correlation between forethought and confrontation was computed to examine whether thoughtful deliberation was related to confrontation or nonconfrontation. A nonsignificant negative correlation [$r(36) = -.12$] between forethought and response choice emerged. Thus, confrontation may be the result of impulsive as well as conscious activity by the respondent. The confrontational model would predict that the conclusions from thoughtful deliberation are more important than the process itself. That is, if one concludes that confrontation would be too costly, then nonconfrontation is more likely than if one concludes that confrontation would be beneficial.
Respondent satisfaction with their response was also assessed. Respondents tended to be moderately satisfied ($M = 4.90$). The biserial correlation between satisfaction and grievance response indicated that satisfaction was related to confrontation, $r(36) = .37, p < .05$. Thus, people felt more satisfied when they employed confrontational responses to their grievances. This is supported by account data, where several people who engaged in nonconfrontation indicated that they "wished they had said something" to their target friend.

To test Peterson's (1983) link between seriousness of response and confrontation, a biserial correlation was computed. A nonsignificant correlation was obtained, $r(36) = .29, p > .05$, indicating that seriousness of grievance was not associated with confrontation. It should be noted that grievances were classified as moderate offenses rather than small irritations or serious problems ($M = 3.70$ on a 7 point scale). Account data suggest that grievance seriousness is truly in the eye of the beholder. That is, some apparently minor offenses, such as being late to a study session, were perceived as egregious problems. Peterson (1983) posits that greater seriousness, less risk, and greater solvability of grievances lead to confrontation as opposed to nonconfrontation. Two of Peterson's three factors obtained significant correlations (if we accept partner-receptivity to change as a measure of his "solvability" factor and anticipated negative consequences as a measure of his "risk" factor), thus providing partial support for his model.
CHAPTER 4
DISCUSSION

Summary of Research Findings

Friendships are typically characterized by support, empathy, understanding, mutual regard, and enjoyment of one another. This study uncovered the conflictual and even deliberate disregard that occurs between friends, and how friends consequently address both their friend and grievance issues.

The community sample’s friendships could be described as relatively conflict-free. When grievances occurred, they were either settled through discussion or tolerance of the problem. On the other hand, students' friendships tended to be more volatile and conflict-laden. A variety of issues, behaviors, and misunderstandings precipitated the grievances. Correspondingly, grievances were handled in many ways--through avoidance, tolerance, and termination of the relationship, to calm discussion, heated arguments, and nonverbal displays. This collection of conflicts provided for the test of the confrontational model.

This study found mixed support for the confrontational model between friends. The underlying social exchange approach to the model was supported; confrontation became less likely as anticipated negative consequences of confrontation increased. Additionally, as partner receptivity to change increased, the likelihood of confrontation increased. Interdependence was weakly related to confrontation; however, the cognitive interdependence dimension was strongly associated with confrontation. These findings are discussed hereafter in more detail.
Hypothesis Tests and Research Questions

Hypothesis one, which posited that anticipation of negative consequences is related to nonconfrontation, was confirmed. The more negativity anticipated as a result of confrontation, such as more relational conflict or the partner blowing the situation out of proportion, the less likely one was to openly confront the partner. It is important to note that this hypothesis focused primarily on the anticipated costs which are proposed to carry the most weight in determining confrontation. The argument was made that because people expect positive interactions with their friends, negative events are more salient and consequently are more important than the anticipated benefits. It may be that once the anticipated negative consequences exceed a certain "threshold," confrontation is avoided; only when one acts without thinking or is pushed too far will confrontation take place.

It appears that avoiding negative situations is a high priority for friends. In this respect, the Chilling Effect (CE) was supported. The present investigation did not assess power bases and alternative friendships, which are integral components of CE, and therefore did not provide for a full fledged test of CE. CE's power and alternative relationships and coinciding explanatory mechanisms may not be as applicable to casual friendships as to exclusive romantic relationships. For example, within friendships, we assume relatively equal power (and according to Rawins, 1992, if there is unequal power, it should be neutralized due to friendship norms) and that people have other concurrent friendships. Additionally, friends may avoid confrontation simply out of politeness and friendship norms, rather than out of fears.
How would CE handle the cases in this study where the higher powered individual (who did not fear retaliation) did not confront? Nevertheless, friends did engage in nonconfrontation with greater risk of negative consequences, thus supporting the main principle of CE.

