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ORIGINAL PAPER

"Being Able to Support Yourself": Young Adults' Meaning of Financial Well-Being Through Family Financial Socialization

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Abstract
This study investigated how young adults' ($N=31$) perceptions of family financial socialization processes and experiences influenced their definition and understanding of financial well-being. Coding and analysis followed Gilgun et al. (Qualitative methods in family research, Sage, Newbury Park, 1992) pattern-matching approach of analytical induction. The financial socialization processes dimension of Gudmunson and Danes (J Fam Econ Issues, 32:644–667, 2011) Family Financial Socialization (FFS) theory guided confirmation or refutation of theoretical constructs used to organize young adults' ($M=24$ years) personal reflections and interpretations of financial well-being. Findings confirmed current FFS theory constructs while extending the theory by adding the concept of cognitive interpretations of finances and financial well-being (anticipatory socialization) with an accompanying hypothesis. Thus, greater conceptual precision is provided about the connective link between the family's financial socialization processes and the individual's development of personal financial dispositions.

Keywords Anticipatory socialization · Financial socialization · Financial well-being · Young adults · Financial parenting

Introduction

Today's young adults are taking longer to make the transition to adulthood than did previous generations. Young adults are marrying later in life (currently an average of 29 years for men and 27 years for women compared to 23 for men and 21 for women in the 1970s; US Census Bureau 2017) and taking longer to be financially independent from their families (Pew Research Center 2012). They may face several challenges in achieving self-sufficiency along with the many traditional milestones that signify adulthood, all of which have financial underpinnings (LeBaron et al. 2018; Robertson and Shoffner 1989). However, the challenges are not merely financial; they are multidimensional. Van Campenhout (2015) argued that young adults' understanding of money matters (economic context) emerges from the combination of family financial socialization processes (sociological context), age-related cognitive development (psychological context), and current reflections on past socialization as well as personal experiences in defining financial well-being. To fully understand young adults' journey to self-sufficiency and their interpretations of financial well-being, we contend that all of Van Campenhout's contexts must be investigated simultaneously. This study incorporates all of these contexts.

Life choices and outcomes for young adults depend on available opportunities (e.g., stable employment) and constraints (e.g., high student loan debt), as well as individual resources and capabilities (Cote 2014). Because the opportunities and social norms for today's young adults may differ from those of previous generations, their transition to adulthood may require more time than in the past (Arnett 2014). Some researchers have suggested that emerging adults who lack financial resources may delay or forgo marriage (Halliday-Hardie and Lucas 2010; Hill 2011). Indeed, delays in labor market entry, barriers to career advancement, increased cost of living, and student loan debt have been found to be associated with marital delay (Furstenberg et al. 2004; Settersten and Ray 2010). Nevertheless, young adults' life decisions are grounded in their family financial socialization processes (Danes and Yang 2014). Conceptually, financial socialization is defined as "the process of acquiring and developing values, attitudes, standards, norms, knowledge, and behaviors that contribute to financial viability and

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individual well-being" (Danes 1994, p. 128). Parents are at the core of these processes through direct and indirect communication, both in their spoken words and in their patterned behaviors as a direction to follow (Lachance and Choquette-Bernier 2004). However, greater understanding is needed about how young adults interpret that communication and how their interpretation contributes to the continual development of young adults' internal cognitive understanding of finances.

Anticipatory socialization is a concept crucial to the financial understanding. Anticipatory socialization refers to the fact that attitudes, knowledge and capabilities are acquired in anticipation of roles which will be assumed sometime in the future (Van Campenhout 2015). Although financial well-being has most often been viewed in the literature as a behavioral outcome, its definition and understanding are an essential standard from which young adults cognitively interpret the explicit (purposive financial socialization) and implicit (family interactions and relationships) financial socialization they receive within their families (Gudmunson and Danes 2011). Those cognitive interpretations of finances and financial well-being are the foundation of the development of their financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities that motivate their financial behavior (Danes and Yang 2014). While studies vary in the measures and the definitions of financial well-being used, what they have in common is the reliance on concepts defined by financial professionals (Sabri 2011). Discovering more detail about how young adults interpret their family's financial socialization and how they define and understand financial well-being is important because it will generate greater understanding about motivations behind the financial behaviors they enact. That kind of detailed depth and conceptual precision can only be obtained through the use of qualitative methodologies.

By adapting Gudmunson and Danes (2011) family financial socialization (FFS) theory, we focus on the internal cognitive processes engaged in by young adults to define and understand financial well-being and the family financial context in which these cognitions were grounded. We posed three guiding questions in this study:

(1) What is the connection between young adults' family financial socialization processes and financial well-being?
(2) How do young adults interpret family financial socialization processes?
(3) How do young adults define financial well-being?

The study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it offers a definition of financial well-being from the perspective of young adults themselves. Second, it illuminates the content of family financial socialization processes that contribute to financial self-beliefs (financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities). Lastly, this study integrates young adults' own financial experiences and retrospective reflections of their family experiences to understand how a definition of financial well-being emerges as a motivator of their financial behavior. We note that the data used in this study were collected during 2010 when career opportunities were constrained and even college graduates had difficulty finding employment (Shierholz et al. 2013). What makes the young adults in this study different from those before the economic crisis of 2008 is that they are much more cognizant of financial instability and more cautious in their financial behaviors. This is an important contribution to the literature as young adults who experienced the recession now have different perspectives of what it takes to achieve financial well-being (Pew Research Center 2014). Hard economic times have also exacerbated the financial tenuousness that is known to occur in this developmental stage of emerging adulthood (Willoughby et al. 2015).

Guiding Theoretical Framework

Gudmunson and Danes (2011) family financial socialization (FFS) theory provided the framework for organizing young adults' reflections about family financial socialization. We focused only on these components of the theory: (1) financial socialization processes of *family interactions and relationships* (i.e., implicit socialization) and *purposive financial socialization* (i.e., explicit socialization); and (2) financial socialization outcomes of *financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities*, and financial *well-being* (Fig. 1). Some components of the theory were not included in this study's analysis due to our small sample size (personal and family characteristics) and the focus on how young adults *defined and understood* financial well-being, not how they *engaged* in it (financial behavior). In this study, we relied on FFS theory to explain the process through which young adults conceptualized and defined financial well-being in the transition from college to career.

FFS theory has two dimensions: family socialization processes and financial socialization outcomes. In this study, family socialization processes, the first part of the theory, refer to young adults' interpretation of family financial interactions which contribute to young adults' financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities and inform their definition of financial well-being (i.e., a financial socialization outcome). In this sense, we sought to understand young adults' cognitive interpretations of family financial socialization in achieving financial well-being. Therefore, young adults' reflections were mapped onto components of the FFS theory (Fig. 2) to provide insight on the process by which the transmission of financial socialization occurs.

