Family Communication Patterns and Conflict Management Styles in an Animated Film: An Evaluation of the Film Mitchells vs. the Machines

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Abstract

This study explores family communication patterns and conflict management styles in the context of a popular 2021 animated film "The Case of *The Mitchells vs. the Machines*." In addition to content analysis, a diagnostic tool designed based on the Family Communication Patterns instrument (RFCP) commonly used by family counsellors, was used by the researchers to assess the family communication patterns and conflict management styles in the animated film . The content analysis and diagnostic assessment indicated that *the Mitchells vs. the Machines* showed both low conformity and conversation orientations. The fictional Mitchell family was of a laissez-faire family type, but there was variation between family members. In this context, it was also found that daughter Katie (the main character) adopted an integrating conflict management style with her family members. Concerning the relations between family communication patterns and conflict styles, Katie's conflict management style led to a "happily ever after conclusion" in which the parents completely changed conflict styles. Such radical change is not consistent with family communication patterns identified in previous research. It is in fact extremely difficult to change the family communication patterns of parents. As a family movie, thus, this fictional animated film provided a new opportunity to understand what ideals underpin a good society at the level of the family unit, even if it is not possible in real life.

Keywords

Animated Film; Family Communication Patterns; Conflict Management Styles

1. Introduction

The family is the smallest unit in society which forms a sphere of communication. Communication among family members and context directly affect child development in terms of personalities, attitudes, and behaviors. But both interactivity and intersubjectivity need to be taken into consideration to completely understand family communication (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a). Despite the inherent closeness of such relations, every relationship, even relationships with family members eventually lead to moments of conflict. In order to maintain good relationships, conflicts need to be well-managed within realistic parameters. This is why when studying family communication, communication scholars evaluate conflict processes (Chaffee, McLeod & Atkin, 1971). This body of research often reveals how individuals respond to interpersonal problems (Dumlao & Botta, 2000).

The film industry has changed some of its approaches since people do not go to the cinema as often anymore, and are more likely to consume films at home, whether due to COVID-19 restrictions, or changing culture. Originally, the animated film *The Mitchells vs. The Machines* was planned for theatrical release by Sony Pictures in 2020. Due to the closure of theatres in the context of the COVID 19 Pandemic, Sony studio reluctantly distributed the rights to Netflix for worldwide streaming in May 2021. But Sony was lucky, and the crisis turned into an opportunity and the animated film became Netflix's biggest animation film with 53 million households watching (White, 2021). Families (audiences) around the world watched this animated film, which has a clear focus on family communication.

The major family conflict portrayed through *the Mitchells vs. the Machines* emphasizes the relationships between the main characters in the Mitchell family, especially between a daughter and her father. The animated film opens up a dialogue between family which was obviously disrupted by communication in the digital age. Katie is a teenager who has recently been accepted into a film school in California. However, she clashes with her father, Rick, who disagrees with her choice of school. In particular, they clash about her dream of making movies, and whether it would allow her to make a good living for herself. Then Rick accidentally breaks Katie's laptop, so he cancelled her flight ticket to California film school the next morning, and set up a long road trip, hoping that he would ease the tension between him and his daughter along the way. He announces to her too that he will teach her how to drive a stick shift on her a ride to her college. On the trip they are joined by Linda, her mother, who idealizes her neighbors the Posey family whom she knows mainly through posts on Aaron's Instagram, Katie's shy younger brother, who is fascinated by dinosaurs, and family dog Monchi who seems to be a mix of pig and dog.

During the road trip, all the other people in the whole world were captured by "The Machine" in a transparent box. The only people not captured were the Mitchell family. The journey was transformed from a simple adventure of taking a girl to college, into a world taken over by robots controlled by an intelligent AI called Pal. Pal wanted to send humanity into outer space. This imperfect Mitchell family became the last family able to be the heroes who save the world. As it was, they would save the world by using screwdrivers. How Rick had the last word and saved the world were hilariously revealed through the meaning of family gifts. Rick gave a square-head screwdriver number three with anti-slip handle as a wedding gift to his wife, as a birthday gift for Katie, and as an explanation for Aaron about the tooth fairy. They became true heroes and saved the world when their screwdrivers unravel the circuit board and control box that held them together. Through familiar formulaic storytelling, the problems in the characters' family were gradually revealed and resolved with a happy conclusion, and the world was saved.