Research Question 1 examined the most and least frequently used strategies in response to grievances. Of the nonconfrontational strategies examined, tolerance and avoidance were the most frequently utilized. Community members tended to tolerate grievances and students tended to avoid the problem or their friend. It may be that the high interactional frequency between students necessitated them to avoid the problem in order to "cool down." In contrast, community members interacted significantly less frequently and with less variety; they may have had less opportunity to avoid their friends. The conflict management literature supports the findings that avoidance and tolerance are common, and the friendship expectations literature (i.e., Rawlins, 1992) suggests that being supportive (avoiding negativity) is expected in friendships.

Yet, in addition to avoidance and tolerance, nonverbal negativity was also utilized frequently. Rather than directly confronting a friend, hinting at one's displeasure through these nonverbal behaviors allows one to get the point across while preserving face needs (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Similarly, nonverbal expression of anger or frustration is more difficult to control and therefore might not be used intentionally, but instead "leaked" (Burgoon, Buller, & Woodall, 1989). Because intentionality of these specific strategies was not assessed (just their occurrence),
conscious awareness and strategic use of nonverbal negativity needs further empirical examination.

Nonconfrontational tactics were used not only by themselves, but also in conjunction with verbally explicit responses. The correspondence between confrontation and nonverbal negativity is expected (McNeil, 1991), as only the most skilled of communicators may be able to be verbally and vocally pleasant while confronting a friend over a problem. Indeed, it must be noted that verbally direct strategies were also used with high frequency (third most frequent after tolerance and avoidance), which were present in almost half of the grievances. Similarly, verbally indirect strategies (nonconfrontational) were used about one-third of the time. These findings are coincident with Knapp’s (1984) model of communication behavior in developing relationships, that suggests more developed relationships have more critical and negative verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

Among those strategies least utilized were third party mobilization and overt and covert retaliation. It is not surprising that third party mobilization was rarely used. Typically, other people are not asked to interfere in quarrels between friends. Others may be informed about grievances (and even mobilized as a form of emotional support), but they are not asked to intervene as a mediator or arbitrator. Intervention by mutual friends also may place them at risk of taking one person’s side. Morrill and Thomas (1992) similarly found third party mobilization and covert retaliation infrequently used among people with strong ties in the organizational setting, although they found more instances of overt retaliation among these same people.
In contrast to Morrill and Thomas' (1992) findings, friends in this study *infrequently* used overt retaliation, a form of confrontation. It is interesting to note that overt retaliation primarily occurred among student sample men. It may be that men felt more able to yell and swear at their friends than did females; in general, males are allowed to voice their anger and frustration more than females (Burgoon et al., 1989). That the community members did not use these strategies may be due to social desirability, maturity, or "opportunity" factors. Over all, friends did not utilize these more deliberately harmful strategies. Avoidance, tolerance, nonverbal negativity displays, and discussion of differences were the prevailing strategies.

The main hypothesis for this study, hypothesis 2, linking greater interdependence to confrontation, was partially supported. There was a trend toward confrontation with greater overall interdependence. Also, the cognitive dimension of interdependence was strongly associated with confrontation. That is, friends who were influenced by and valued the other's thoughts, knowledge, and viewpoint, were more likely to engage in confrontation than those who did not value the other's opinions as highly. It may be that these friends have established an atmosphere where openness and honesty is valued and consequently they confront. In retrospect, it may be that extremely strong affective and behavioral ties might actually lessen confrontation in light of the strong effect of anticipated negative consequences. If confrontation is expected to produce negative outcomes, then the partner has more opportunity to cause friction in several realms. It might be better to smooth over the situation (tolerate or avoid) than to risk the negative consequences. Although a
curvilinear relationship did not emerge between confrontation and interdependence in the present study (perhaps due to small n per level of interdependence), future investigations should keep a curvilinear relationship as a distinct possibility.