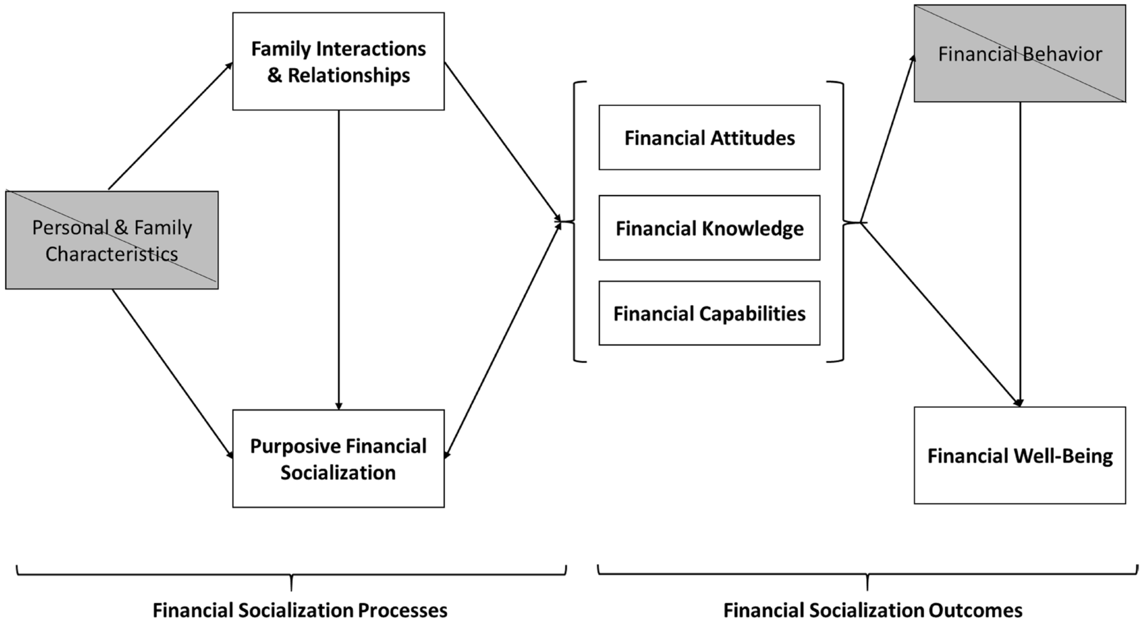

Fig. 1 Gudmunson and Danes (2011) family financial socialization theory. *Note* Categories in gray with a line through them are concepts that were not examined in this study

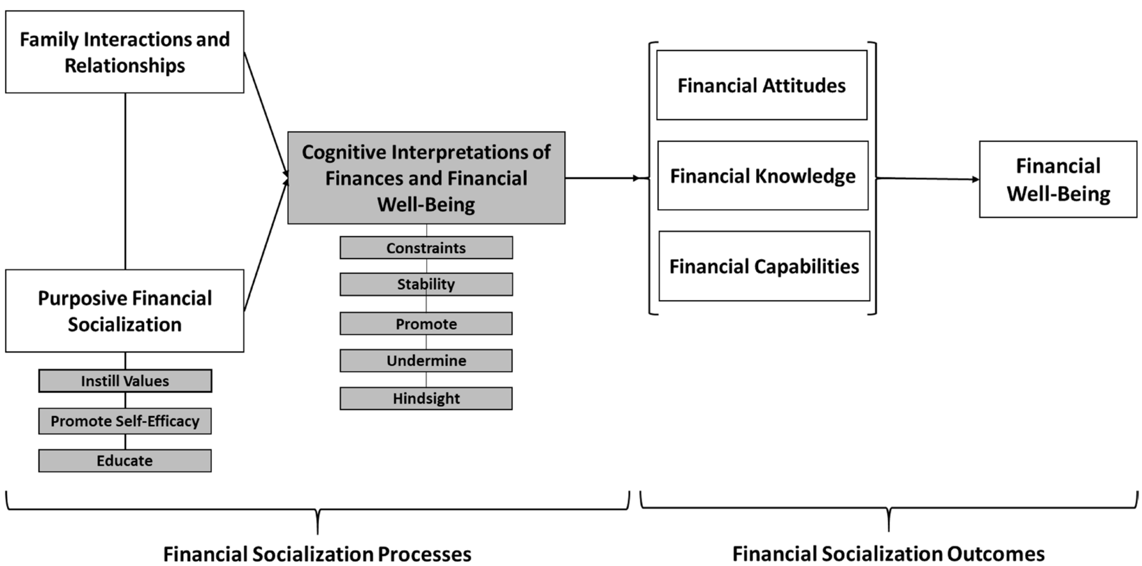

Fig. 2 An adapted analytical model of Gudmunson and Danes (2011) family financial socialization theory. *Note* Subcategories that are in gray have been added to the adapted model

The concept of family interactions encompasses both interactions among family members and family roles. Family relationships are formed through family interactions including communication, time spent together, and development of trust among family members. Family interactions and relationships influence the type of financial socialization that occurs within the family. Although not explicitly examined or tested in this study, personal and family characteristics influence family interactions and relationships and are thus indirectly tied to financial socialization outcomes.

Purposive financial socialization refers to deliberate actions and communications intended to impart knowledge and understanding about finances and financial behaviors. Yet, many family financial interactions embedded within the context of everyday life (e.g., paying bills, grocery shopping, even arguments about money) provide lessons in the ways a family thinks about and handles finances. This form of financial socialization is implicit and as such, it is subject to different interpretations, as family members may not fully understand what is happening or why it is happening in a particular way. Therefore, this involves a cognitive process by which financial socialization contributes to attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities and in turn, these cognitions form definitions of financial well-being. Financial attitudes and knowledge tend to reflect the beliefs, opinions, or general facts an individual has about money and are reflective of the individual's own personal family socialization background. Financial capabilities are defined by what an individual is "able to do, rather than skills which emphasize what is done proficiently" (Gudmunson and Danes 2011, p. 649). According to Danes and Yang (2014), the term capability can also refer to an internal source of motivation such as self-sufficiency and values. For the purpose of this study, conceptual definitions of attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities were mapped to corresponding young adults' narrative reflections of personal beliefs, opinions, or skills about money based upon past financial socialization that contributed to financial well-being.

Financial well-being is defined as reflecting both subjective and objective dimensions and, therefore, should be treated as two distinct constructs (Gudmunson and Danes 2011; Danes and Yang 2014). For example, net worth and income are objective financial indicators of financial well-being, while income adequacy is a subjective financial indicator of financial well-being (Danes and Yang 2014). The FFS theory posits that financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities have a direct influence on an individual's financial behavior as well as their overall financial well-being. For the purpose of understanding the concept of financial well-being from the perspective of young adults themselves, this study relied on young adults' qualitative definitions of financial well-being based on perceived retrospective family financial socialization processes.

Literature Review

Financial Socialization Processes

Research suggests that parents play a significant role in serving as financial socialization agents in their children's lives (Clarke et al. 2005; Xiao et al. 2014). Two commonly studied types of financial socialization processes are parental role-modeling and parental teaching (e.g., Violato et al. 2011).

Parental Role-Modeling

Parental role-modeling is an example of family interactions and relationships. Parental role-modeling tends to be implicit; it involves subtle social interaction that parents and children engage in with few educational goals in mind (e.g., gaining financial knowledge through observation) (Sabri 2011). Due to the lack of structure in parental role-modeling, messages received from parents may be misconstrued or misinterpreted by children and can lead to financial behaviors which may, in fact, be risky in nature. For example, a qualitative study by Solheim et al. (2011) found that poor financial behaviors practiced by parents were embraced by their college-aged children due to implicit financial socialization.

Parental Teaching

Parental teaching, an example of purposive financial socialization, involves the explicit transfer of financial knowledge and skills from parents to children. This direct approach helps young adults build understanding and reasoning about financial matters that motivate them to engage in specific behaviors (Violato et al. 2011). Several studies have indicated a strong relation between explicit parenting practices and young adults' financial behaviors (Clarke et al. 2005; Grinstein-Weiss et al. 2011). For instance, Webley and Nyhus (2006) found that young adults were more likely to save versus spend money that was left over after paying all monthly expenses as a result of parental socialization regarding financial matters learned during childhood (Webley and Nyhus 2006). In a separate study, Shim et al. (2010) found that college students were more likely to have positive attitudes toward performing healthy financial behaviors when they respected their parents' expectations and saw them as financial role models. Developing such skills allows young adults to gain a sense of self-efficacy, which creates a greater potential for achieving financial well-being in adulthood (Drever et al. 2015).

