

Supplementary Materials

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Additional ratings

In addition to the victim blame ratings presented in the poster, we also asked participants to rate, on 100-point sliders, how much blame they assigned to the company responsible for the product that caused the accident (extremes: “No blame at all” and “All of the blame”) and how much money they thought the victim should have received in compensation for the accident (extremes: “No compensation at all” and “Maximum compensation allowed by law for this type of claim”). The extremes for the compensation rating slider were chosen to make the same rating scale usable in all scenarios, which depicted accidents rather different from one another and that could thus differ in terms of the sensible range of monetary compensation.

In the following, we report graphs and p values for the results of the company blame and compensation ratings for each experiment.

Experiment 1

Stories

Story 1

Jane is an actress in her 60s. For obvious reasons, she takes good care of her skin, using gentle soaps, plenty of moisturizer, and hypoallergenic makeup. It is important for Jane to use only certain products because she has sensitive skin. One night, during her skincare routine,

- she uses her usual face cream, [CONTROL]
- she uses a different face cream than her usual brand, [CFT]

which she bought in a fancy cosmetics shop downtown. However, the next morning, she wakes up with a rash. Unbeknownst to her, the cream was part of a defective batch. She had been scheduled to film a scene for a movie. Instead, she is replaced by a different actress. Jane sues the face cream company for delivering a defective product.

Story 2

Mark is a huge basketball fan in his 70s and has bought season tickets for his local NBA team. His tickets allow him to sit anywhere between 10 and 20 rows from the floor, but he typically arrives quite late and only finds empty seats in the 20th row. One evening, Mark arrives at a game, late again,

- and, as usual, the only seats he finds are in the 20th row. [CONTROL]
- but this time, he also finds some empty seats in the 10th row. [CFT]

Shortly after the beginning of the match, a light fixture suddenly falls from the arena ceiling. Fortunately, nobody is killed, but part of the light lands on Mark's foot, which is badly broken. Mark sues the owners of the arena, claiming negligence on their part.

Story 3

Every Monday through Friday, Joe, a bank employee in his 20s, leaves his office right around 5 p.m. He typically takes the motorway, which is the most direct route home. One afternoon,

- as usual, Joe takes the motorway, [CONTROL]
- enjoying some nice weather, Joe takes a longer, scenic route, [CFT]

but, while he is driving, a large road sign suddenly detaches from a bridge and falls into the path of his car. Joe cannot avoid it, and as a result, his car is severely damaged. Afterward, Joe decides to sue the agency that installs and maintains the road signs.

Story 4

Bonnie is a successful businesswoman in her 30s. As part of her job, she travels frequently, giving presentations all over the country. Whenever she can, she prefers to travel by train. One day, she needs to visit a client about 40 minutes by train from her office. Since she prefers to arrive early to her meetings, she gets to the station in time to catch a train that would guarantee arrival at her destination about one hour before the meeting. When she is about to get on the train, her cell phone rings. The call is from her office. She answers and asks if she can call back after she's arrived at her destination, as trains are often noisy and she would like to avoid talking while on board. The caller says, "We need to discuss something important as soon as possible."

- Bonnie reassures them she will call back as soon as she arrives at the destination, and she gets on the train. [CONTROL]
- Bonnie decides to go on with the call and to take the following train. [CFT]

Then, about five minutes after her train has left the station, a storage bin above Bonnie's seat suddenly breaks, and a heavy bag falls on her head. Bonnie suffers damage to her neck, requiring disc surgery. She sues the train company for poor maintenance of the train.