In terms of academic studies, Family Communication Patterns (FCP) was developed by Chaffee, McLeod and Atkin (1971) to describe the tendencies and predictable ways of how family members communicate with one another, as well as explaining how social reality is created and shared by the family. As a new approach, we are, thus, interested in applying this concept to media that narrates the story of family relationships. The goal is to extend this knowledge to be more practical than a phenomenological study.

In the book '*The Psychosocial Implications of Disney Movies*' (Dundes, 2019), the dynamic creation of animated media from the perspective of different disciplines is investigated. Relevant for this paper, there is a chapter in this book called "the Portrayal of Families across Generations in Disney Animated Films" which aims to reveal the qualities of family demographics, structure, and function in 85 Disney animated films. Zurcher et al. (2019) concludes that the dominant family structure is single parent families. Also, over 75% of Disney animated films portray warm and supporting family interactions. Zurcher et al. (2019) described how Disney animations from 1937 to 2018 represented family structure similar to the way Propp (1968) evaluated *The Morphology of the Folktale*, which portrayed how folklore can be evaluated using structural analysis. However, there was no mention about family communication patterns and conflict management styles in these previous film studies.

The objective of this study is to investigate how family communication patterns and conflict management style manifest in the animated film "The Case of *The Mitchells vs. the Machines*". The examination focuses especially on Mitchell's family to identify what their communication style is, and what type of conflict style they apply when dealing with family conflict. To apply the theory of family communication, it is necessary to evaluate the nature of animated film production of the family genre, with theories about family communication styles. The Mitchell family then is a case study for family communication in the smallest unit of society. What do families see when watching such an animated film?

2. Literature Review

Two bodies of theoretical literature are a basis for this study. They are the family communication patterns (FCPs) literature, and the literature about conflict management styles. Previous research identified an association between family communication patterns and conflict management styles (see Dumlao & Botta, 2000; Koerner, & Fitzpatrick, 1997; 2002). Hence, this study adds to the body of work concerning family communication patterns and conflict management styles by examining how these two factors are presented in the animated film *The Mitchells vs. The Machines.*

Family Communication Patterns

The original model of family communication patterns was developed by Chaffee, McLeod and Atkin (1971). They argued that "family communication patterns help to guide children in their cognitive mapping of situations they ultimately encounter outside the immediate family context" (p. 332). As a well-known tool for academic studies, Ritchie & Fitzpatrick (1990; see also, Ritchie, 1991) re-labelled the McLeod and Chafee family communication patterns to construct an instrument called RFCP (Family Communication Patterns Instrument) that measured family communication patterns more generally.

The Revised Family Communication Patterns divide families into two categories: conformity-oriented family and

conversation-oriented family. A conversation-oriented family is open to the involvement of all family members in discussions, and open to the expression of differing points of view. Parents high on conversation orientation encourage their children to participate in sharing ideas on a variety of topics. By comparison, families low on conversation orientation, communicate less frequently with each other, and limit the topics for debate (Schrodt, Ledbetter, & Ohrt, 2007; Shearman & Dumlao, 2008). Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002b) stated that parents high on conversation orientation are more likely to think about the usefulness of open and frequent exchanges of ideas and opinions in order to improve children's education and socialization. Parents low in conversation orientation are not likely to embrace this idea.

On the other hand, Conformity-oriented families are concerned with unity. Parents high on conformity orientation expect their children to be respectful of their (the parents') ideas, to be obedient, and to avoid conflict (Fitzpatrick, 2004; Koerner & Cvancara, 2002; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997; Koesten, 2004; Ritchie, 1991; Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990). High conformity orientation parents tend to promote a hierarchical family structure, while parents low in conformity orientation consider family members' ideas and treat each family member as equal (see, for example, Schrodt et al., 2007; Schrodt, Witt, & Messersmith, 2008). Koerner and Fitzpatrick (1997) noted that families high on conformity orientation believe in a traditional family structure; the family is cohesive and hierarchical.