Financial Socialization Outcomes

Everyone is financially socialized. Financial socialization is not simply learning how to successfully manage money; rather, it encompasses the development of attitudes, values, and standards that will ultimately either support or undermine financial capabilities and well-being (Danes 1994).

Financial Attitudes

Young adults acquire financial attitudes as they mature, and these attitudes affect their financial behavior (Drever et al. 2015). For example, Shim et al. (2012) found that young adults with a healthier attitude about financial behaviors were more likely to engage in healthy financial practices, which in turn affected their overall sense of well-being. Similarly, Jorgensen and Savla (2010) found that college students who perceived greater parental influence on financial attitudes and behaviors through family interactions reported healthier financial attitudes. Norvilitis and MacLean (2010) found that young adults' ability to delay gratification in keeping impulsive credit card purchases under control were influenced by attitudes that led to lower overall credit card debt.

Financial Knowledge

When parents engage in responsible and healthy financial practices that provide opportunities for explicit financial socialization, their children tend to be more knowledgeable about how to use money (Shim et al. 2010). For instance, Jorgensen and Savla (2010) found that greater financial knowledge was attained by those college students who reported explicit early socialization (e.g., my parents taught me about budgeting) compared to implicit socialization (e.g., I learned by observing my parents). Children who received financial education and learned the importance of making sound financial decisions tended to internalize behaviors associated with managing their money and become more financially competent (Kim et al. 2011). Such practice reflects responsible financial behavior and contributes to the child's understanding of financial well-being (Serido and Deenanath 2016).

Financial Capabilities

Researchers who have studied financial socialization have also identified key family socialization processes that influence financial capabilities (e.g., belief in one's abilities to manage finances). For example, Kim and Chatterjee (2013) found that children who observe and learn from their parents about spending were more likely to have confidence in their own abilities to manage money. In a separate study, Xiao et al. (2014) found that young adults were more likely to have greater financial independence when they did not rely on their parents' financial resources. This suggests that financial independence is learned through both implicit and explicit financial socialization processes. Xiao et al. (2014) also suggested that financial independence results not only from more money or different demographic characteristics, but also the skills that young adults learn and acquire to manage their money effectively. In summary, parents' financial socialization practices are influential in the development of their children's financial independence, thus contributing to their overall perception of financial well-being.

Financial Well-Being

As a multidimensional concept, financial well-being takes into account not just objective indicators of financial resources (e.g., wealth, income), but it also encompasses subjective assessments of well-being (e.g., belief in one's ability to achieve financial well-being) (Gudmunson and Danes 2011). The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) conducted in-depth, one-on-one interviews with working-age and older consumers to assess their definitions of financial well-being. The CFPB (2015) found very little difference among the participants in how they defined financial well-being. The participants defined financial well-being as a state of being wherein you: (1) have control over day-to-day, month-to-month finances; (2) have the capacity to absorb a financial shock; (3) are on track to meet your financial goals; and (4) have the financial freedom to make the choices that allow you to enjoy life (CFPB 2015, p. 5).

Much of the literature uses inconsistent conceptual terms used to describe financial well-being. For instance, some definitions tend to reflect the individual's ability to manage finances, such as the ability to have control over one's daily and monthly finances and the capacity to handle financial uncertainties (Drever et al. 2015), while other definitions reflect the resulting evaluation of financial management—an overall satisfaction with one's financial situation (van Praag et al. 2003). Further, most definitions of financial well-being do not explicitly indicate that the concept has both an objective and a subjective dimension as is specified in FFS theory (Gudmunson and Danes 2011). Shim et al. (2010) study is one example that recognized the objective and subjective nature of financial well-being; however, the subjective dimension was a one-question assessment of young adult's financial status. The current study fills a gap in the literature by providing a definition of financial well-being from a young adult's perspective which indicates that financial well-being is not only a financial socialization outcome but a motivator for behavior that evolves out of the cognitive development process of family financial socialization processes. Furthermore, based on study findings, a revision to the financial socialization processes dimension of the financial socialization theory is suggested along with a new theory hypothesis.

Method

Sampling Procedures and Sample Description

The data for the present study come from interviews with 31 college-educated young adults between the ages of 20 and 23 years old. The participants were drawn from a longitudinal dataset (Shim et al. 2009). The purpose of the study (the parent study from which our sample was drawn) was to examine how financial behaviors may contribute to a young adult's success and overall well-being. The first wave of data were collected early in 2008, during the participants' first year of college. Wave 2 data were collected in the fall of 2010 at the start of the participants' fourth year of college. Qualitative data for this study were collected after the second wave of data, where some students were still attending college and others had recently graduated from college and were beginning their college-to-career transition.

An email was sent to all participants who completed the Wave 2 survey ($N = 1511$). The purpose of the email was to thank the students for participating in the second wave of the study and to invite them to participate in a follow-up, exploratory interview. This criterion-based sample of participants was recruited from October 2011 to February 2012. Students who were interested in participating in the interview were asked to contact the PI by email or by telephone. The final sample consisted of 31 young adults.

After explaining the purpose of the current study and obtaining informed consent, the PI conducted one-on-one open-ended and semi-structured interviews. The interviews lasted between 20 and 45 min ($M = 30$ min) and were conducted by telephone or in-person located in a private office on campus. The interviews began by asking each participant to provide a definition of financial well-being and probed for additional information about what influenced that definition. The PI ended the interviews by thanking participants, reminding them of confidentiality, and compensating them for their time with a $50 check and a copy of the consent for their records. All 31 interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim by members of the research team. All procedures were approved by the institutional review board of the PI's university. The interview outline and questions are located in Appendix A. It is important to note that health and well-being were used interchangeably in the interview questions. However, in this study we use the term *well-being* to reflect a more inclusive concept about how young adults "felt" about financial well-being.

The sample included interviews with six men and 25 women with a mean age of 24 years old. The racial and ethnicity make-up of the 31 participants consisted of 21 White (67.7%), four Asian (13%), two Black (6.5%), two Latino (6.5%), and two multiracial (6.5%). In the current study, there were three college graduates, seven adults with one semester left until graduation (6 months remaining), 13 adults who were 6–12 months from graduating, five who were 12–24 months until graduating, and three adults who estimated that they were more than 24 months from graduating.

Table 1 Participant demographic information

Participant	Age	Ethnicity	Gender	SES	Expected time to graduation
Isabella	24	MX	F	2	1
Brittany	24	W	F	1	2
Amelia	24	W	F	3	2
Sofia	24	L	F	1	2
Abby	23	W	F	1	3
Emily	23	B	F	2	4
Ellen	27	W	F	1	3
John	24	W	M	2	2
Joe	24	W	M	3	4
Chloe	23	W	F	1	1
Nancy	26	W	F	3	3
Tiffany	24	W	F	1	2
Sumiko	23	AS	F	1	0
Bella	24	W	F	3	0
Alice	24	W	F	2	2
Paula	23	W	F	2	2
Mariana	30	L	F	1	4
Daya	24	AS	F	1	2
Marie	23	W	F	3	2
Jill	24	AS	F	2	3
Olivia	23	MX	F	3	2
Lucy	23	W	F	3	2
Grace	23	W	F	1	1
Kimberly	24	AS	F	3	1
Ruth	23	W	F	3	3
Nathan	23	W	M	3	1
Thea	23	W	F	3	2
Missy	24	W	F	3	0
Frank	23	W	M	1	2
Mark	23	W	M	2	1
Tom	23	W	M	1	1

For ethnicity, *AS* Asian, *B* Black, *L* Latino, *MX* Mixed, *W* White; for gender, *F* Female, *M* Male; for socioeconomic status (SES), parents' education and income at Wave 1, 1 = Low-income (annual income below $50,000); 2 = Middle-income (annual income between $50,000 and $150,000), and 3 = High-income (annual income above $150,000); for expected time to graduation 0 = already graduated; 1 = within 6 months; 2 = within the next year; 3 = within the next 2 years; 4 = longer than 2 years

Data Analysis Plan

All participants have been assigned pseudonyms. Pseudonym and demographic information are provided in Table 1. All transcribed interviews were coded and analyzed following Gilgun et al. (1992) pattern-matching approach of analytical induction. Analytical induction is a research process that fully integrates theory and the empirical process and begins with a conceptual model which is tested against and modified by emerging data (Gilgun 2001). Through a process of pattern-matching, a conjecture emerges as a theme or category that either confirms, refutes, or adds to the theoretical definitions or propositions of the theory (Gilgun 2001). In this study, conceptual definitions, or theoretical propositions from FFS theory served as the initial pattern or conjecture and were matched with the interview data. For example, FFS theory defines interactions between family members and family roles as the sources of financial socialization. Data that fit this definition confirmed the pattern and provided support for that conjecture; data refuting the pattern were set aside in order to determine if another pattern would emerge or if the data segment fit another conjecture. Thus, new themes from young adults' reflections provided additional understanding of the FFS theory and were added to the original model (Fig. 2).