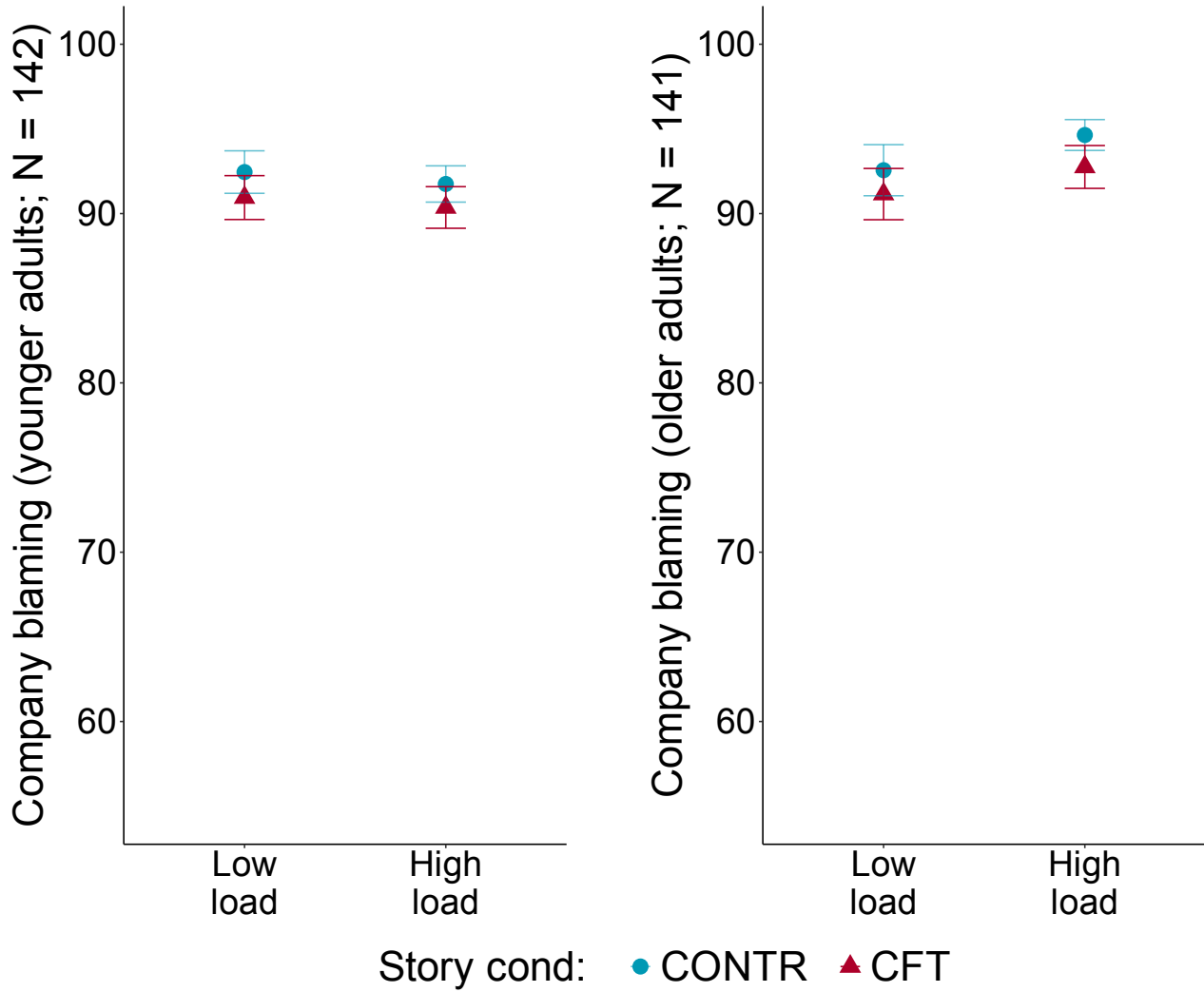
Company blame ratings

Story condition
 $p = .041$

Age condition
 $p = .255$

Load condition
 $p = .430$

Interactions
 $ps > .101$



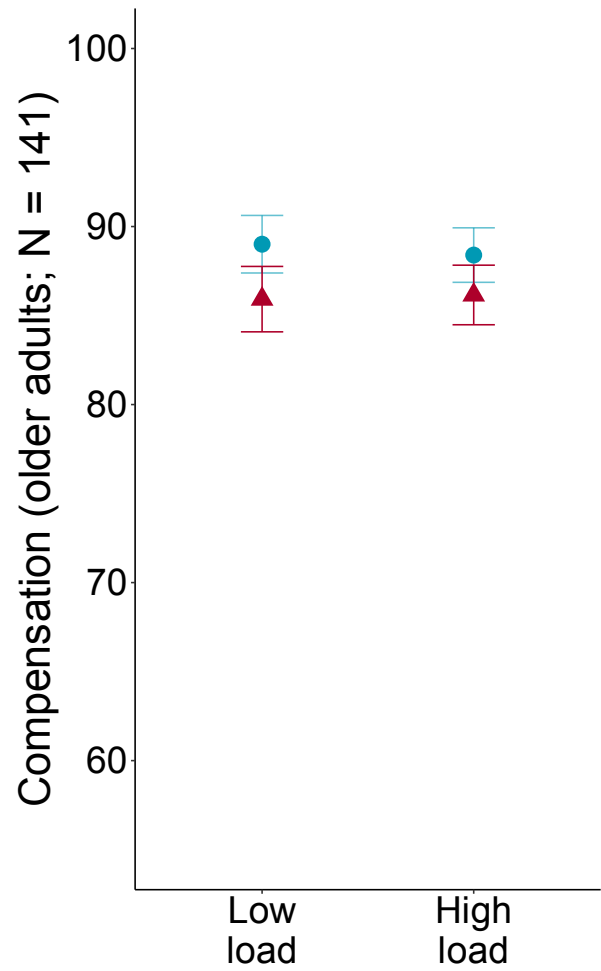
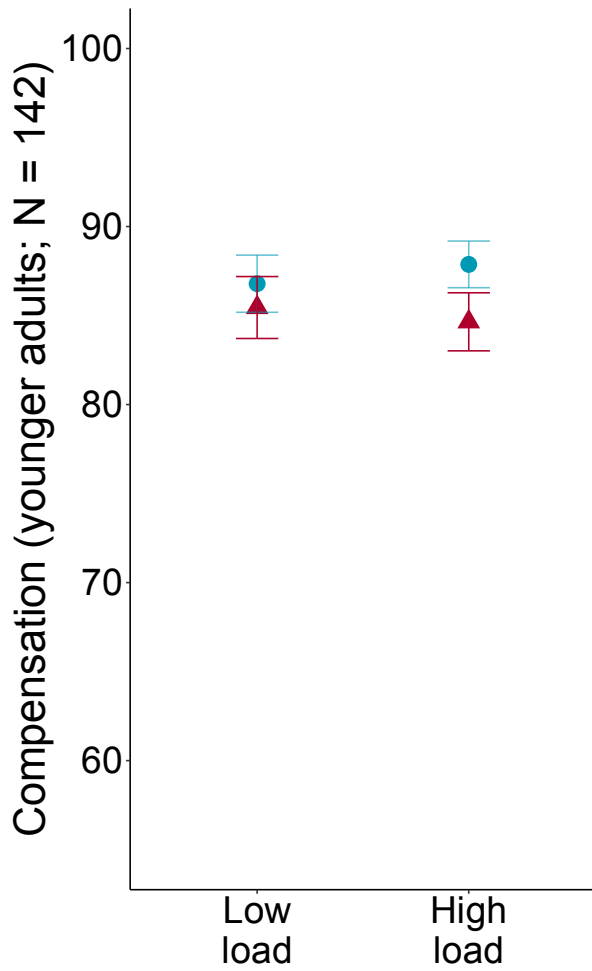
Compensation ratings

