

PERCEPTIONS OF SEXUAL, EMOTIONAL AND FANTASY INFIDELITY:
PREDICTIONS BASED ON GENDER, PERSONALITY,
AND MENTAL HEALTH

by

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ABSTRACT

The study examines how perceptions of infidelity may be mitigated by other correlates such as gender-related traits, and mental health traits. The study utilizes a sample of 302 college students, 76% of which were female and 24% were male. In addition to the personality and mental health measures, participants completed a 19-item checklist that assessed their perceptions of specific items that could potentially be construed as infidelity. Several hypotheses were made in regards to perceived infidelity predictions based on gender, on personality, and on mental health and their mediating relationships. Results were mixed regarding support of the hypotheses. Implications and suggestions for future research are discussed.

I. INTRODUCTION

Within the confines of a committed relationship, experiencing an act of infidelity is without argument a personal and often traumatic event. However, different people have different views on what constitutes such an act of infidelity, and in order to work through such issues in a relationship, we must first understand the reasons for the differences in these perceptions. As described below, the very few studies on this subject have found that gender differences exist (Miller & Maner, 2009; Shackelford & Buss, 1996) and that agency and communion may be related to those differences (Thornton & Nagurney, 2011). The current research will expand on these studies by also addressing key mitigating factors of self-esteem, depression, and anxiety.

Background

What constitutes an act of infidelity, and how much does this vary from individual to individual? Infidelity has been defined in a multitude of ways comprising a number of activities, including: “having an affair, extramarital relationship, cheating, sexual intercourse, oral sex, kissing, fondling, emotional connection that are beyond friendships, friendships, internet relationships, and pornography use, among others, and has been defined as involvement in romantic relationships outside of one’s active committed relationship which result in a sense of relational betrayal” (Chuick, 2009). Regardless of the varying definitions and general lack of disagreement on what constitutes infidelity, two types have been specifically defined: emotional and sexual (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948). Sexual infidelity is considered to be engaging in sexual intercourse with someone other than one’s partner, while emotional infidelity is considered to be “falling in love” or sharing a deep emotional bond to someone other than one’s partner (Whitty &

Quigley, 2008). Clearly, there is no universal operational definition of infidelity, and Blow and Harnett (2005) have shown that there are no agreeable or simple guidelines for defining infidelity or those behaviors which fall within this category. For the purpose of this study, sexual and emotional infidelity will be examined due to their lack of ambiguity regarding the actions that constitute their definitions.

In continuing to explore the differences between emotional and sexual infidelity, many people have thought that infidelity or “cheating” implies a sexual or physical act with someone other than their partner, but this is not always the case. Recent research has shown a particularly prominent difference between how men and women respond to different types of perceived infidelity (Miller & Maner, 2009). This research has demonstrated that women consider an intense emotional relationship outside of their own as an unfaithful involvement, even when there is no physical component (emotional infidelity). Men, on the other hand, consider primarily physical contact, typically sexual, to constitute infidelity, much more so than an emotional involvement outside of their relationship (sexual infidelity; Shackelford & Buss, 1996). Ultimately, infidelity might be considered feelings or behaviors that go against a partner's expectations for the exclusivity of the relationship. However, the aforementioned research has shown that gender differences alter one's perceptions of infidelity.

There are two types of gender-related traits, agency and communion (Helgeson, 1994), that may be related to the gender differences in perceived infidelity. Agency is the extent to which one focuses on personal achievements and believes that one exists as an individual. It emphasizes such issues as self-protection and the creation of a unique identity. Communion, on the other hand, is the extent to which one focuses on

establishing and maintaining supportive relationships and the belief that one is part of a larger social structure. It emphasizes such issues as cooperation and attachment (Bakan, 1966). It should be noted that each of these traits, in moderation, contribute to an overall sense of well-being. Most individuals possess both traits to a moderate extent and can therefore garner the benefits of each. However, there are instances when an individual can possess one of these traits to the exclusion of the other. The traits then become known as unmitigated agency and unmitigated communion, and those unmitigated versions of the gender-related traits are associated with less socially-acceptable outcomes. In other words, the unmitigated versions of both agency and communion tend to be those traits that are considered more harmful and tend to have negative effects on one's psychological and physiological well-being (Bakan, 1966; Helgeson, 1994).