These two basic communication patterns (conformity-orientation and conversation-orientation) in turn create four family types: pluralistic, protective, consensual, and laissez-faire [see Figure 1]. Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002b) affirmed that there is theoretical significance in the four different family types. Parents in pluralistic families are high on conversation orientation and low on conformity orientation. That is, they are more open and accept the involvement of their children in family discussions. Parents in protective families are high on conformity orientation and low on conversation orientation. That is, they are more concerned about consistency and avoiding disagreement within the family. A consensual family type is high on both conformity orientation, and on conversation orientation. Parents in consensual families are open to children's participation in family discussions, but these parents also expect their children to agree with their (the parents') opinions. Although parents in these families make decisions for the family, they still listen to their children and devote time and energy to explaining their decisions (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). Finally, a laissez-faire family type is low on both conformity orientation and conversation orientation. In this type of family, parents and children interact less with each other. Additionally, the topics available for communication are highly restricted (Chaffee et al., 1973). Parents in laissez-faire families encourage family members to make their own decisions; however, they do not necessarily pay attention to their children's views (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b).

	Low conformity -orientation	High conformity -orientation
Low conversation-orientation	Laissez-faire	Protective
High conversation-orientation	Pluralistic	Consensual

Figure 1 Family Types Determined by Conversation Orientation and Conformity Orientation (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006).

Conflict Management Styles

An individual's pattern of response to conflict is called that person's "conflict style" (Putnam & Poole, 1992; Sternberg & Dobson, 1987; Ting-Toomey, 1997). Individuals first learn about conflict and how to resolve interpersonal problems in their family of origin (Noller, 1995). The notion of conflict style aligns with Blake and Mouton's (1964) identification of five organizational conflict management styles based on the level of concern that the manager has for production (or tasks) versus people (or relationships). Following Blake and Mouton, many other scholars (for example, Rahim, 1983, 2001; Thomas, 1976; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974) extended the conceptualization of conflict styles.

Rahim's (1983, 2001) instrument measuring the five conflict styles has been used extensively. Rahim is a professor of management, and his assessment of five conflict styles is grounded in the concept of a person's level of concern for self against concern for others. Individual concern for self is manifested in satisfaction with self or the need for one's views to be respected. Meanwhile, concern for others embodies a focus on others' needs before self. The resultant five styles for handling interpersonal conflict are 1) integrating/collaborating, 2) compromising, 3) dominating/competing, 4) obliging/ accommodating, and 5) avoiding/withdrawing [see Figure 2].

The integrating style refers to a person's high concern both for self and for others when a solution is needed in a conflict situation. When engaging in events where incompatibilities exist, individuals who adopt an integrating conflict management style will be concerned with openness, exchanging information, and looking for alternatives. This is sometimes known as problem-solving, that is, the diagnosis of and intervention in the right problems (Rahim, 2002).

The compromising style balances concern for self and others with conflict issues. Individuals adopting a compromising style of conflict management engage in a give-and-take. This means that they give up something seeking to arrive at a mutually satisfactory decision (Rahim, Antonioni, Krumov, & Ilieva, 2000). The dominating style reflects a person's concern for themselves more than for others when engaged in conflict. This style is also known as competing or win-lose orientation. Individuals adopting this style are more likely to "force" their positions to meet their own needs while ignoring the needs of others (Rahim, 2002). The obligating style indicates a higher concern for others than for self. This style describes individuals who neglect their own concerns to satisfy the concerns of others. Lastly, the avoiding style reflects a low degree of concern for self and concern for others, something commonly associated with a person who avoids engagement with conflict. Rahim et al. (2000) stated that individuals who apply the avoiding style usually combine that style with withdrawal, buck-passing (i.e. trying to direct