In this study, the trustworthiness and authenticity of the data, key analytic goals in analytical induction methods (Denzin and Lincoln 2011; Gilgun 2001) were established by three strategies: reflexivity, peer consultation, and post-modern constructivism. Peer consultation ensured that the data were coded in a genuine and credible way; one that maintained respect for the participants' first-hand experiences. Consultation meetings occurred among peers internal as well as external to the fields of family and finances. These peer meetings also helped to reveal the process by which the researcher examined the data and eventually formulated the study's findings (Shenton 2004). Throughout the analysis, we placed emphasis on incorporating participants' direct words and descriptions in the reported findings. Through this process, multiple young adults' understandings of financial well-being were considered. These truths confirmed and refuted theoretical concepts or propositions that composed the comparative conjectures. In respecting multiple truths, young adults' perspectives beyond theoretical concepts and propositions of FFS theory were not refuted but rather recognized as different conditions. These conditions were incorporated as adaptations to FFS theory.

Results

Overall, the participants' reflections both confirmed and added to Gudmunson and Danes' FFS theory. In each of the following sections, we first identify the conceptual definition of FFS theory to establish the foundation for matching the participants' reflections. Then, we provide examples from the data that match the pattern or conjecture. From the findings, we developed an analytical model (Fig. 2) adapted from FFS theory to organize the findings of this study.

Family Interactions and Relationships

Family members spend much of their time interacting with one another through communication, recreational time, and building strong, healthy relationships (Gudmunson and Danes 2011). Reflecting on family interactions and interpersonal family relationships, participants shared that their parents promoted implicit expectations in hopes for them to learn financial practices. Thus, understanding the unique experiences of young adults is vital to understanding the essence of their family interactions and relationship quality. These types of financial socialization processes also influenced their conceptualization and definition of financial well-being.

Children tend to practice and engage in the same financial practices that their parents demonstrated through observation and modeling (Serido and Deenanath 2016). For this reason, it was important to highlight the financial practices our participants learned while growing up. For instance, participants stated that their parents did their best to educate them, but felt that their parents did not provide explicit ways for them to manage their finances independently. Brittany reflected upon her first-hand experience of learning about money in this way:

> It was more [that] they would give me words of advice. When you're little you see something cool and you want to buy it. My parents would remind me to consider keeping part of the money I had. They never directly told me to save the money because they expected me to make my own mistakes.

Some participants felt that they did not learn explicit financial practices from their families and were disappointed because they believed that these skills could have assisted them in managing their finances today. For example, Nancy reflected:

> I wish that they [parents] had spoken with us more openly about bill paying and that sort of stuff. When I left home, and started living on my own, I had no idea what I was doing… it would have been nice to have known what to do.

Although Gudmunson and Danes (2011) suggest that "by merely interacting with others in family roles, family members are financially socialized" (p. 649), the young adults in this sample provided insights on the limitations inherent in implicit socialization. The participants reported that they had learned some financial management behaviors from their parents; however, they also reported that their parents did not fully explain why these practices were being done. Thus, young adults may continue to follow the practice without understanding why it is important to do so. Without knowing why the financial practice is important, young adults may not know how to modify or adapt the practice under changing economic and/or personal conditions.

Purposive Financial Socialization

Purposive financial socialization occurs when family members intentionally make efforts to financially socialize each other (Gudmunson and Danes 2011). During the pattern-matching coding process, reoccurring subcategories emerged that fit the definition of purposive financial socialization. They also provided explicit examples of financial behaviors learned and contributed to participants' conceptualizations of financial well-being. The three subcategories that were added to the adapted FFS theory are: (1) *instill values*, (2) *promote self-efficacy*, and (3) *educate*.

Instill Values

Similar to family interactions and relationships, participants described the importance of holding on to the values that their parents shared with them as they made financial decisions. However, there were some differences in whether or not financial values tended to *stick*. Amelia's reflection provides an example of how her family influenced her current financial values by stating: "The most important financial value that I grew up with was the idea that you have to live within your means, and as the means change, your lifestyle changes." Most participants spoke of the importance of saving money for the future as a retrospective value learned from their parents. Tiffany shared how her perspective of financial well-being was similar to her parents and how her family's values influenced her financial practices:

> I think they would describe it [financial well-being] pretty much the same way. They've always said, "don't put this on a credit card, don't buy stuff that you can't afford, [and] live very much within your budget." So, I think that's how I look at financial well-being.

Similarly, Joe reflected on the value of money and how it was instilled in him growing up:

> They [parents] always tried to teach me the value of money. They would make me pick between things of equal value. So, I could have the choice of having a bigger birthday party or more presents. They would find ways to teach me what money was worth.

Jill's experience was also reflective of how her parents instilled the importance of healthy financial practices: "They [parents] said 'if you're going to take on something, you have to make sure you're able to honor your commitment' in terms of paying the bills on time every month."

Alternatively, participants who diverged from parental values acknowledged that they did not realize the significance of saving money until they were older and managing their finances independently. We labeled this as the subcategory of *hindsight*, which we discuss in the results of the financial well-being category.

Promote Financial Self-efficacy

Many participants reflected upon explicit strategies learned from parents that helped them establish and develop a sense of financial self-efficacy, which we define as belief in one's ability to manage finances. Previous studies have found evidence that financial self-efficacy is an important resource for achieving self-sufficiency (Lown et al. 2015; Robb and Woodyard 2011). Emily's statement provides an example of how her parents instilled in her a sense of financial self-efficacy:

> I am trying to do the best that I can with what I have. My parents gave me a good head on my shoulders so that I can find my way around and make decisions for myself and they are also there to help me.

Sofia described how she included reciprocity in the context of family as an important part of self-sufficiency and financial well-being:

> I want to help my parents financially. I am on my own, but they help me out when I need it, so I would like to give back. Hopefully I will be financially well off to give back. Not only to make myself comfortable, but continue to make them comfortable.

Skills and strategies that were learned among these young adults were critical in building their self-esteem and financial self-efficacy. It was evident that those participants who learned these skills from their parents tended to be more self-reliant and were striving more toward financial self-sufficiency.

Educate

In reflecting upon specific role models that influenced the way they perceived or thought about financial well-being, our participants described how they were socialized through a process of direct parent–child financial education, a new subcategory that we named *educate*. Nathan described his personal experience of learning financial education in this way:

> My mom would sit down with me three or four times a year and go over all my bank statements and my Fidelity account. She would show me where I spent my money and where I needed to cut back on spending.

Marie reflected upon a similar experience:

> They would teach us work ethic and to think things through. My parents sat me down and said, "okay so, you have X amount in your bank account and you need to start looking at cars and figure out what you need

> to make, and whatever you put in from now until your sixteenth birthday we'll double it and that will be put towards your car."