It is important to note that several factors in this study might have attenuated the relationship between interdependence and confrontation. The analysis was underpowered due to small sample size. Additionally, the ability to statistically detect a relationship between confrontation and interdependence was limited because of a lack of variability in interdependence; almost everyone fell within a two unit range on interdependence. One might interpret the modest correlation between overall interdependence and confrontation as evidence indicating a relationship actually exists in light of these factors that inhibit the detection of a true relationship. Future empirical examination is necessary before one may draw firm conclusions.

Hypothesis 3, positing greater confrontation if the target friend is willing or able to change, was supported. It makes sense that people do not want to risk negative consequences without hope of positive outcomes, and therefore people anticipate whether confrontation will lead to partner change. When friends are unable to change, nonconfrontational strategies, such as ignoring problems or avoiding negative situations, may be associated with the least risks and/or costs. However, when the grievances are more serious and one believes the partner will not change, ending the friendship (perhaps considered as an extreme case of avoidance) may occur instead. For example, one respondent account highlighted this latter scenario: A target friend continually treated the respondent poorly, and the respondent felt this
was not going to change. The respondent indicated, after three grievances, that she was very angry with her friend and was not going to complete any more grievance questionnaires because she was ending the friendship and all interaction with the other. It would be interesting to assess whether friends get less upset with their target friend when the partner is unable to change, as opposed to unwilling to change. Additionally, it would be interesting to explore if there are differences in recognizing an event as a grievance in the event that it could not be avoided (i.e., the friend is unable to change the behavior) or the grievance could be attributed to the situation rather than intentional behavior on the part of the friend. It is my suspicion that many grievances are "written off" and ignored because of these factors.

To account for an emotional, rather than a "rational," basis of confrontation, hypothesis 4 was posited. It was speculated that greater frustration would lead to confrontation as a form of cathartic release or as a by-pass to cost-benefit analysis of confrontation. The relationship between frustration and confrontation was not supported. That is, frustration alone does not predict confrontation; other communication goals and anticipated costs appear to influence how one manages frustration. This finding seems to confirm the more basic fight and flight responses to arousal and threat; confrontation may parallel fight (i.e., defending oneself verbally) if one foresees "victory," whereas nonconfrontation may parallel flight when one anticipates negative consequences. Or, instead of negative consequences determining for frustration is handled, it may be that context has a constraining influence, even on the spontaneous level. Although the frustration variable was not
predictive of confrontation, the inclusion of reactive responses (spontaneous and uncalculated), in addition to the more "thoughtful" cost/benefit responses, need to be captured in any model of confrontation.

Research question 2 examined whether partner receptivity to change, frustration, and anticipated negative consequences would together predict confrontation. Only anticipated negative consequences entered the equation, and was able to predict confrontation with fairly high accuracy (70 percent). Therefore, confrontation is most likely to occur if one anticipates very few negative consequences. The redundancy of (correlation between) partner receptivity to change and anticipated negative consequences, suggests that the respondents might actually be factoring in the partner's ability to change into their overall prediction of negative consequences. In this light, anticipated negative consequences might be a useful global measure that encompasses all kinds of individual and relationship specific cost/benefit considerations.

Because this study is highly exploratory in nature, additional analyses were conducted among other factors of interest. First, greater satisfaction was associated with confrontation. Those people who used nonconfrontational strategies in response to their grievances were less satisfied than those who openly discussed their grievances with their target friend. Account data suggest that people who enacted nonconfrontational strategies wanted to be confrontational and used their accounts as a means of expressing their dissatisfaction with their friends and their own inability to confront their friends. Many of the accounts resonated with the assertiveness
literature; many lamented that they wanted to confront but could not overcome their anxiety to do so. Confrontation may be the preferred mode of dealing with grievances because it gets the problem out in the open where it may be settled. (Also, the current societal emphasis is on entitlement and assertiveness.) Otherwise, people may have to tolerate multiple and ongoing grievances which may lead to dissatisfaction with the friendship.