authority/attention to someone else), and sidestepping situations. They are more likely to postpone the issue or withdraw from conflict situations.
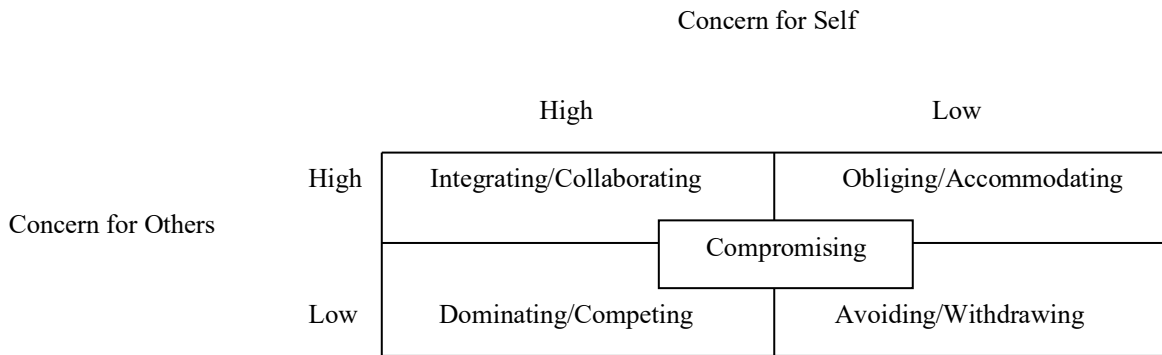
Concern for Self

	High	Low
High	Integrating/Collaborating	Obliging/Accommodating
	Compromising	
Low	Dominating/Competing	Avoiding/Withdrawing

Concern for Others (label to left)

Figure 2 The styles of handling interpersonal conflict (Rahim, 1983)

Integrating the Literatures on Family Communication Pattern and Conflict Styles

Koerner and Fitzpatrick (1997) examined the relationship between family communication patterns and conflict styles. A family high on conformity orientation tends to also have high conflict avoidance, while a family high on conversation orientation tends to have low conflict avoidance. Moreover, there is a significant relationship between family type and conflict avoidance (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Families who adopt laissez-faire and protective family communication styles are high in conflict avoidance, whereas pluralistic families are least conflict-avoidant, and consensual families are moderate in conflict avoidance. Family members in conformity-oriented families are more likely to avoid conflict, while family members in conversation-oriented families are less likely to avoid conflict.

Shearman and Dumlao (2008) argued that young adults in high conversation-oriented families use integrating and compromising conflict strategies with their parents, whereas young adults in high conformity-oriented families use avoiding and obliging conflict strategies. Young adults who reported a consensual family communication pattern report using obliging conflict styles more than those from other family types. Additionally, young adults from families high in conformity-orientation and conversation-orientation, known as consensual families, are more likely to adopt a collaborating or integrating style when they engage in conflict with fathers (Dumlao & Botta, 2000).

3. Methodology

The family communication patterns and conflict management styles in *The Mitchell vs. The Machine*s are examined using content analysis, in association with quantitative research, an approach extensively used in psychology, sociology, media studies, and business (Neuendorf, 2002). Content analysis involves classifying the emergent themes through the identification of codes and nodes. Therefore, we offer an analysis of the communication with the major characters as the family form in a qualitative sense. However, we employ the conventions of the Family Communication Patterns instrument (RFCP) (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990), which is the questionnaire as a code for a