Other participants remembered that their parents would bring them to the bank and open a savings account with them or sit down with them at the kitchen table and help them learn financial management practices, such as budgeting. For example, Chloe shared that she learned how to manage her finances from her dad and reflected by stating that: "He [dad] guided me. [He told me] 'don't get a credit card, [but if you do] get one with your bank and make sure you're saving along with whatever you're spending.' I have him to thank."

In addition, participants noted that their siblings helped them in applying for college scholarships and in filling out their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. This process was helpful to them, especially when it came to budgeting and being able to recognize how much tuition they were going to be able to afford and where they were going to be short. These financial management practices were particularly important to the participants' as they prepared for their future. They described how grateful they were to receive explicit financial education from their families because it helped them to become more financially independent and be aware of their finances today.

Cognitive Interpretations of Finances and Financial Well-Being

As a new category, including subcategories and new hypothesis that emerged from this study, cognitive interpretations of finances and financial well-being serve as a foundational motivation for young adults' continual development of financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities. These interpretations are developed through financial socialization processes of the FFS theory and contributed to the participants' overall perceptions of financial well-being. The following five subcategories have been adapted to the FFS theory: (1) *constraints*, (2) *stability* (e.g., living independently from one's parents), (3) *strategies that promote financial well-being* (e.g., put away money for future), (4) *factors that undermine* (or prevent an individual from achieving) financial well-being, and (5) *hindsight* (i.e., the understanding of a financial situation or event only after it has happened). Participants' reflections provided additional understanding of the explicit ways that they felt about their current and future finances in achieving financial well-being.

Constraints

Constraints refer to young adults' financial concerns about affording life on their own. Many participants described how they and/or their family members experienced feelings of guilt or worry toward money at some point in their lives due to limited personal and financial resources. Olivia shared that her mom, who ran her own business, was always "really worried about finances for most of my life" and how the stress "was a source of a lot of fights" between her parents. Some participants contended that their experiences of witnessing their parents argue over money influenced their perceptions on how they now felt about money (e.g., a negative connotation about money). As Isabllea reflected, having financial health and well-being meant that "one must not feel guilt or worry toward money, but rather have freedom to do what they wish with their money." Some noted that their concerns about their finances led to them putting more focus into saving because they were worried about not having enough to afford the things they wanted in the future. For example, Frank shared his worry over money in this way: "I was so freaked out about spending money that my parents would actually have to say, 'it's okay to buy that.'"

In addition, the participants believed that one's financial issues would also affect their career outlook as well as relationships that they have with friends and family members. One prevalent piece of information that emerged was stress as it pertained to financial topics and overall well-being. For example, participants shared that when they experienced stress related to their finances, (e.g., finding a job after graduating from college), they focused more on handling the stress and spent less time with family and friends. This appeared to negatively affect those relationships and young adults' overall well-being.

Stability

From these young adults' perspectives, greater financial health and well-being meant having financial security or having financial stability independent from one's parents. Sumiko reflected on what it means to achieve financial well-being in this way:

> Financial well-being is being stable and being able to provide for one's self without being dependent on parents. [It is also the ability to] have steady income, whether it is a scholarship or something like that.

Mariana indicated that you know you have financial health and well-being because, "[money] doesn't limit you; where you are in a good financial state and you wouldn't have to work full-time and could afford to go on vacations." Thea shared a similar meaning of what it meant to achieve financial well-being in this way:

> It is living completely on your own two feet with some form of salary [where] you can afford all your bills for the month, [plus] additional expenses such

as traveling or medical and car bills. [It is also] being able to pay off [your] credit card every single month in full and still be saving [for the future].

Other participants believed that to achieve financial well-being one must have financial security, which they defined as the ability to be able to pay one's bills, put money aside into savings, and engage in travel or other opportunities. Participants also shared personal values and beliefs about money that revealed the importance of having financial security as they got older. Many of the participants explained that these beliefs and values were reflective of their families' beliefs and values: that is, they also believed that being more financially secure and stable signified comfort and happiness in one's life.

The interpretations of implicit (family interactions and relationships) and explicit (purposive financial socialization) financial socialization serve as motivations for acquiring financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities and therefore, contribute to the young adult's conceptualization of financial well-being.

Promote

The participants conceptualized financial well-being by identifying specific strategies that promote it. John shared his personal strategy in achieving financial well-being in this way:

> Every year I continued working, putting away more money and before I graduated [high school] I got a seasonal job opportunity where I started putting away money for the future.

A similar experience by Alice was also representative of a strategy to promote financial well-being:

> I made a budget worksheet in Excel that keeps track of all my expenses and will tally up how much I spend in each category so that I can get a sense of how much it costs for food and how much I spend on different things like maintaining my bike.

Another participant, Paula, believed that to achieve financial well-being you must:

> Have enough money in your bank account; where you can pay your bills and then set money aside in your savings and still have some money to spend on something fun. [It's important to] take care of the necessities, [including] your bills and groceries, [but have some money to] go out with your friends to a dinner and still have enough to put aside in savings.

Undermine

Not taking financial behaviors seriously and accruing financial debt through credit cards or student loans were common attitudes as to why an individual may not achieve financial well-being. Specifically, the participants reflected that it is important for individuals to have explicit financial strategies in place in order to attain financial well-being. They also shared the importance of managing good and bad debt, such as paying credit card and student loan payments on time. Ruth reflected her perception of financial well-being in this way:

> I think the biggest thing that comes to mind when I think about financial well-being is debt. I would say it is how much debt and how much savings somebody has. Savings and debt are two things that have to do with financial well-being.

Many participants shared personal experiences of growing up and how their parents managed money. Although most participants had followed in their parents' footsteps, practicing similar healthy financial behaviors, some learned from their parents' mistakes. This was reflected in how participants shared that they did not want to have the same financial behaviors as their parents because these were strategies that undermined their ability to achieve financial well-being. For example, Ellen shared that although she had "a lot of financial background and [knew] how to use money" from her dad, she chuckled and stated: "he [wasn't] very good with his money."

Hindsight

Many of the parental values that participants recalled retrospectively reflected the importance of saving money for the future. Some participants, however, struggled in managing their finances independent from their parents, preventing them from saving for their future or achieving financial self-sufficiency. The participants reflected that they did not realize the significance of saving money until they were on their own or until they wanted to make a big purchase that their parents were not going to pay for. For example, participants reflected by stating I wish I would have known or done this. Tom described hindsight in this way:

> I'm still working on my credit because I had a credit card throughout college. I had enough in the bank where I could afford a bigger limit, but I never really established my credit until a couple of months ago. That is one specific thing I wish they [parents] would have told me about.

Mariana shared hindsight financial information she wished she had learned from her parents, as it would have promoted her financial well-being:

> Budgeting is something that my dad never talked about. And now that I'm older, I've asked him, "Dad, can you help me? What's the secret? Can you help me figure out what I'm doing wrong?" and he's said "Don't buy what you don't need. Don't live beyond your means." And he comes out with these sayings that are just like yes, that makes sense, but they are not helping me.

Mark also shared an example of *hindsight*; reflecting upon a missed learning opportunity: "Unfortunately, at least for me, I didn't fully understand the consequence of my decision until I was really into my college years."

Collectively, cognitive interpretations of finances and financial well-being continued to develop and reform and serve as financial socialization processes that help to construct financial socialization outcomes of financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities as well as an overall perception and definition of financial well-being.