Story condition
 $p = .004$

Age condition
 $p = .494$

Load condition
 $p = .809$

Interactions
 $ps > .344$



Story cond: ● CONTR ▲ CFT

Experiment 2

Stories

Story 1

Jane is an actress in her 60s. For obvious reasons, she takes good care of her skin, using gentle soaps, plenty of moisturizer, and hypoallergenic makeup. It is important for Jane to use only certain products because she has sensitive skin. One night, during her skincare routine,

- she uses her usual face cream, [CONTROL]
- she uses a different face cream than her usual brand, [CFT]

which she bought in a fancy cosmetics shop downtown. Unbeknownst to her, the cream was part of a defective batch. The next morning, Jane wakes up with a rash. The rash

- resolved spontaneously on its own within a few days, without leaving any marks on her skin [LOW SEVERITY].
- worsened over the next few hours, requiring hospitalization and leaving permanent marks on her skin [HIGH SEVERITY].

That morning she had been scheduled to film a scene for a movie. Instead, she is replaced by a different actress. Jane sues the face cream company for delivering a defective product.

Story 2

Mark is a huge basketball fan in his 70s and has bought season tickets for his local NBA team. His tickets allow him to sit anywhere between 10 and 20 rows from the floor, but he typically arrives quite late and only finds empty seats in the 20th row. One evening, Mark arrives at a game, late again,

- and, as usual, the only seats he finds are in the 20th row. [CONTROL]
- but this time, he also finds some empty seats in the 10th row. [CFT]

Shortly after the beginning of the match, a light fixture suddenly falls from the arena ceiling. Fortunately, nobody is killed, but part of the light lands on Mark's

- backpack, damaging his smartphone and other personal items. [LOW SEVERITY]
- foot, which is badly broken and this required him to wear a cast for a few weeks. [HIGH SEVERITY]

Mark sues the owners of the arena, claiming negligence on their part.

Story 3

Every Monday through Friday, Joe, a bank employee in his 20s, leaves his office right around 5 p.m. He typically takes the motorway, which is the most direct route home. One afternoon,

- as usual, Joe takes the motorway, [CONTROL]
- enjoying some nice weather, Joe takes a longer, scenic route, [CFT]

but, while he is driving, a large road sign suddenly detaches from a bridge and falls into the path of his car. Joe cannot avoid it, and

- while he is unscathed, his car is damaged. [LOW SEVERITY]
- , as a result, he suffers head trauma and broken ribs and his car is damaged. [HIGH SEVERITY]

Afterward, Joe decides to sue the agency that installs and maintains the road signs.

Story 4

Bonnie is a successful businesswoman in her 30s. As part of her job, she travels frequently, giving presentations all over the country. Whenever she can, she prefers to travel by train. One day, she needs to visit a client about 40 minutes by train from her office. Since she prefers to arrive early to her meetings, she gets to the station in time to catch a train that would guarantee arrival at her destination about one hour before the meeting. When she is about to get on the train, her cell phone rings. The call is from her office. She answers and asks if she can call back after she's arrived at her destination, as trains are often noisy and she would like to avoid talking while on board. The caller says, "We need to discuss something important as soon as possible." Bonnie

- reassures them she will call back as soon as she arrives at the destination, and she gets on the train. [CONTROL]
- decides to go on with the call and to take the following train. [CFT]

Then, about five minutes after her train has left the station, a storage bin above Bonnie's seat suddenly breaks, and a heavy bag falls

- grazing her shoulder, causing her some pain in the following couple of days. [LOW SEVERITY]
- on her head. Bonnie suffers damage to her neck, requiring disc surgery. [HIGH SEVERITY]

She sues the train company for poor maintenance of the train.