Additional supplemental analyses between degree of conscious planning of one's response and confrontation suggest that friends may have both deliberate and spontaneous reactions to grievances. People who planned their responses used both confrontational and nonconfrontational responses. Rather than the deliberation involved, the outcome of that process appears most important to whether one confronts or not. If one believes that confrontation is too costly, then one might act nonconfrontationally. Conversely, one may plan a confrontational response if it yields the better outcome. Similarly, spontaneous reactions to grievances included confrontation and nonconfrontation. This finding further supports the notion that spontaneous reactions may take the form of fight or flight.

It is important to note that Peterson's (1983) model was partially supported by the findings of this study in addition to the confrontational model that was presented in this investigation. Anticipation of fewer negative consequences, which may be parallel to Peterson's "risk" factor and solvability (partner receptivity to change) were both predictive of confrontation. Also, the Chilling Effect was supported in that fear of negative consequences inhibited confrontation.
In addition to hypothesis tests, this study was designed to explore similarities and differences between student and community samples, interdependence, and to examine the nature of grievances among friends.

**Student Sample versus Community Sample**

This study highlighted some of the similarities and differences between student and community samples. Students and community members differed in several ways. First, they differed in the number of grievances incurred. Almost all students had a grievance in the three week time period of the study, whereas half of the community members did not. Of those who did have grievances, students experienced multiple grievances while it was rare for community members to have more than two. Whether the community friends are better "matched," see each other less (such that they have less opportunity to irritate one another), or have a larger bandwidth of acceptable behaviors for (or fewer expectations of) their friends is left open for speculation. It may be that because community members knew their friends much longer than did students, many of the "kinks" had been worked out of the community member relationships, leaving them with more pleasant interactions.

Second, students were slightly more interdependent (particularly in the behavioral realm and with close friends) than community members, which fits the pattern for young single adult friendships. In contrast, married people (the majority of the community sample) tend to spend most of their time with their spouses and children; their social lives revolve around their family rather than their friends (Rawlins, 1992), which accounts for the community sample's lesser degree of
behavioral interdependence with their friends. The community group, besides being less interdependent overall, may qualitatively differ in interdependence. That is, although community members had less variety and frequency of ties with their friends, on average, they had a much longer history of interaction with them. Commitment to and investment in their friendships may affect interdependence and, possibly, confrontation patterns. One may not be as willing to confront and therefore risk a long-term established relationship over a small offense.

Interdependence

In addition to the relationship between interdependence and confrontation, interdependence according to relationship type and the differences and similarities among the three interdependence dimensions were explored. Although it is assumed that type of relationship (acquaintance to best friend) is not necessarily parallel to degree of interdependence between friends, on the average the closer the relationship type, the greater the interdependence. However, of particular interest is that people indicated they were moderately interdependent with their casual friends. The relatively high level of interdependence overall did not allow for an adequate test between non-interdependent and highly interdependent friends. It is reasonable to assume that if one considers another person as a friend, then one has some degree of affective, behavioral, and cognitive interdependence with that person; it would be very odd for respondents to indicate little emotional or cognitive ties to people they consider friends. The behavioral dimension is the only dimension that appears to have a wide range of variability within the "confines" of a friendship.
Another interesting, but not surprising, finding was that female friends were more affectively interdependent than male friends. Women's friendships tend to be more "communally" oriented (emotionally based) than men's (Rawlins, 1992; Winstead, 1986). Although greater affective interdependence is expected from females, it is unclear why they also were more behaviorally interdependent than males. For example, although men and women typically interact differently when they do get together (females talk and give more emotional support whereas men engage in activities), it does not necessarily follow that females would interact more frequently, consistently, and across a variety of settings than males. If the male "activity" orientation toward friendship is true, then it is reasonable that men do not have as much variety or opportunity to engage in these activities as women may have opportunity to get together to talk.