Financial Attitudes

Financial attitudes reflect the beliefs and opinions an individual has about money, are reflective of the individual's own personal family socialization background, and are acquired through family interactions and relationships (Danes and Yang 2014). The influence of purposive financial socialization on financial attitude development, knowledge transfer, and financial capability development occurs bidirectionally (Danes and Yang 2014). Based on our findings, a new hypothesis is formed and states that an individual's cognitive interpretations of finances and financial well-being are developed from family financial socialization processes; the foundational base for the continual development of financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities. For example, Daya reflected on how her family's financial management practices still resonate with her today: "They [parents] are very careful with their financial spending as opposed to spending money on themselves." Abby described a similar experience in how parental financial socialization influences how she feels about finances and why she is cautious about spending:

> We did grow up living frugally, so always having hand-me-down clothes, or homemade fun activities instead of going out for entertainment. I think that left an impression that you have to be careful with money and it wasn't to be spent freely.

These examples provided the participants' perceptions of how their interpretations of finances and financial well-being as well as their past family financial socialization influenced their current attitudes toward finances. These examples also provided an understanding of how participants' financial attitudes impacted their financial behavior and thus, affecting their overall financial well-being.

Financial Knowledge

Financial knowledge refers to the content knowledge and general facts an individual has about money and is also reflective of the individual's own personal family socialization background (Gudmunson and Danes 2011). Sofia described her lived experience of financial knowledge in this way:

> Knowing what to spend and when to spend it—I've learned that from my mom. But [I've also found that] being independent has helped me. [For example], managing my own money has taught me what to spend, and when to spend it.

There were differences in the personal reflections among participants when it came to handling financial matters. For instance, participants reported a need for financial education, not only for themselves, but also for future generations. This opinion was more strongly held among the participants who were reflecting on what their lives were like growing up. Some participants expressed the wish that their parents or family members would have talked more openly about finances in the home so that they would have been more financially prepared when leaving the home. Participants discussed that they wished their friends and others in society would have received more financial education growing up as well, so that they would make better financial choices. They shared that there is a need to educate young people on financial matters today, especially on how to handle bill paying and emphasizing the importance of saving. Lucy discussed the importance of financial education in this way:

> I think that preparedness is the biggest thing. I don't think that people [peers; young adults] are trying to do bad things in terms of their financial well-being; I just don't think they know any better. I think that parents these days do the hovering and they are more actively involved in their kids' lives—which I think can be for the better or for the worse.

Further, Bella shared how her own lack of financial education left her worried about being able to manage her finances, especially now that she has graduated from college. This is what she said:

> That kind of scared me because [it made me wonder] do people see what we're heading into or do they see the money situation that we are going to be stuck while

> trying to make ends meet and coming straight out of college?

Financial Capabilities

In addition to financial skills, financial capabilities refer to internal motivational sources such as self-efficacy, values, perceived needs, and living standards (Gudmunson and Danes 2011). The FFS theory assumes that without confidence in one's own ability to accomplish a financial action, knowledge is not likely to give way to behavior or to financial well-being (Danes and Yang 2014). Participants varied in their levels of financial capabilities as they shared different sources of motivation toward achieving financial well-being. Here are the words of Nancy that mirrored those of many others in the sample, reflecting a sense of internal motivation to save:

> Looking back, my parents never told me that I should, or I had to, save my money. However, I knew that it's what I needed to do if I wanted something. So, I saved my money for the things that I wanted. I think somehow, they must have influenced me in doing that [saving], but it wasn't an open discussion.

Nathan shared a similar reflection: "Honestly, I just saved most of it—there wasn't a lot of expectations from my parents." An internal motivation to save was also important to Missy. She echoed Nathan by stating: "I knew it was my money to manage responsibly. I like to save for the big things instead of spending on the little things and I don't spend anything in excess."

Participants also shared how challenging financial experiences led to them making an internal and explicit goal to save money. Sofia explained:

> Financial support, it makes things easier. Sometimes, financially, it is hard, but if you have the motivation you'll work full-time and part-time to continue in achieving your goals.

Kimberly also shared how being frugal during tough economic times was important in order to achieve her life goals. She shared her experience in this way:

> I consider the bills that I have to pay and the money I have to save. I'm currently working on [saving more] money and [being mindful of the money] I can spend and [the] money I can't and how I need to move forward in saving for the future.

Meaning of Financial Well-Being

This study's research question focused on meaning-making of financial well-being as expressed by young adults. While it was not considered a new subtheme under this overarching theme (*financial well-being*), many participants agreed that financial well-being is something good to have. Due to the framing of the interview questions, the absolute definition of financial well-being emerged when questions were asked about participants' current financial state. Some participants, however, defined financial well-being as a continuum when asked about their future potential; where one end of the spectrum represented a low-level of financial well-being and the other end of the spectrum signified a high-level of financial well-being.

Nevertheless, the assessment of the meaning of financial well-being rested on the participants' motivations for the ongoing development of financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities. In other words, an individual's implicit and explicit financial socialization served as a foundation for their cognitive interpretations of finances and financial well-being, which then served as motivation to the continual development of financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities and, therefore, contributed to the overall perception and definition of financial well-being. Grace provided a statement that is especially reflective of many of the participants' interpretations and definitions of financial well-being:

> I think that financial health and well-being is being able to support yourself, make ends meet, while being able to save for other ventures. [It is also about] being able to make ends meet while still being able to put money away.

Taken together, it is relevant to see that some participants are struggling to identify the simple financial strategies needed to be able to support themselves and be self-sufficient from their families. Our addition of cognitive interpretations of finances and financial well-being as well as the subcategories for these interpretations and further understandings of purposive financial socialization provide a glimpse into the lives of some young adults' perspectives on financial well-being and what they believe it takes to overcome constraints by utilizing resources in achieving financial self-sufficiency today.

Discussion

This study offers an understanding of the financial strategies young adults learn through both explicit and implicit family interactions and how this learning influences their interpretation of the communication about finances and financial well-being during that process. The findings drawn from the personal reflections of the 31 young adults in our sample are consistent with the extant literature, demonstrating that parents and families contribute to young adults' financial well-being through financial socialization. But unlike previous studies, our study focused on the internal cognitive process (psychological context) that young adults undergo in interpreting family financial socialization as motivations for their financial behavior and perceptions of financial well-being.

This study contributes to the literature by confirming the FFS theory, extending the theory through the addition of the concept *cognitive interpretations of finances and financial well-being* (Fig. 2), as well as adding a new hypothesis to the "Financial Socialization Processes" section of the theory. The assumption in past literature has been that financial attitudes, knowledge, and capability outcomes have been socially imbued over time, but it has not addressed how those outcomes emerge (Gudmunson and Danes 2011). The new hypothesis resulting from the study findings contributes to that gap in the literature. It states that an individual's cognitive interpretations of finances and financial well-being emanate from family financial socialization processes as the foundational base for the continual development of their financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities. FFS theory embeds family financial socialization processes with the context of personal finances (Gudmunson and Danes 2011). The new hypothesis provides further conceptual precision about the connective link between the family's social processes and the individual's development of personal financial dispositions (Van Campenhout 2015).

From the viewpoint of these young adults, three new subcategories demonstrate their reflections of purposive financial socialization: *instill values, promote self-efficacy*, and *educate*. Cognitive interpretations of finances and financial well-being are reflected in the subcategories of *constraints, stability, promote, undermine, and hindsight*. Although personal and family characteristics are important components of FFS theory, they are excluded from Fig. 2 because it was not part of this study. With the addition of the concept of cognitive interpretations of finances and financial well-being to FFS theory, this study contributes to the theoretical literature in two ways. First, this study's FFS model includes the psychological context of young adults which is the cognitive interpretive lens that is the motivational springboard to the construction and continuing development of financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities (Van Campenhout 2015). Second, it incorporates two dimensions of financial well-being. The original FFS theory had financial well-being as a behavioral outcome. With this new addition, the motivational dimension of financial well-being is now incorporated in the financial socialization process. The new addition also reinforces that financial attitudes, knowledge and capabilities are social-imbued individual characteristics that develop over time and are affected by cognitive interpretations of one's past and current financial context (Danes and Yang 2014).