The unmitigated agency individual tends to focus on one's own achievements and goals to the exclusion of others' needs and tends to be generally more avoidant. These individuals will therefore be more socially isolated and will lack the supportive networks that could help them in times of stress. The unmitigated communion individual tends to be more focused on the needs of others to the point where their own needs are largely ignored. These individuals thus will generally have a lesser sense of their identity. Research has shown that females tend to score higher than males on measures of communion and unmitigated communion, while males tend to score higher than females on measures of agency and unmitigated agency (Helgeson, 1994).

The pioneer study, conducted by Thornton and Nagurney (2011), sought to identify perceptions of infidelity by utilizing the gender-related traits of agency, communion, unmitigated agency, and unmitigated communion. They found that

communion and unmitigated communion were positive correlated with perceived infidelity (i.e., the number of acts perceived as infidelity) and that unmitigated agency was negatively correlated with perceived infidelity. Ancillary analyses revealed three subscale factors that included four or more infidelity items per factor: sexual activity (e.g., sexual intercourse or oral sex with someone other than one's partner), fantasy (e.g., viewing pornographic material or going to a strip club without one's partner), and suggestivity (e.g., flirting or sharing an emotional bond with someone other than one's partner). Further analyses revealed that although communion was correlated with each type of act, the unmitigated versions of both communion and agency were correlated with only fantasy acts of infidelity. Little disagreement about sexual activity (i.e., sexual acts constituting infidelity) may lie behind the lack of correlation for that type in the latter findings. However, the lack of correlation with the suggestivity subscale is surprising. Perhaps, it may be attributed to the fact that this subscale, with a Cronbach's alpha of only .66, seemed to address two different types of acts: casual flirting and intimate emotional bonds.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The current study will replicate Thornton and Nagurney's (2013) original work, but with a revised suggestivity subscale to include five items that clearly relate to emotional acts of infidelity, consistent with past research and theories on the primary types of perceived infidelity. Beyond this replication, the current study will further investigate possible mitigating mental health variables. In particular, the mental health variables related to agency and communion are self-esteem, depression, and anxiety. Research has revealed that while agency and communion are positively related to self-

esteem, unmitigated agency and unmitigated communion are positively related to anxiety and depression (Helgeson & Fritz, 1999). The mental-health constructs of self-esteem, depression, and anxiety receive a great amount of attention in the popular media and in research due to their impact on an individual's life and overall well-being. However, previous studies have failed to investigate the existence of a relationship between these key factors and perceptions of infidelity. Their individual influences seem particularly logical. For example, compared to people with high self-esteem, people with low self-esteem may perceive more items as constituting infidelity, due potentially perceiving some of the situations listed as threatening to their worth. The more intriguing questions, though, will concern potential mediating effects or interactions. For example, the aforementioned correlation between self-esteem and perceived infidelity may be mediated by unmitigated communion.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The hypotheses for the current study are provided below.

1. **Perceived infidelity predictions based on gender.** Compared to men, women will perceive more items as constituting acts of sexual, emotional, and fantasy infidelity.
2. **Perceived infidelity predictions based on personality.** Communion and unmitigated communion will be positively correlated with the number of items perceived as constituting acts of sexual, emotional, and fantasy infidelity. Agency and unmitigated agency will be negatively correlated with the number of items perceived as constituting acts of sexual, emotional, and fantasy infidelity.

3. **Perceived infidelity predictions based on mental health.** Depression and anxiety will be positively correlated with the number of items perceived as constituting acts of sexual, emotional, and fantasy infidelity. Self-esteem will be negatively correlated with the number of items perceived as constituting acts of sexual, emotional, and fantasy infidelity.
4. **Mediating relationships.** The correlations of the mental-health variables with perceived acts of sexual, emotional, and fantasy infidelity will be mediated by the personality variables.