Description of Grievances

Respondents were asked to give their detailed accounts of the grievances they experienced in order to provide a description of what kinds of problems they face in their friendships. Accounts are defined as "story-like constructions that contain a plot or storyline, characters, a time sequence, attributions, and other forms of expression such as affect" (Harvey, Orbuch, & Weber, 1992, p. 3). These grievance accounts are assumed to contain more complete and vivid information, that provide one with richer, fuller understanding of the grievances, than information gleaned from checklists. Respondent accounts were coded for many facets of information described in the account definition (e.g., people, sequential ordering of events, emotion) and
were utilized in making sense of the companion questionnaire data.

Overall, respondents experienced a mixed bag of grievances. However, friends tended to have grievances over behaviors rather than differences in opinion. Indeed, many of the grievances could be considered violations of relationship expectations, supporting Newell and Stutman’s (1988) findings. The relative lack of opinion/value grievances may be a result of accepting different views from friends, or perhaps true opinion and value similarity (e.g., the attraction literature suggests that people establish relationships with those who are similar to them). Similarly, Planalp and Surra (1992) suggest that friends' beliefs may converge over time.

Since all events in stories are located within settings, two dimensions of settings were coded: private-public and formal-informal. Grievances occurred about equally in both public and private settings. Account data suggest that grievances in public situations often revolved around the respondent being embarrassed by their target friend's socially unacceptable behavior, such as using foul language in front of other people and behaving inappropriately to other workers, as well as basic politeness rules, such as being on time to scheduled meetings. However, grievances (regardless of whether they were in a public or private setting) tended to occur when only the respondent and the target friend were present. Therefore, although grievances occurred in public settings, they did not occur when strangers and acquaintances were nearby, counteracting some of the "publicness" of the situation.

In contrast to the public-private distinction, grievances were overwhelmingly found in informal settings. It may be that in informal settings, people relax their
scripted "politeness" behaviors and have more freedom of action in which to cause grievances. Furthermore, friendship interactions appear to take place primarily in informal settings, therefore more grievances will consequentially occur within them.

Grievances were also analyzed for whom or what received the "injury." Most grievances tended to revolve around unacceptable behavior aimed at the respondent or another person. Personal injuries and grievances may be much more potent than actions aimed at objects or discussions about abstract ideas. As Planalp and Surra (1992) suggest, people may interpret less personal differences as irrelevant to their friendship or accommodate the target friend such that their beliefs fall in line with each others. On the same train of thought, behavioral differences may be harder to ignore (particularly those aimed at oneself) than opinion differences (Newell & Stutman, 1987) and therefore are experienced as grievances.

Strengths and Limitations

This study is one of just a few to examine conflict between friends from a theoretical framework. One of the strengths of this study is the inclusion of an adult community member sample in addition to a student sample. Sometimes, however, a study's strength is also a weakness. This held true for the use of community members. Because half of them experienced no grievances, the sample size for the hypothesis tests and research questions was small and subsequently resulted in underpowered tests. Additionally, difference between samples must be held tentatively due to the small size of each group.
Yet, this study provides one with a starting point with which to direct future empirical investigations. Recommendations not only include a longer time frame for grievances to emerge, but also "user-friendly" measures. Minimizing respondent effort in dependent measure administration should be a top priority, as several of the respondents who did not complete the study indicated that they did not remember to, or make time to, complete the measures. Although community members desired to participate in the experiment, many people dropped out because their schedules became too hectic. Providing incentives for community members combined with interesting and easy-to-complete measures may help retain their participation.

It is clear that student samples may be ideal for longitudinal studies of grievances that span a couple weeks. They are accessible, and extra credit provides sufficient motivation for their participation. Community samples, on the other hand, may be a bit more difficult to recruit and retain. If community members are recruited, however, one should plan on a longer time frame for the study.