This study contributes to the literature in that young adults had experienced the impact of an economic downturn. Their interpretations of that experience provide a unique lens compared to other studies. They have experienced certain constraints and financial instabilities early in their lives. Thus, they have the advantage of not only that experience but the cognitive hindsight that feeds into the further development of their financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities. This anticipatory socialization has better prepared them for facing future financial turning points and family financial decisions by being more cognizant of financial instability and more cautious of their financial behavior.

Finally, this study contributes to the current literature on promoting young adults' financial well-being by providing an understanding on how young adults interpret specific types of family financial socialization processes, and how these interpretations influence their definition of financial well-being. Through this reflective process two main findings arose: (1) implicit financial socialization may be misunderstood, and consequently result in risky financial behaviors potentially prolonging dependence on parents, whereas (2) explicit financial socialization demonstrates a clear connection between behavior and the interpretation of well-being and may promote more autonomy in young adulthood. Just as parenting and the parent/child relationship changes over time, the process of understanding and using one's finances appropriately is constantly changing as well (Tanner and Yabiku 1999). One of the things that future research needs to investigate is family financial socialization and the cognitive interpretations of young adults as a dynamic bi-directional process that occurs over time.

Family Interactions and Relationships

To answer the second guiding question for this study (*How do young adults interpret family financial socialization processes?)*, participants reflected on their family interactions and relationships as they related to financial practices. In families where financial matters were implicitly addressed, participants were more likely to indicate that they continue to rely on their parents or other family members. Participants value their families' financial beliefs and continue to trust their parents' opinions about financial decisions. They also reflect that actual financial practices (e.g., budgeting) were unclear due to vagueness, misinterpretation, or mislearning. Implicit family interactions also left some participants questioning their parents' advice as to how the financial practice actually worked and why it was important. Some participants feel as though they have missed learning opportunities, either because they did not follow their parents' behavior or misunderstood the reasons behind a financial practice. These findings were similar to those of Solheim et al. (2011), in that students whose parents modeled responsible financial behaviors at home practiced those same behaviors as college students at school; however, students also adopted the poor financial behaviors that parents practiced at home. Although financial role modeling was helpful to some participants in this study (e.g., learned the importance of saving through parental role-modeling), others struggled in identifying why their parents engaged in such financial behaviors, which resulted in feeling regret and disappointment due to their financial missteps.

Purposive Financial Socialization

In response to the first guiding question of this study (*What is the connection between young adults' family financial socialization processes and financial well-being?)*, participants who learned financial practices through purposive financial socialization developed and felt a sense of importance in managing their finances independently to become self-sufficient. These families were intentional about having their children learn and discuss financial practices in an effort to promote self-efficacy. In a related study, teens who received more financial teaching from their parents were more likely to set financial goals and save money for their future (Koonce et al. 2008). In the current study, participants who said their parents explicitly taught them about financial matters were more cognizant of their financial behaviors and understood the connection between their financial behavior and their overall well-being. Participants reflected on how grateful they were to have families that explicitly taught them financial practices through learning opportunities, so that they could incorporate these lessons into their daily financial management practices. They also shared that they were grateful for learning the explicit financial knowledge as they saw many of their peers struggle with related practices. Participants whose parents instilled strong financial values felt a sense of internal motivation to save—knowing that it would benefit them in the future even if it was difficult to save in the present. These participants wanted to achieve their future goals on their own, independent from their parents, yet still hold on to the values their family instilled in them.

Cognitive Interpretations of Finances and Financial Well-Being

In response to the second guiding question (*How do young adults interpret family financial socialization processes?*), young adults in our sample had various interpretations of finances and financial well-being. Specifically, participants were reflective on how constraints (i.e., guilt or worry toward money due to limited personal and financial resources) impacted their overall financial well-being. This could be attributed to the finding that when they were financially strained, they worked more hours to compensate. However, this left them little time to spend with family and friends and therefore, not only impacted their personal well-being, but also the well-being of their relationships with family and friends.

It was also evident that a majority of the young adults in our sample wanted to live financially independent from their parents, but they also wanted to be able to live financially stable enough in order to take care of their families (i.e., give back financially). The participants also reflected that financial security was essential as it impacted overall health and well-being. Therefore, it was important for them to put away money for the future and to engage in healthy financial management practices now to ensure that they had financial stability in their future. In addition, participants shared that debt was a critical factor for many participants as they believed it was important not only to manage the debt they had, but to get to a point in their lives where they could completely eliminate it as it seemed to cause stress. To many, financial well-being was a sign of happiness and comfort; to be able to take vacations and enjoy life, stress-free.

One of the unique subcategories added to the FFS theory is *hindsight* (i.e., the understanding of a financial situation or event only after it has happened). This was an intriguing finding as many of the participants would reflect upon the financial mistakes they made personally or those made by their families. However, many concluded that they had learned from these poor financial practices and, therefore, made it a point to be conscious of managing their finances for the present and the future. Each of these subcategories adds a new and more dynamic perspective on the participants' overall interpretations of finances and financial well-being and contributes to the continuing development of financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities.

Financial Attitudes, Knowledge, and Capabilities

In response to the final guiding question (*How do young adults define financial well-being?*), participants generally defined financial well-being as an ability to balance taking care of their money for stability and freedom to live independently from their parents, with feeling unconstrained by their finances. Participants reflected on their own personal financial knowledge and the importance of decision-making. They also felt confident in their ability to know what to spend and when to spend it and this appears to contribute to their overall perception of financial well-being in a positive way. Lastly, participants discussed the importance of saving and becoming self-sufficient, which was reflected in some participants as an inner compass, providing the motivation to save even when it was difficult to do so.

These responses of young adults reflect conventional economic definitions of financial well-being. This study's qualitative findings also uncovered the anticipatory socialization role that young adults' definition and understanding of financial well-being played in the generation of their financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities. Their cognitive interpretations of finances and financial well-being that emanated out of their implicit (family interactions and relationships) and explicit (purposive financial socialization) family financial socialization experiences. Van Campenhout (2015) indicated that these specific skills that children practice during their childhood as part of the anticipatory socialization process are ones that the individual can fall back on whenever a relevant occasion arises later in life.

The findings of this study reaffirm Van Campenhout's (2015) call for a multi-disciplinary approach to financial education and researching personal and family finance. The conventional approach has been steeped in the economic discipline. The socialization perspective is one that needs to be perused more in the future in addition to the economic perspective. Further, financial professionals need to be challenged to move beyond their disciplinary definitions of financial well-being and become more cognizant of the definition and understanding of financial well-being held by those who they are attempting to reach.

Much is yet to be learned about the financial socialization process. It is not just a phenomenon early in life but rather an ever-changing and developing process. Gudmunson and Danes (2011) indicated that financial socialization continues into adulthood evolving with changing roles and resource levels. As life progresses and young adults acquire new family roles and identities such as spouse and parent, they work to meet new financial needs and develop characteristics that they perceive pertain to those roles and identities—the very definition of anticipatory socialization. Melding two perhaps differing cognitive interpretations of finances and financial well-being is a socialization process in itself of which we know little.

Not only does future financial research and educational efforts need to become more multi-disciplinary, their approaches also need to be multi-level. The conventional approach has been primarily individual in nature. The family contextual approach needs to be expanded in the future to understand how anticipatory socialization more fully influences the continual development of financial attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities. A life course perspective would contribute to the understanding of how family financial socialization processes adapt to both changing internal and external economic conditions.