five-point Likert scale checklist to categorize the type of family communication pattern and the conflict organization in the character's family in the selected film.
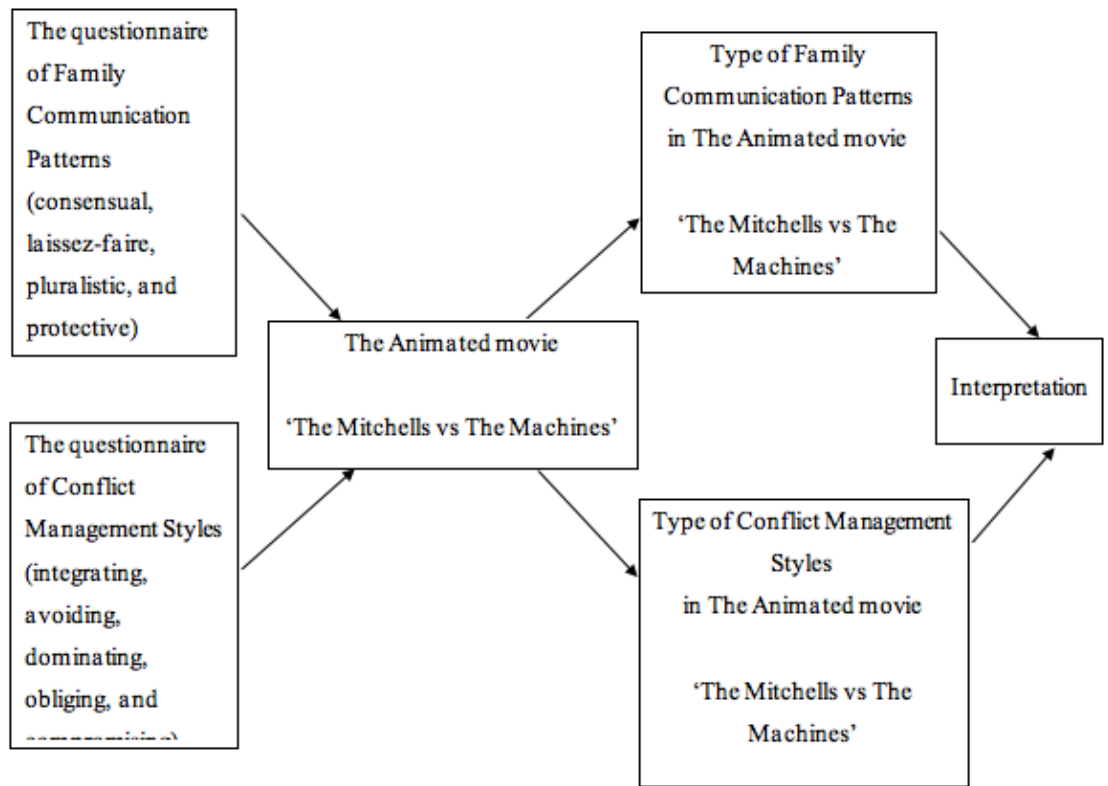

Figure 3 Research Design Framework

After watching the animated movie, the researchers answered the questions on the Revised Family Communication Patterns instrument (RFCP) (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990). The RFCP consists of 26 items employing a five-point Likert scale that ranges from 5 "strongly agree" to 1 "strongly disagree" intended to measure family communication patterns. The mean splits on two dimensions of family communication patterns—conformity orientation and conversation orientation—reflect the four types of family communication patterns. The results scoring above the sample mean on both conversation orientation and conformity orientation were classified as consensual families. Those scoring below the sample mean on both conversation orientation and conformity orientation were classified as laissez-faire families. Those scoring below the sample mean on conversation orientation but above the sample mean on conformity orientation were classified as protective families, and those who scored above the sample mean on conversation orientation but below the sample mean on conformity orientation were classified as pluralistic families.

Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) (Rahim, 1983) was employed to assess the conflict management style in the animated movie. The ROCI-II instrument consists of 28 Likert-type scale items that tapped

into the five conflict styles: integrating, compromising, dominating, obliging, and avoiding. The researchers respond to the items using five-point Likert scales that range from 5 "strongly agree" to 1 "strongly disagree."

The scoring instruments were used to evaluate family communication styles and conflict management styles in the film *The Mitchells vs The Machines.* Each of the two researchers watched the film 2 times and checked each other for reliability and validity by 80% of inter-rater reliability.