Another strength, that also was a weakness, was the longitudinal nature of this study. Although many scholars call for longitudinal designs, relatively few conduct them. This investigation was conducted over the course of three weeks and tracked multiple grievances over time. However, due to the fact that friendship grievances did not occur with regularity or frequency, particularly among community members, there were too few cases of multiple grievances to examine. Most of the research questions and hypothesis tests utilized only the first grievance, unless otherwise noted. The results of this study suggest that if one desires to track multiple instances of
conflict, a much longer time frame than three weeks is necessary.

Other strengths of this study include the combination of both quantitative data and qualitative data that provided for a fuller understanding of friendship grievances. Also, asking respondents to provide a written account of their grievances was assumed to anchor them to (make them recall in detail) their particular grievances and therefore minimize response biases, such as providing "typical" grievance characteristics and response strategies, in the completion of their standardized questionnaires. With a small time frame between grievance occurrence and dependent measure administration complemented by the inclusion of written accounts, data was considered reasonably accurate.

Directions For Future Research

This study found that the most important predictor of confrontation was the lack of anticipated negative consequences. Because it played such a central role in this study as well as others (i.e., Peterson, 1983; Roloff & Cloven, 1990), further exploration and comparison of the kinds of negative consequences people anticipate, their degree of likelihood, and the actual negative consequences experienced when confrontation does occur would enhance our understanding of this important factor. Assessing target friend’s confrontational preferences (whether they prefer the respondent to confront or avoid bringing up their grievances), their subsequent responses to being confronted, and the resultant relationship outcomes would also complement the growing body of knowledge on friendship conflict. Rawlins (1992) suggests that close friendships acquire more dyadically negotiated rules; it would be
interesting to survey close and casual friends to contrast whether they have conflict management rules that differ from one another as well as from basic friendship norms.

Nonconfrontation may either make the relationship more harmonious or cause more problems in the long run of a continuing relationship. Do people who avoid or tolerate grievances have more stable friendships? The long term effects of avoiding confrontation is one area to explore.

On the other hand, it may be that these avoidance and subtle nonverbal negativity displays function as confrontation in light of the otherwise supportive relational atmosphere. Friends may act cool and reserved (nonverbal negativity) toward their partners, which may clearly communicate the felt grievance. There may be very little need to verbalize the grievance when these nonverbal cues get the point across with clarity and with less risk. It may be that we have been conceptualizing confrontation wrong; we have been looking at its surface appearance rather than at its functional value within the interaction. Thus, participants may react to and ascribe confrontational "status" to these nonconfrontational behaviors. Further research on how nonconfrontational behaviors function as confrontation may be fruitful.

Summary

The findings of this study provide partial support for the confrontational model. Fewer anticipated negative consequences emerged as the single most important factor in predicting confrontation. It alone was able to predict confrontation with a fairly high degree of accuracy. Greater partner receptivity to
change also was predictive of confrontation. Although interdependence was not a strong predictor of confrontation in this study, the trend toward confrontation with greater interdependence and the link between cognitive interdependence and confrontation provide support for further research in this area.

All in all, confrontation between friends is an area wide open to empirical examination. Further testing and refinement of both the confrontational model and its constructs is just one place to start. Then, one may begin to test competing models and theories to assess which best accounts for when and why people engage in confrontation.
Affective Interdependence
I feel close to him/her.
His/her emotional support is important to me.
It bothers me when he/she is upset with me.
I depend on him/her to be there for me when I am down.
His/her mood does NOT affect my mood/emotional-state.
I like him/her more than most people I know.
He/she doesn’t encourage me.
Sharing personal stuff with him/her is important to me.
He/she doesn’t know how to cheer me up when I’m down.
I don’t tell him/her personal things about myself.

Behavioral Interdependence
I don’t spend time with him/her on a regular basis.
I don’t spend much time with him/her when I see him/her.
I do a wide variety of activities with him/her.
I spend leisure time with him/her (i.e., watching tv).
I don’t run errands or do chores with him/her.
I arrange my schedule so I can do things with him/her.
I interact with or talk to him/her frequently.