II. LITERATURE

Perceived Infidelity

The most prominent concept in this research is that of infidelity, which has previously been defined as a breach of trust, either emotional or physical, that signifies a potential lack of commitment to one's romantic partner (Thornton & Nagurney, 2011). While this definition may be broad, it expresses how varying and different the circumstances (and the people) surrounding infidelity can be.

There have been distinct differences between how men and women respond to different types of perceived infidelity (Miller & Maner, 2009). Specifically, women consider situations that are more emotionally-driven, such as their partner engaging in an exclusively intimate conversation with someone else, as constituting an unfaithful involvement, and therefore a potential act of infidelity (Shackelford & Buss, 1996; Thornton & Nagurney, 2011). On the contrary, men consider situations that are more sexually-driven, such as their partner engaging in physical contact with someone else, to be an act of infidelity (Shackelford & Buss, 1996; Thornton & Nagurney, 2011). These examples show that there are two very different “types” of infidelity, and that they are often strongly gender-driven (Shackelford & Buss, 1996).

However, a previous study conducted by Thornton and Nagurney (2011) revealed another category for acts defined as infidelity. This category was labeled “fantasy” and includes acts such as viewing pornographic material or going to a strip club without one’s partner. Regarding gender, women had a greater chance of finding these acts to be considered infidelity than men.

Gender-Related Personality Traits

Although infidelity is hard to define both literally and personally, the gender-related traits are much more specific and detailed. A quick break-down highlights that agency and communion are the two main types of gender-related traits, with subsets of both (Helgeson, 1994). Agency involves a person's focus on personal achievements and individuality, whereas the person high in communion (as the name suggests) tends to focus on building and maintaining supportive relationships, that is, their baseline is geared towards a more communal sense of self (Bakan, 1966). Generally, these are considered the healthier and more constructive traits, and when possessed together, can provide a successful amount of balance and well-being in one's life.

Unfortunately, as previously mentioned, there are instances when an individual can possess too much of one trait, and none, or not enough, of the other. The traits then become unmitigated versions of themselves when they become off-balanced, and ultimately more harmful than helpful. The subsets of these traits are known as unmitigated agency and unmitigated communion (Bakan, 1966; Helgeson, 1994).

Specifically, those high in unmitigated agency tend to be what is traditionally considered selfish—they focus on themselves to the point of excluding others, and are also generally less social. The individuals high in unmitigated communion are quite opposite, in that they focus on others too much, to the point that their own needs go unattended (Helgeson, 1994). Both of these traits can lead to an individual's neglect of very important aspects of their life, and therefore, can cause detrimental issues for their well-being in the future (Bakan, 1966; Helgeson, 1994).

Also instrumental in this study is the connection between the aforementioned gender-related traits, infidelity, and the mental health constructs of self-esteem, depression, and anxiety, which will be defined in the following material.

Agency, communion, and their unmitigated versions are considered gender-related traits because research has shown that they are more common in one sex than the other. Research has shown that females tend to score higher than males on measures of communion and unmitigated communion, while males tend to score higher than females on measures of agency and unmitigated agency (Helgeson, 1994).

When reflecting on previous research, communion is considered to be more “female,” in that it is expressed primarily through means of nurturing and care of others, whereas agency, the “male” trait, manifests itself through assertiveness and self-aggrandizement (Bakan 1966; Spence et al, 1979; Korabik & McCreary, 2000; Helgeson & Fritz, 1999). As would be expected, the more extreme versions of agency and communion also have a gender correlation, and research shows that these traits are associated with a range of problem behaviors. Specifically, those high in unmitigated communion were more often women, and that this trait led to suppression of one’s own needs in order to support someone else’s, as well as relying on others to provide a sense of identity. On a regular basis, whether through media or television programs, women are often portrayed in the light of the caretaker, the mother who often loses identity outside of her domestic responsibilities. It is easy to see, then, how women can identify with this trait more than men. Conversely, men have traditionally more likely to have unmitigated agency, which has been linked with an inability to seek help for problem behaviors, as well as an unwillingness to become involved in relationships with others (Helgeson &

Fritz, 2000). This finding is supported by current research that indicates men are less likely to seek social support than women (Greenglass, 2002).