4. Results

The Mitchells vs The Machines

After watching '*The Mitchells vs The Machines',* the researchers did a self-administered questionnaire using the Revised Family Communication Patterns instrument (RFCP) [see Appendix 1] (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990) and Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) [see Appendix 2] (Rahim, 1983). These were used to assess Katie's conflict management style. According to Table 1, the researchers found that, in the Mitchell family, there are both low conformity orientation (lower than 3.34) and conversation orientation (lower than 3.86). The score for conformity orientation was 2.68, while conversation orientation was 2.90. This means that the Mitchell family fit into the quadrant for a laissez-faire family type. In this type of family, the parents interact less with their children. Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002a) stated that "Most members of laissez-faire families are emotionally divorced from their families" (pp.45). Children in this family have to make their own decisions and tend to be influenced by peers and other external sources.

Additionally, the topics available for communication are highly restricted. For example, the Mitchell's family interacted less with each other, especially Linda, Katie and Arron. Although parents in laissez-faire family encourage family member to make their own decisions, they do not necessarily pay attention to their children's views (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). For example, the daughter Katie choose her film major of study in the university, but her parents have less understood what Katie really studied.

Table 1 Mitchells' Family Communication Patterns

Family Communication Patterns	Researcher #1	Researcher #2	The Average
Conformity Orientation	2.73	2.63	2.68
Conversation Orientation	2.93	2.87	2.90

In terms of conflict management styles, Table 2 showed that when Katie engaged in incompatible communication with the member in her family, she tends to apply integrating conflict management style.

Table 2 Katie's Conflict Management Styles

Conflict management styles	Researcher #1	Research #2	The Average
Avoiding	3.60	3.67	3.64
Compromising	3.00	3.00	3.00
Dominating	3.60	3.60	3.60
Integrating	3.71	3.85	3.78
Obliging	3.33	3.33	3.33

5. Discussion

The present study investigates the fictional animated movie '*The Mitchells vs The Machines*' and analyzed it for family communication patterns and conflict management styles. The results showed that parents in laissez-faire families (like the Mitchells) are aware that family members make their own decisions. However, they do not pay much attention to their children's decisions. This is portrayed at the beginning of the journey, as the Mitchell family as is revealed to be a laissez-faire type. Rick cancelled Katie's flight, called to make sure it was possible to skip her school activities during the daytime, and said he would teach Katie how to drive a stick shift car on the way to her school. Katie could not deny the goodwill of her father, irrespective of the fact she was not consulted.

Parents with conformity orientation tend to avoid conflicts and disputes. In order to preserve the harmony of the family, a conformity-oriented family limits their child's (or children's) expression of opinions, especially opinions that might be in disagreement with those held by the parents. As the researchers saw in the film, Katie sympathizes with her father even though he did not pay attention to the video she made. Rick asks her sarcastically, "You can make a living with this stuff?" His opinion relates to question number 3 of the Family Communication Patterns instrument (RFCP) instrument, which strongly illustrates the characteristic of the type of family communication where there is a conformity orientation.

Parents often say something about what their children will be when they grow up. For example, in a kitchen scene, Rick comes back from work expecting to spend time with his wife and child. Ironically, none were pleased with his coming home, and focused only on the screens in their hands. This led him to insist that everyone to put down their online devices and look into each other's eyes for a while. This comedic scene reflected question number 12 on the FRCP which is a measure of conformity orientation. Rick did not appreciate digital life and did not want to know about these things. Complementing this, item number 23 in the RFCP questionnaire which is about parents are always the boss. This reflects the point that the Mitchell family is a laissez-faire family type. The power of a patriarchal family in which the father has the last word is revealed through the meaning of family gifts. Rick gave a square-head screwdriver number three with anti-slip handle as a wedding gift to his wife, and as a birthday gift for Katie. Aaron gets one from the tooth fairy. Nevertheless, they all become true heroes in the movie, saving the world when their screwdrivers unravel the circuit board control box that holds the world captive. All because Rick insisted, they carry the strange tool in case of emergency.