Cognitive Interdependence
The information I get from him/her is important to me.
His/her opinions don’t really matter to me.
His/her interpretations of events are enlightening.
The feedback he/she provides me is useful.
I don’t seek out his/her viewpoint.
His/her assessment of problems is important to me.
I find him/her intellectually boring.
He/she shows me different ways to view situations.
APPENDIX B
SCALE ITEMS FOR PARTNER-RECEPTIVITY TO CHANGE, FRUSTRATION, ANTICIPATED NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES, DEGREE OF FORETHOUGHT, AND SATISFACTION

Receptivity to change
I thought I could get him/her to see things my way.
I thought I could persuade him/her.
I thought I could influence him/her.

Degree of Frustration
The grievance made me very frustrated.
I felt very angry as a result of the grievance.
I felt very frustrated with the problem/grievance.
I was sick and tired of 'ignoring' problems.

Anticipated Negative Consequences
I thought he/she might have blown this out of proportion if I said anything to him/her.
I thought speaking up would cause more conflict.
I felt I could say anything to him/her and it would NOT cause any problems between us.

Degree of forethought
I carefully weighed my options BEFORE responding.
My response was impulsive.
I considered the consequences of my response BEFORE enacting it.
I did not plan my response to the grievance.
I thought through how I was going to respond BEFORE I actually responded.
I acted without thinking.
I did NOT consider alternative ways of responding to the grievance.
The way I responded to the grievance "just happened."

Satisfaction
I am dissatisfied with my response to the grievance.
Nothing was accomplished by the way I responded.
I am satisfied with my response to the grievance.
APPENDIX C
GRIEVANCE RESPONSE STRATEGIES AND ITEMS

Third party management
I asked a third person to intervene and settle it for us.

Covert retaliation
I "got back" at my friend by making it difficult for him/her in some way.
I secretly did something to inconvenience my friend.

Toleration
I swallowed my objections to my friend's behaviors.
I endured the actions that I did not like.
I acted like there was no problem/disagreement.
I simply tolerated the grievance.

Avoidance
I tried to not bump into my friend whenever possible.
I ended the interaction early.
I left my friend alone.
I did not go somewhere where I thought I might run into my friend.

Nonverbal negativity
I became cold or distant towards him/her in order to indicate my displeasure.
I nonverbally indicated that I was upset/disagreed rather than tell my friend directly.

Verbally indirect statements
I hinted at the disagreement/problem rather than discussing it directly.
I joked about the problem/grievance rather than discussing it directly.

Overt retaliation
I swore at my friend.
I called my friend a dirty name to his/her face.
I got angry and yelled at my friend.

Confrontation
I discussed my grievance with my friend in order to reach a joint decision about how to deal with it.
I asked my friend to compromise and give in a little on his/her position.
I told my friend directly what I did not like about his/her behavior.
I explained to my friend things that he/she might do differently.
November 9, 1993

Lesa A. Stern, M.A.
c/o Judee Burgoon, Ph.D, Advisor
Communication Department (Speech 203)
Main Campus

RE: CONFRONTATION BETWEEN FRIENDS

Dear Ms. Stern:

We have received documents concerning your above cited project. Regulations published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [45 CFR Part 46.101(b) (2)] exempt this type of research from review by our Committee.

Thank you for informing us of your work. If you have any questions concerning the above, please contact this office.

Sincerely yours,

William F. Denny, M.D.
Chairman
Human Subjects Committee

WFD:rs

cc: Departmental/College Review Committee
March 10, 1994

Lesa A. Stern, M.A.
c/o Judae Burgoon, Ph.D.
Department of Communication
Speech 203
Main Campus

RE: CONFRONTATION BETWEEN FRIENDS

Dear Ms. Stern:

We have received documents concerning your above cited project. Regulations published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [45 CFR Part 46.101(b) (2)] exempt this type of research from review by our Committee.

Thank you for informing us of your work. If you have any questions concerning the above, please contact this office.

Sincerely yours,

William F. Denny, M.D.
Chairman
Human Subjects Committee

WFD: js

cc: Departmental/College Review Committee
REFERENCES


Contemporary Theories of the Family (pp. 549-581).


architectural studios. Unpublished manuscript.