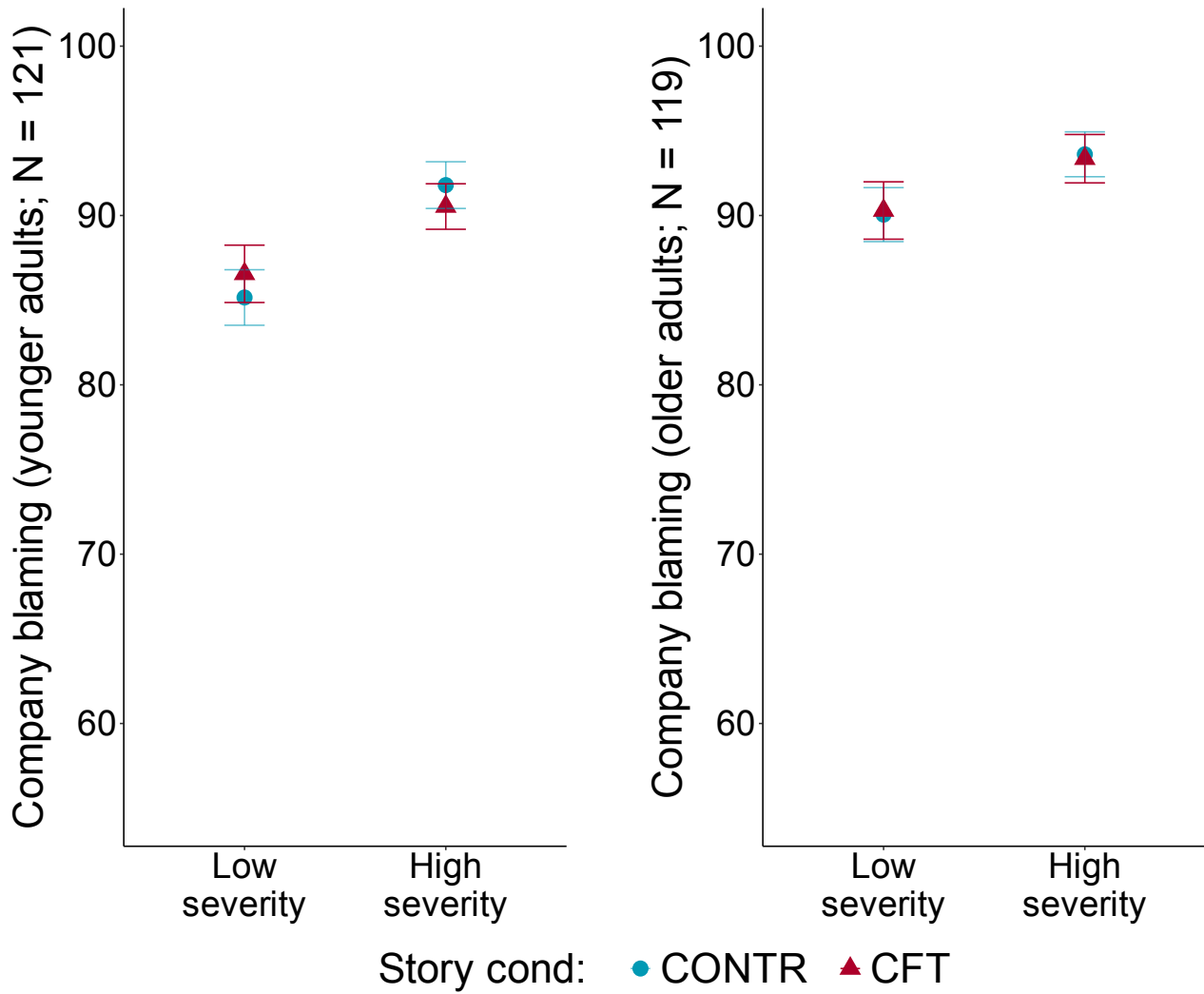
Company blame ratings

Story condition
 $p = .976$

Age condition
 $p = .033$

Severity condition
 $p < .001$

Interactions
 $ps > .216$



Compensation ratings

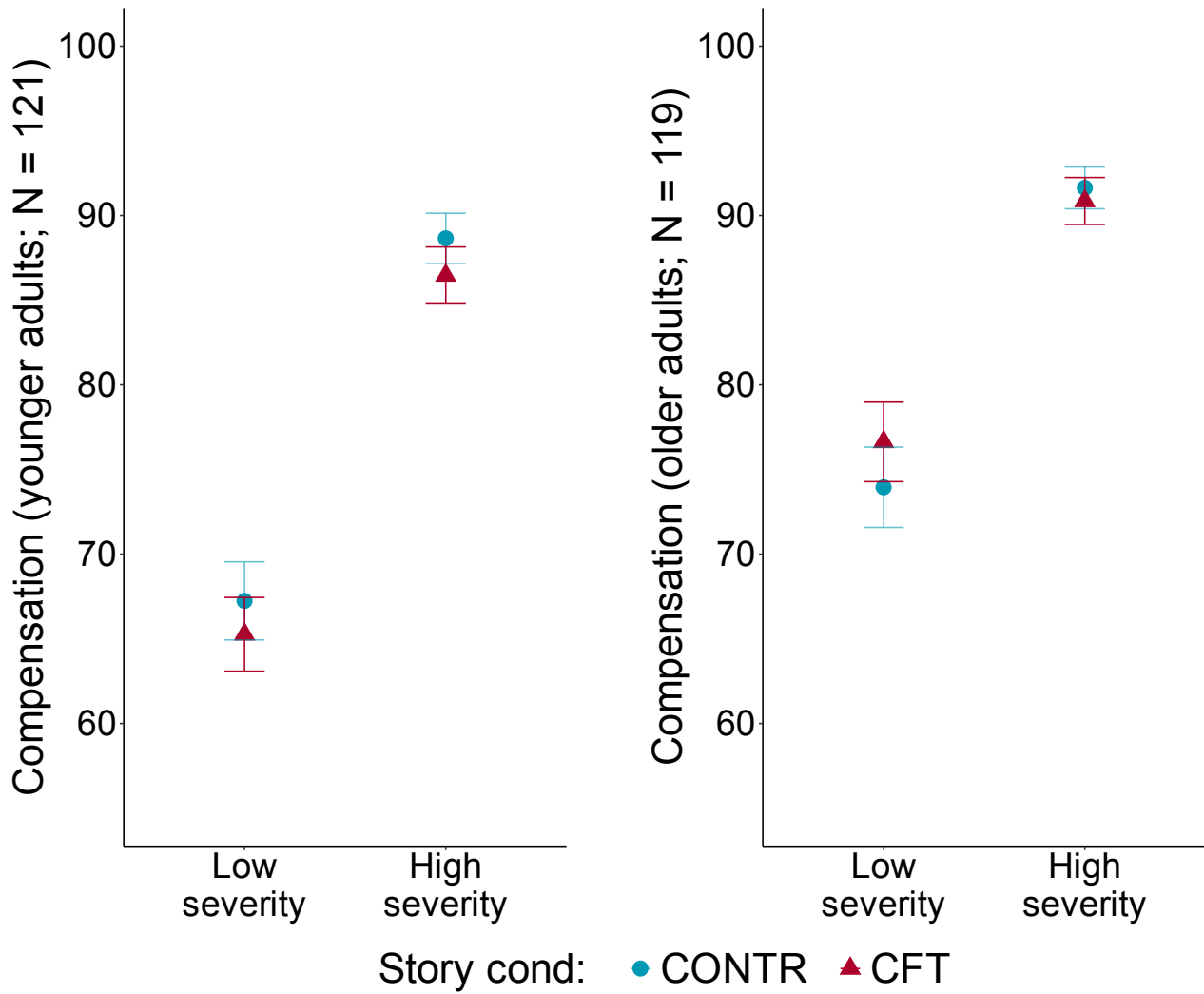
Story condition
 $p = .485$

Age condition
 $p = .002$

Severity condition
 $p < .001$

Severity*Age
 $p = .008$

Interactions
 $ps > .212$



Experiment 3

Story 1 revisions

We list three main aspects we considered potentially responsible for the greater effect of counterfactual manipulation in Story 1 compared to the other stories (along with the corrections implemented to address these aspects).

1. Participants **did not pay attention** to the fact that the cream came from a defective batch, which is the crucial piece of information that makes Jane effectively blameless.



We added details on why the cream was defective to reduce the possibility that the information is missed.

2. Participants considered Jane's decision to change cream as **intrinsically dangerous**.

The scenario depicted Jane as changing the cream that she typically used (and that, thus, she knew worked fine) for a new one. Even if it was reported that Jane paid great attention to the products she used, implying that she made sure the new cream would have worked just fine, participants were not explicitly told that this was the case. They might have then suspected that, even if the cream had not come from a defective batch, it had the potential to produce some unpleasant side effects.



We specified that the product was identical to the usual one from the chemical point of view.

3. Participants considered Jane's decision to change cream as **unnecessarily risky**.

Considering that the following day Jane was scheduled to shoot a scene for a film, even participants who did not consider the cream change as intrinsically dangerous may have held that Jane should have played it safe and reduce all sources of possible issues. In a sense, the defectiveness of the batch may be interpreted as evidence that she indeed made a poor decision rather than a circumstance discounting her role in the accident. Related to this point, this scenario, differently from the others, presents a **double misfortune** (the allergic reaction and the job loss).



We reworked the scenario to set it under normal circumstances and to avoid presenting a "double misfortune".

Stories

Story 1

Jane is a woman in her 60s without any specific skin issues and who takes good care of her skin using gentle soap and a light face cream.