In terms of conflict management styles, a person exhibits different behaviors when handling conflicts: behaviors based on their concern for themselves (and/or the issue at hand) and their concern for others. Referring to Appendix 2 and Table 2, the researchers found that Katie adopts an integrating conflict management style with her family members. This reflects openness, exchange of information, and a search for alternatives. This is sometimes known as "problem-solving" (Rahim, 2002). Therefore, when Katie faces family conflict, she tends to employ other styles of conflict depending on the situation. With her father, Katie's actions present a compromising way of dealing with conflict. The family's favorite song the Romaninan 'Dragostea din Tei' (Balan & Sevan, 2003) was often sung in their family happy moments. But it became a song that Katie felt that she was too old to sing and dance to with her father, like she done in childhood. Still she would do this if it pleased him. But at the critical moment, Katie said that the world needed Rick and she needed him too, thus giving Rick the courage to go out and deal with robots using the screwdrivers. She tried to speak with him using the words he wanted to hear. All of these actions, at least, reflected her ways of compromising. She could do this although it was a lie; she pretended to be a good girl in line with her father's needs. Meanwhile, we saw Rick attempt to do like her as well by saying the words his wife offered.

For the "compromising scene" before the last fight, Katie proposed a plan to enter the code to break the whole robot system. They do this by disguising themselves as robots. When they are successful, Rick wants to celebrate at the Taco Bar near their house. Linda requests a buffet meal, and Arron insists on a "tuxedo" for the Monchy pigdog. This scene showed that there are all have compromising with different action like give and take. Interestingly, Katie's approach to deal with family conflict is that she incorporates her fathers' speech about her filmmaking dreams into the dialogue in the short film she makes. perhaps in the hope that one day Rick would understand her too. Negotiations between conflicts in real life though should not exist in the Mitchell family. At least, she could only express her feelings through her film. Finally, Rick watches her film and understand better. That is the obligatory happy ending, the family saves the world, and resolves the tension between father and daughter.

Still Katie's conflict management style and her family communication patterns are not consistent with previous research—the two characteristics observed do not occur in "real life" families. Recall that Koerner and Fitzpatrick (1997) found that there is a significant relationship between family type and conflict avoidance. Families who adopt laissez-faire and protective family communication styles are high in conflict avoidance. Also, as Shearman and Dumlao (2008) argued, young adults in high conversation-oriented families use integrating and compromising conflict strategies with their parents. Children from laissez-faire families are most likely to use the avoiding style for conflict management (Zhang, 2007). Although the Mitchell family communication pattern is laissez-faire, and predictably Katie has adopted an integrating conflict management style when her opinions are inconsistent with the opinions of her parents. We can explain this result in real-life, while recognizing that it is hard to change parents who originated the family communication patterns. The family film genre always expects to empower positive relationships through the films' themes. In the end, Rick (the father) can finally engage with digital life. He even subscribes to Katie's

YouTube channel, learns about being online friends with his daughter, and enjoys online shopping with his wife.

Warm family pictures on the wall house in the opening scene are used to describe the contrast of the family members' relationships in the movie. Therefore, children may draw comparisons between their real-life interactions within the family and the family in the movie; imitative behavioral practices might occur (Callister et al. 2007; Robinson and Skill 2001). Family communication revolves around the storytelling of the family film genre and could be associated with the contribution to a better society. However, in fact things cannot really be that way in the "real world." A family movie is fiction in more ways than one, and in this case by portraying examples and information about parent-child interactions, family construction, family roles, and the home environment.

6. Conclusion

One stark new insight that this study has generated is as to how the literature regarding communication pattern and family conflict management can be used as guidelines in film study and film making. Once those who are concerned with animated film production for children and family audience understand the ways in which how the family communication patterns and conflict management styles can be the pipeline of the story, it will be easier for them in suggesting an appropriate framework regarding realistic attitudes toward how conflicts that arise in families are resolved.