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem has been defined as “a feeling of having respect for yourself and your abilities, [and] a confidence and satisfaction in oneself” (Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary, n.d.). A more psychological definition of self-esteem is that it is defined as the valence (positive or negative) that a person attaches to his or her own personal attributes (Baumeister, 1998; Coopersmith, 1967).

The concept of self-esteem has elicited a large body of theoretical accounts and empirical research, and has gained attention throughout the years as psychological growth and well-being have become more emphasized (Baumeister, 1998; Kernis, 2006; Swann & Bosson, 2010). Historically, the first influential definition of self-esteem comes from William James and dates back to 1890. He considered self-esteem to be the ratio of success and pretensions in important domains of life, such as relationships and work. More recent definitions of self-esteem emphasize the fact that self-esteem should be distinguished from other components of the self, or of the identity (such as self-knowledge and self-efficacy), insofar as self-esteem represents the affective, or evaluative, component of the self—therefore, it signifies how people feel about themselves (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). According to Rosenberg (1989), high self-esteem “expresses the feeling that one is ‘good enough.’ The individual simply feels that he is a person of worth. . . . He does not necessarily consider himself superior to others” (p. 31). Although previous researchers share the view of self-esteem as self-regard with

an affective component, they expand the definition of self-esteem to include feelings of superiority, arrogance, and pride (Baumeister, 1998; Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996).

In general, high self-esteem is generally predicted to have significant positive effects on important life outcomes (Orth et al., 2012; Trzesniewski et al., 2006). When experiencing negative situations or negative emotions, individuals with high self-esteem have been shown to attempt to counteract these feelings by bringing to mind personal strengths and positive thoughts and memories (Dodgson & Wood, 1998; Smith & Petty, 1995). A conclusion from this research is that individuals with high self-esteem tend to be more adaptive and are better equipped at handling unfavorable situations and negative affect, so long as high self-esteem does not veer into narcissism.

Low self-esteem, conversely, is correlated with a lack of motivation, and a lesser ability (than those with high self-esteem) to adapt and repair negative moods (Heimpel, Wood, Marshall, & Brown, 2002). Previous research has also shown that individuals who have low self-esteem tend to remain mired in the negative experience of the situation and find it more difficult to conjure positive thoughts and attitudes (Dodgson & Wood, 1998).

There is a third variation of self-esteem, however, and that is when an individual possesses too much. Research has shown that individuals who have an overwhelming amount of high self-esteem tended to have an inflated sense-of-self and were considered to be more unstable (Baumeister et al., 1996). Having these traits correlated with interpersonal aggression and violence, because people with overly high self-esteem are more prone to experience ego threats and, consequently, are more strongly motivated to defend their self-esteem by devaluating and attacking people who question their inflated self-views (Crocker & Park, 2004; Kernis, Grannemann, & Barclay, 1989).

Regarding self-esteem and gender, it has been indicated that women suffer from low self-esteem more than men, and consistently men have scored higher on standard measures of self-esteem than women (Allgood-Merten & Stockard, 1991; Feather, 1991). Previous research has proposed several reasons for these findings, including culture's emphasis on women's physical appearance, gender-role expectations, and violence against women (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Fiengold, 1992; Koss, 1990). Ultimately, however, despite consistent findings that men have higher self-esteem, the difference was found to be slight and therefore deserving of an expansion of the literature (Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell, 1999).

Overall, the extant literature suggests that high self-esteem may have positive consequences for the well-being and success of the individual and that low self-esteem, as well as an unstable amount of high self-esteem, may be a risk factor for negative outcomes. Previous literature also indicated that while men may score higher on self-esteem measures than women, it is not as significant a difference as often perceived.

Depression

Depression can be defined and described in a multitude of ways, and has been for years throughout culture. Merriam-Webster's online dictionary (n.d.) states that it is "a state of feeling sad, [or] a psychoneurotic or psychotic disorder marked especially by sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentration, a significant increase or decrease in appetite and time spent sleeping, feelings of dejection and hopelessness, and sometimes suicidal tendencies." While this definition may be lacking in some respect, it is a universal and widely-understood definition.