One night, during her skincare routine, she opens a new jar of

- her usual hypoallergenic face cream, [CONTROL]
- a face cream, different from her usual one, but still hypoallergenic, [CFT]

which she bought in her regular, trusted, high-quality cosmetics shop downtown.

However, the next morning, she wakes up with a bad rash that causes intense itching for the next few weeks. Despite having used various creams throughout her life, she had never encountered any issue like this before. After inquiries through the shop, it became apparent that the jar Jane had bought was part of a defective batch in which the composition of the cream had been altered due to an issue in the production line.

Jane decides to sue the face cream company for delivering a defective product that caused her harm.

Story 2

Bonnie is a huge volleyball fan in her 40s and has bought season tickets for her local team. Her tickets allow her to sit anywhere between 10 and 20 rows back from the floor, but she typically arrives quite late and only finds empty seats in the 20th row.

One evening, Bonnie arrives at a game, late again,

- and as usual, the only empty seats are in the 20th row, so she takes one of them. [CONTROL]
- but this time, in addition to the empty seats in the 20th row, she finds an empty seat in the 10th row and takes it. [CFT]

However, shortly after the beginning of the match, a light fixture suddenly falls from the arena ceiling. Fortunately, nobody is killed, but part of the light lands on Bonnie's backpack, damaging her smartphone and other personal items.

Bonnie decides to sue the owners of the arena for causing her material damage, claiming negligence on their part.

Story 3

Every Monday through Friday, Joe, a bank employee in his 30s, leaves his office right around 5 p.m. He typically takes the motorway, which is the most direct route home.

One afternoon, Joe

- takes the motorway, as usual. [CONTROL]
- opts for a longer, more scenic route to enjoy the pleasant weather. [CFT]

However, while he is driving, a large road sign suddenly detaches from a bridge and falls into the path of his car. Joe cannot avoid it, and while he is uninjured, his car is damaged.

Joe decides to sue the agency that installs and maintains the road signs for causing him material damage, claiming negligence on their part

Story 4

Mark is a successful businessman in his 50s who frequently travels by train for work. He typically arrives at the station early to catch a train that ensures he reaches his clients well in advance of meeting times.