Future research related to family communication patterns and/or conflict management styles in film should consider not only animation films but also other film that manifest real-life stories as family film genre. Prospective study should also concern the number of films and the number of researchers doing self-administered questionnaire surveys for more reliability.

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Appendixes

Communication patterns in the Mitchells family

Statements	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Uncertain 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. In our family we often talk about topics like politics and religion where some family members disagree with others.				CV	
2. My parents often say something like "Every member of the family should have some say in family decisions."		CV			
3. My parents often say something like "You'll know better when you grow up."	CF				
4. My parents often say something like "My ideas are right and you should not question them."					CF
5. My parents often say something like "You should always look at both sides of an issue."			CV		
6. I usually tell my parents what I am thinking about things.		CV			
7. My parents often say something like "You should give in on arguments rather than risk making people mad."					CF
8. When anything really important is involved, my parents expect me to obey without question.		CF			
9. My parents and I often have long, relaxed conversations about nothing in particular.			CV		
10. I really enjoy talking with my parents, even when we disagree.					CV
11. My parents sometimes become irritated with my views if they are different from theirs.		CF			
12. If my parents do not approve of something, they do not want to know about that thing.		CF			
13. My parents tend to be very					

Statements					
open about their emotions.		CV			
14. We often talk as a family about things we have done during the day.			CV		
15. In our family we often talk about our plans and hopes for the future.		CV			
16. My parents often ask my opinion when the family is talking about something.		CV			
17. My parents encourage me to challenge their ideas and beliefs.				CV	
18. My parents often say something like "A child should not argue with adults."					CF
19. My parents often say something like "There are some things that just shouldn't be talked about."					CF
20. I can tell my parents almost everything.				CV	
21. In our family, we often talk about our feelings and emotions.			CV		
22. In our home, my parents usually have the last word.			CF		
23. My parents believe that it is important for them to be the boss.	CF				
24. My parents like to hear my opinions, even when they do not agree with me.				CV	
25. My parents encourage me to express my feelings.			CV		
26. When I am at home, I am expected to obey my parents' rules.			CF		

Note. CV stand for Conversation Orientation, CF stand for Conformity Orientation
Ritchie & Fitzpatrick (1990) the Revised Family Communication Patterns instrument (RFCP) Questionnaire

Conflict management styles in the Mitchells family

Statements	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Uncertain 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. I try to investigate an issue with my parents to find a solution acceptable to us.		integrating			
2. I generally try to satisfy the wishes of my parents.			obliging		
3. I attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and try to keep any conflicts with my parents to myself.		avoiding			

4. I try to integrate my ideas With those of my parents to come up with a joint decision.		integrating			
5. I try to work with my parents to find solutions to a problem that satisfy our mutual expectations.			integrating		
6. I usually avoid open discussion of my differences with my parents.			avoiding		
7. I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse.		compromising			
8. I use my influence to get My ideas accepted.		dominating			
9. I use my authority to make a decision in my favor.			dominating		
10. I usually accommodate the wishes of my parents.		obliging			
11. I give in to the wishes of my parents.			avoiding		
12. I exchange accurate information with my parents to solve a problem together.		integrating			
13. I usually make concessions to my parents.		obliging			
14. I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks.					compromising
15. I negotiate with my parents so that a compromise can be reached.			compromising		
16. I try to stay away from disagreement with my parents.		avoiding			
17. I avoid any confrontations with my parents.				obliging	
18. I use my expertise to make decisions in my favor.			dominating		
19. I often go along with the suggestions of my parents.			obliging		
20. I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be found.		compromising			
21. I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue.		dominating			
22. I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way.		integrating			
23. I collaborate with my parents to come up with decisions acceptable to us.		integrating			
24. I try to satisfy the expectations of my parents.		obliging			

25. I sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation.		dominating		
26. I try to keep any disagreements with my parents to myself in order to avoid hard feelings.		avoiding		
27. I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my parents.		avoiding		
28. I try to work with my parents for a proper understanding of any problems.			integrating	

Rahim's (1983) the Rahim Organization Conflict Inventory II (ROCI-II)