Limitations of the Study

Although the findings from this study add to our understanding of family and finances, there are limitations that warrant caution in their application. First, the study sample was predominately White, college-educated, and female from a single university cohort sample and thus limits the generalizability of the findings to all young adults. Second, recruitment of study participants was limited to those who had previously engaged in past study waves and who were compensated for participation and thus other biases may be present in the current sample. Future studies should consider utilizing a more diverse and larger sample of young adults, including non-college-educated young adults to determine whether the findings are consistent in a wider population. Third, it is possible that our findings are skewed by the length of the interviews. Specifically, some participants chose to interview on the phone, while others did interviews in-person. Those who did in-person interviews might have been more likely to share more information, whereas those who engaged in phone interviews may have been more willing to share more depth about family interaction because of the less personalized platform. Future studies may want to investigate this proposition. At the very least, researchers will want to consider the study objectives and then match those objectives with the type of data collection method selected for the study.

Finally, the interview data were collected retrospectively. Because past experiences may have been distorted due to the length of time between when the young adult experienced the financial socialization and the present study, future studies may consider interviewing youth prior to leaving the family home. Although the study sample were directly affected by the economic recession, and likely contributed to their perceptions of financial well-being, money continues to be a sensitive or controversial topic in many families and the society. Thus, our findings suggest the need for further exploration to understand the dynamics behind both positive and conflictual financial interactions as they influence individual as well as family well-being.

Implications

Despite its limitations, our findings contribute to the literature by providing researchers with an understanding of cognitive shifts: the process of how young adults are conceptualizing financial well-being as well as the why, when, and how of financial decision-making. Further research may also consider examining how parents can provide opportunities to develop critical thinking skills regarding financial choices to assist young adults in making sound life decisions. Researchers may gain further understanding on how to measure what is important in the lives of young adults as financial well-being develops and emerges. Gaining a deeper understanding of how young adults make financial decisions based on prior knowledge and family socialization is also a topic for future research.

In addition, practitioners may benefit from these findings by gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of young adults and the ways that parents effectively educate their children on financial matters. Specifically, it is important for practitioners to instruct parents to be intentional in teaching their children about financial practices. Parents need to teach their children about the uses of money and as they become more knowledgeable about the effect of their financial choices; young adults will then feel more competent about managing their own finances by internalizing these behaviors, thus affecting their overall financial well-being (Serido and Deenanath 2016).

Finally, educators can ensure that financial education resonates with the specific audience they are serving so that the learner can apply the concepts to real-life examples. Financial literacy classes and/or workshops that involve the family would be valuable in addressing financial management practices in the context of that family's situation. Parents and educators should try to pay extra attention to young adults' financial needs at important life markers, such as when they obtain their first job or during the transition to college. In addition, providing resources on how to prepare for college and manage finances during college may be especially helpful to students as well as parents as both the need for higher education and the cost of that education increase. These transitions provide teachable moments for educators and parents to make the connection between behavior and relevance of that behavior. Specifically, children learn best by practicing the behavior. From this study, we learned that when young adults have the opportunity to observe implicit and explicit financial practices from educators and parents, engage in the behavior, and receive feedback for the behavior, they learn to understand the reasoning behind the behavior.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the literature by confirming and extending the FFS theory through the addition of a new category, new hypothesis, and several subcategories. Overall, findings indicated that greater perceived intentionality in family financial socialization promoted internal financial self-beliefs that contributed to young adults' meaning of financial well-being. Young adults' financial self-beliefs ultimately motivated their financial behavior, which may promote more autonomy in young adulthood. Whereas, implicit financial socialization may be misunderstood, and consequently result in risky financial behaviors potentially prolonging dependence on parents.

Defining and understanding financial well-being as it is perceived by young adults is essential to understanding what young adults value and how financial well-being contributes to personal well-being or as it relates to family and relationship well-being. To fully understand the reasoning behind the various choices that a young adult makes, we must understand how certain situations and prior socialization experiences have influenced the young adult's perceptions of well-being. We must also understand how those perceptions affect the young adult's sense of how financial well-being can impact their future life decisions and goals. Without such understanding, educational programming cannot be made relevant and specific to the needs of contemporary young adults in the midst of achieving personal and financial goals.

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Appendix A

Outline of Interview Questions

Young adults' perspectives on financial health: What is it? Who has it? And how do you get it?

A. *Primer activity—to get the interviewee thinking about their ideas and opinions about constitutes health and well-being in different domains of life*

On a scale of 1–10 where 1 = as low as you can go and 10 = couldn't get any better, how would you currently rate:

(1) Your physical health and well-being
(2) Your mental health and well-being
(3) Your relationships with family
(4) Your social relationships (e.g., friends, co-workers)
(5) Your career health and well-being
(6) Your financial health and well-being

B. *Participants perspective on financial health and well-being*

q1 How would you define "financial health and well-being"?
q2 Based on your definition, how important is financial health and well-being to you?

q2a Why?
q2b How is financial health and well-being to your overall outlook on life?
q2c How about to other areas of your life, for example, relationships with friends? Family?

q3 Can you give me some examples of financial health and well-being, based on your definition? In other words, how would you recognize that you "have it"?
q4 When you think about older adults, for example, your parents or even your grandparents, does financial health and well-being look the same for them? In what ways is it different?
q5 Think about when you were just starting college, tell me how your definition would have looked then?
q6 Earlier, you rated your financial health and well-being as ____. Now that we have talked about it a bit, would you change it at all? Why/why not? What changed it?
q7 How about your parents—how do you think they would rate their financial well-being? Do you think they would rate it the same or different?
q8 When you think about financial health and well-being, can you give me an example of someone you know—maybe someone you work with or are friends with who represents a good model of someone with a high rating—say an 8 or higher?

C. *Participant's perspective on how one achieves financial health and well-being*

q9 What is it about that person that gives them such a high score?
q10 How do you think they achieved it? Do you think financial health and well-being is something they worked at? Something that they had given to them?
q11 Have you ever talked to that person about financial matters—like how to manage money or their career choices?

q11a Do you observe what they regarding financial decisions and choices?
q11b Asked for their help?

q12 If you could ask them anything you wanted to—relative to financial health and well-being, what would that be?

D. *Family Financial Processes—When you were younger (before going to college)*

q13 Did your family talk openly about financial matters, for example, having enough money to pay bills or go on vacation?
q14 Were you—or your siblings—involved in any of these discussions?
q15 When you think about family and financial matters, what sorts of things did you learn? For example, did your parents teach you how to budget your money or save for something big, like a car or college?

E. *Access to Finances*

q16 Did you ever get a regular allowance from your parents?

q16a What did you have to do to get your allowance (e.g., chores)?
q16b Were you expected to do anything in particular with your allowance (e.g., save some, buy holiday presents for family, save some, contribute to the family/household needs)?

q17 How about any cash gifts you were given (e.g., birthdays, special occasions)—what were you expected to do with that money?
q18 How about money that you earned—either informally (e.g., babysitting, paper routes, jobs) or formally—what were you expected to do with that money?

F. *Learning from experience*

q19 When you look back, are there things you wish your parents did differently—relative to you and your financial matters? What would you have changed, why?
q20 How about your own choices and behaviors—would you have done anything differently? What would you have changed, why?
q21 How about while you were in college would you have done anything differently? What would you have changed, why?
q22 What person or people had the most impact on your current financial health and well-being?
q23 Is there any particular event or experience in your life that you think changed how you're think about financial health and well-being?

G. *Looking ahead*

q24 You first rated your current financial health and well-being at ____; then revised it to_If you were to look ahead 5 years, where would you like to be?
q25 Are there things that you can do to help you reach your goal?
q26 What are the things that might interfere with you reaching your goal?
q27 Is there anything that we haven't talked about that you think is an important part of your financial health and well-being?

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