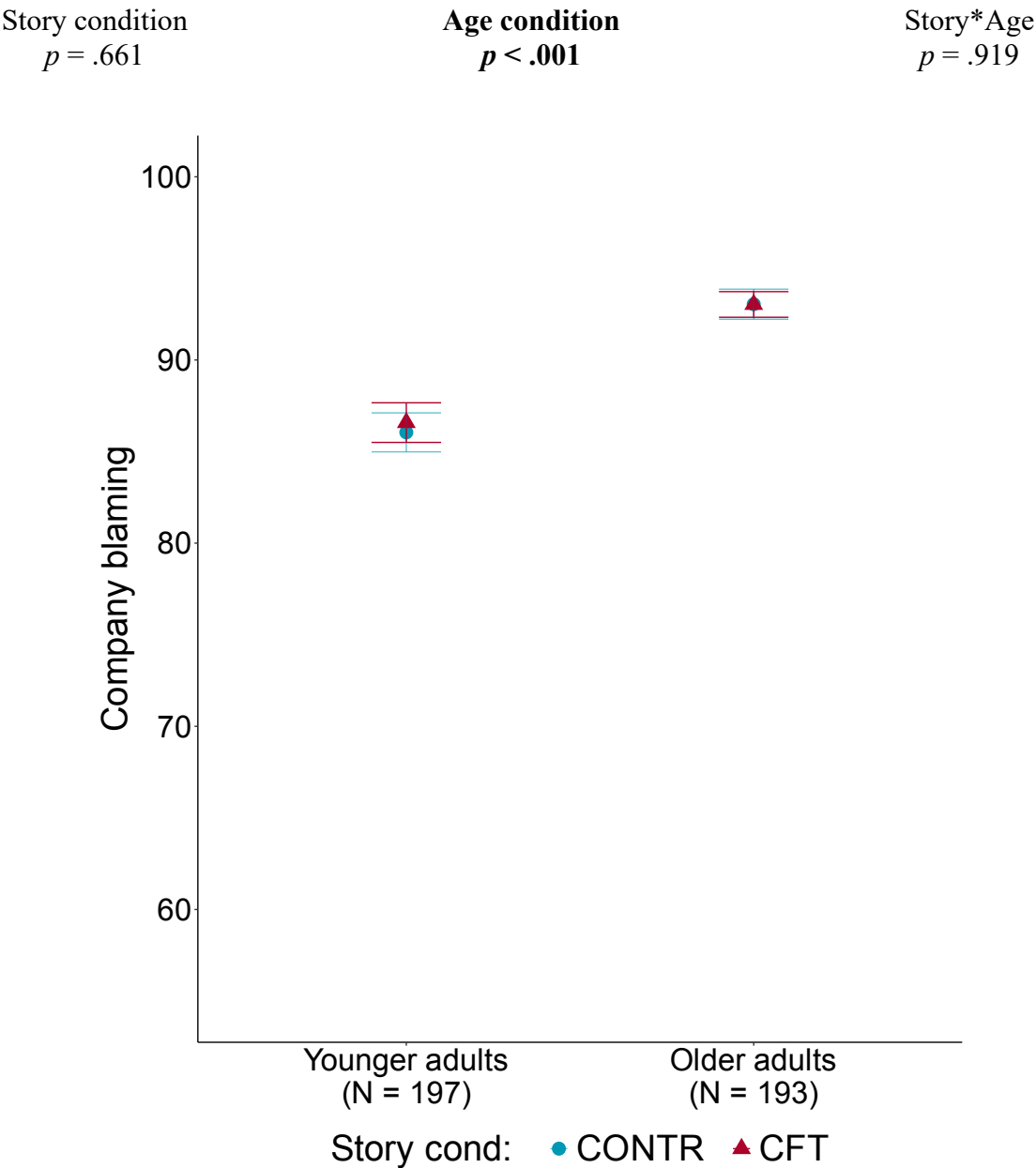
One day, as he is about to board his intended train, he receives a call from his office that demands his attention. As Mark knows that the phone connection is highly unstable along the route, he

- assures them he will call back as soon as he arrives at the destination, and he gets on the train. [CONTROL]
- decides to stay on the call and finish it, and then he gets on the following train. [CFT]

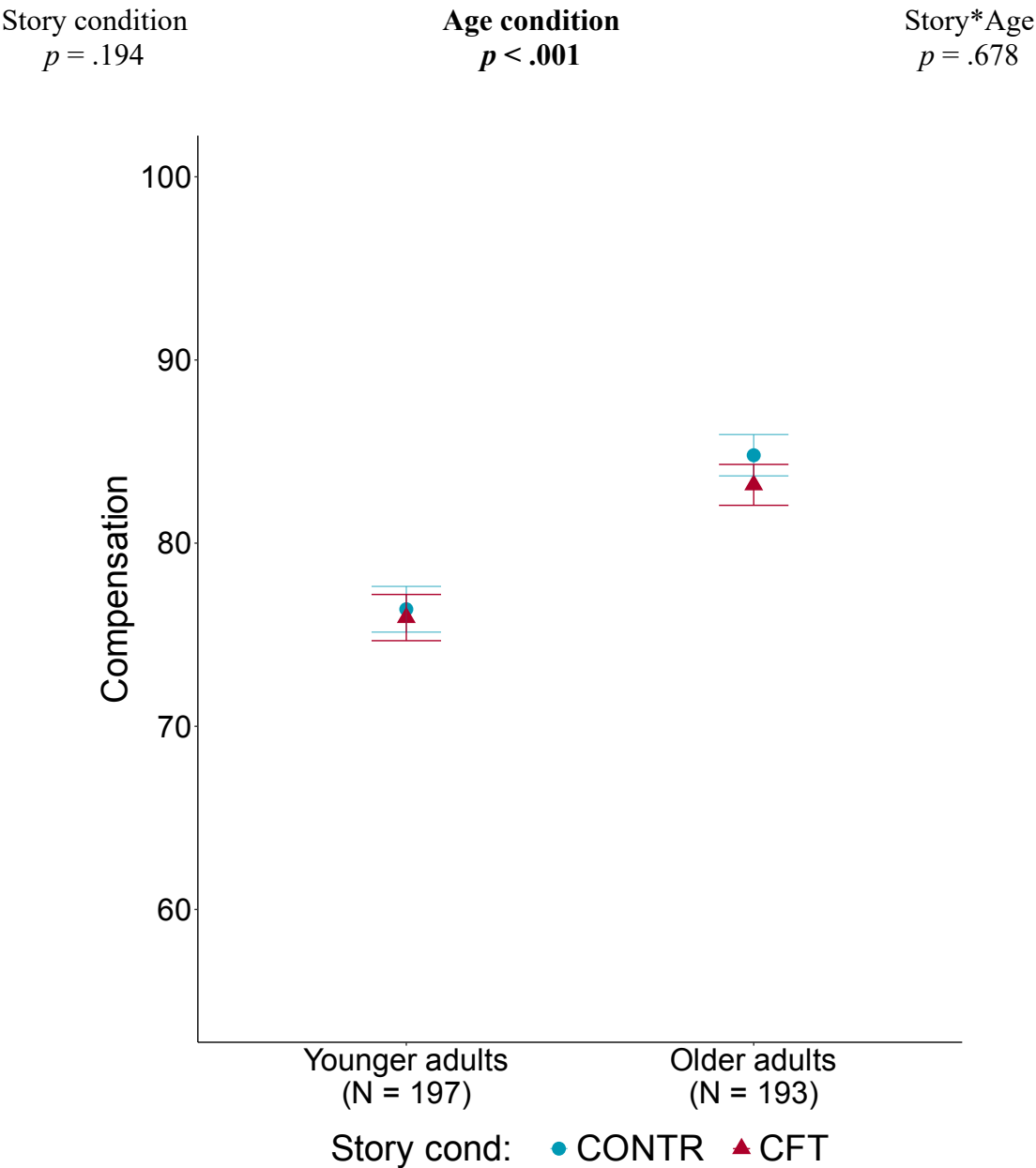
However, about five minutes after the train has left the station, a storage bin above Mark's seat suddenly breaks, and a heavy bag falls, grazing his shoulder, which causes him pain for the next few weeks.

Mark decides to sue the train company for poor maintenance of the train fixtures that caused him harm.

Company blame ratings



Compensation ratings



Experiment 4

Stories

Story 1

Jane is a woman in her 60s without any specific skin issues and who takes good care of her skin, using gentle soap and a light face cream. One night, during her skincare routine, she opens a new jar of

- her usual hypoallergenic face cream, [CONTROL]
- a face cream, different from her usual one, but still hypoallergenic, [CFT]

which she bought in her regular, trusted, high-quality cosmetics shop downtown.

However, the next morning, she wakes up with a bad rash that causes intense itching for the next few weeks. Despite having used various creams throughout her life, she had never encountered any issue like this before. After inquiries through the shop, it became apparent that the jar Jane had bought was part of a defective batch in which the composition of the cream had been altered due to an issue in the production line.

- / [NO MISSED OPPORTUNITY]
- Because of this, she had to give up acting in a commercial, an experience that would have been new for her and that she had been looking forward to for weeks. [MISSED OPPORTUNITY]

In the days following the accident, Jane decides to sue the face cream company for delivering a defective product that caused her harm.

Story 2

Mark is a huge basketball fan in his 40s and has bought season tickets for his local team. His tickets allow him to sit anywhere between 10 and 20 rows back from the floor, but he typically arrives quite late and only finds empty seats in the 20th row. One evening, Mark arrives at a game, late again,

- and as usual, the only empty seats are in the 20th row, so he takes one of them. [CONTROL]
- but this time, in addition to the empty seats in the 20th row, he finds an empty seat in the 10th row and takes it. [CFT]

However, shortly before the beginning of the match, a light fixture suddenly falls from the arena ceiling. Fortunately, nobody is killed, but part of the light lands on Mark's foot, breaking one of his toes.

- / [NO MISSED OPPORTUNITY]
- Because of this, he could not go on a hiking trip, to his great disappointment. He had been planning it for weeks, and it was supposed to have started the day after the accident. [MISSED OPPORTUNITY]

In the days following the accident, Mark decides to sue the owners of the arena for causing him harm, claiming negligence on their part.

Story 3

Every Monday through Friday, Steve, a bank employee in his 30s, leaves his office right around 4 p.m. He typically takes the motorway, which is the most direct route home. One afternoon, Steve

- takes the motorway, as usual. [CONTROL]
- opts for a longer, more scenic route to enjoy the pleasant weather. [CFT]

However, while he is driving, a large road sign suddenly detaches from a bridge and falls into the path of his car. Steve cannot avoid it, and while he is uninjured, his car is damaged.

- / [NO MISSED OPPORTUNITY]
- Because of this, he had no way to get to a fundraising event that was taking place that evening, which he cared deeply about, to support elderly community members who live alone. [MISSED OPPORTUNITY]

In the days following the accident, Steve decides to sue the agency that installs and maintains the road signs for causing him material damage, claiming negligence on their part.

Story 4

Bonnie is a successful businesswoman in her 50s who, every Friday morning, travels by train to visit a client in a big, congested city. She typically arrives at the station early to catch a train that ensures she reaches her client well in advance of meeting times. One day, as she is about to board her usual train, she receives a call from her office that demands her attention. As Bonnie knows that the phone connection is highly unstable along the route, she

- assures them she will call back as soon as she arrives at the destination, and she gets on the train. [CONTROL]
- decides to stay on the call and finish it, and then she gets on the following train. [CFT]

However, about five minutes after the train has left the station, a storage bin above Bonnie's seat suddenly breaks, and a heavy bag falls on her backpack, breaking her laptop.

- / [NO MISSED OPPORTUNITY]
- Because of this, she could not access the materials that she had prepared for a job interview scheduled for the late afternoon, and the recruiter ended up not offering her the job. [MISSED OPPORTUNITY]

In the days following the accident, Bonnie decides to sue the train company for poor maintenance of the train fixtures that caused her material damage.

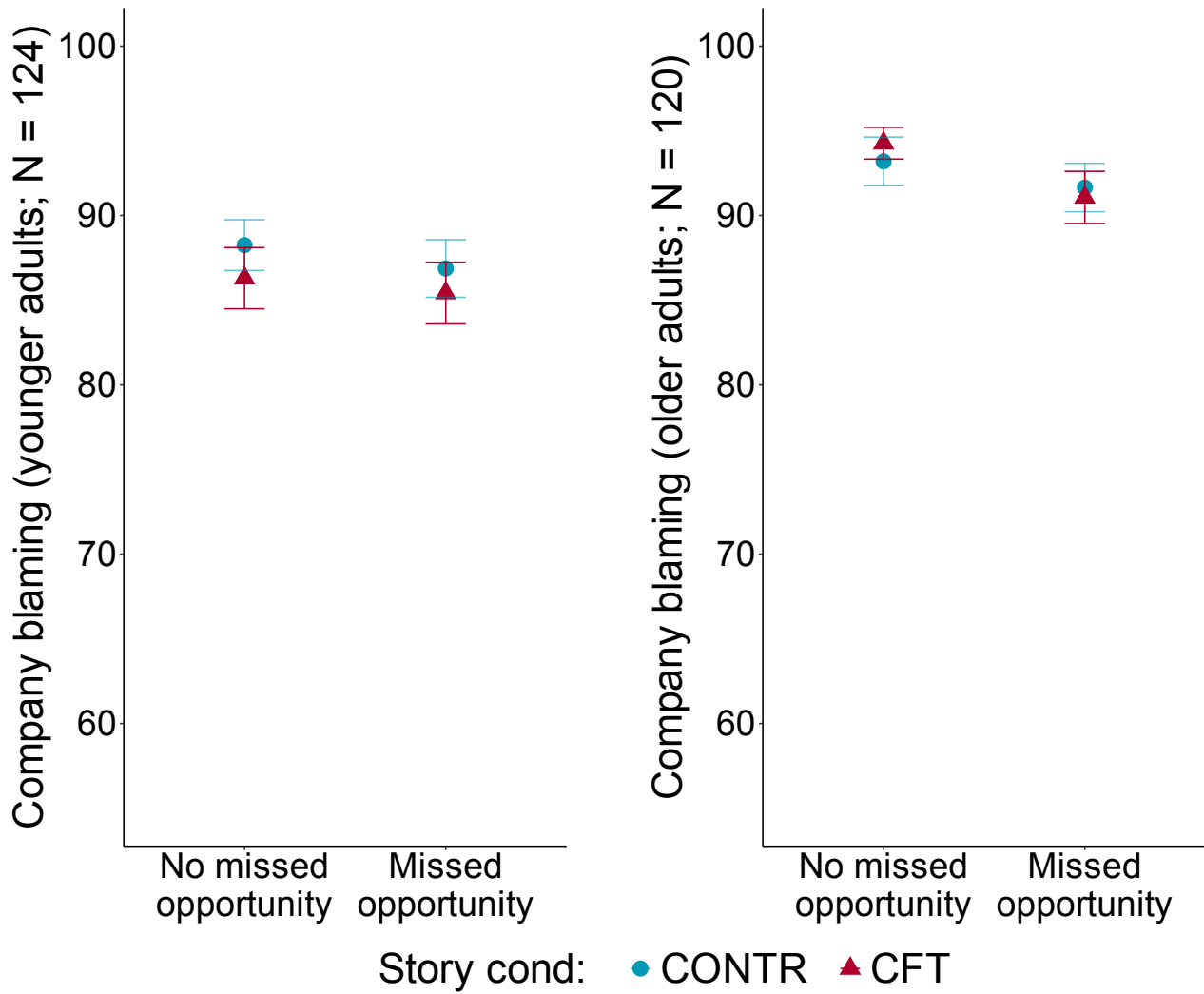
Company blame ratings

Story condition
 $p = .339$

Age condition
 $p < .001$

Opportunity condition
 $p = .032$

Interactions
 $ps > .115$



Compensation ratings

Story condition
 $p < .001$

Age condition
 $p = .002$

Opportunity condition
 $p = .004$

Interactions
 $ps > .059$