Depression affects a wide range of the population and is highly recurrent (Kessler et al., 2003). Depression is not only an important indicator of low psychological adjustment, it is also a major universal health concern (Moussavi et al., 2007). It is associated with impaired functioning in relationships (Davila, Karney, Hall, & Bradbury, 2003), work (Adler et al., 2006), and general overall health (Räikkönen, Matthews, & Kuller, 2007).

It is important to note that while depression and self-esteem have many similarities, researchers have found that it is useful to distinguish between the two constructs (Sowislo & Orth, 2013). To illustrate their difference, a person exhibiting depressive behavior may be sad or feel empty, they may lose the ability to derive pleasure from things they once enjoyed, and they may lack motivation to engage in work or family activities. They may also experience alterations in their appetite and sleep routine, as well as report feeling slowed down or sluggish (DSM-IV, American Psychiatric Association, 2000). A person with low self-esteem may express a strong sensitivity to criticism and may focus on how others are perceiving them, and they may also feel less comfortable engaging in a group discussion and prefer to remain on the edges. They are also often considered shy, and may feel lonely or isolated and alienated from others (Rosenberg & Owens, 2001). Although these two constructs may overlap, it is clear that they are expressly unique in a variety of ways.

Parallel to gender differences in levels of self-esteem, research has consistently found that women are twice as likely to suffer from depression and depressive symptoms as men (Kessler, McGonagle, Swartz, Blazer, & Nelson, 1993). The reasons for these findings are similar to those for self-esteem in that women are expected to deal with a

greater amount of societal gender inequity and oppression, such as lower work wages and sexual and physical abuse (Murphy, 2003). Hormonal changes, such as puberty, childbearing, and menopause, have also been taken into account and are considered to contribute to the higher rate of depression among women (Denmark & Paludi, 1993). Overall, depression is a recurring issue for many people and includes a range and multitude of symptoms that can vary, making a distinction between depression and self-esteem necessary.

Anxiety

The final construct, anxiety, is defined as “painful or apprehensive uneasiness of mind usually over an impending or anticipated ill, [and] an abnormal and overwhelming sense of apprehension and fear often marked by physiological signs (as sweating, tension, and increased pulse), by doubt concerning the reality and nature of the threat, and by self-doubt about one's capacity to cope with it” (Merriam-Webster’s dictionary, n.d.).

Historically, anxiety is a construct that is more difficult to singularly define, and more complicated for some individuals (primarily those who do not experience symptoms of anxiety) to understand what anxiety entails (Klein, 2002). As mentioned in the definition supplied by a well-known and widely-used online dictionary, the key word to best summarize anxiety for the purposes of this study would be “uneasiness [of mind].”

Anxiety arises when we feel a strong sense of threat to a value that we hold dear (May, 1977). It may involve our beliefs in self-effectiveness, being successful, having a good lifestyle or a productive career, among other things. Although anxiety’s symptoms closely resemble outright fear, there is a key difference. Anxiety originates inside of us

because our very sense of self becomes threatened. We feel the dimensions of fear without being able to focus on a particular person or situation (Mortensen, 2014).

Individuals with high levels of anxiety tend to be less confident that they have effective skills in general. They are more pessimistic about whether what they do will make a difference. Further, even more importantly, they are less likely to do productive things like set goals and measure themselves against them. The possible outcomes are tragic. People may give up. They can fail to do the right things because they believe it does not matter. Their discouragement can affect their jobs, relationships, and overall quality of life (Mortensen, 2014).

Regarding gender and anxiety, studies have demonstrated that females are more likely than males to experience anxiety (Yonkers & Gurguis, 1995). One study suggested that two frameworks could be offered to explain the observed gender differences in anxiety disorders. The first suggests that the female preponderance in anxiety disorders is due to genetically or biologically determined differences between the sexes. The second assumes that gender differences in anxiety are linked to differences in the experiences and social roles of men and women in this culture (Lewinsohn, Gotlib, Lewinsohn, Seeley, & Allen, 1998). These implications for higher levels of anxiety in women are similar to the explanations as to why depression and low self-esteem are also more likely to occur in women.

Lastly, another explanation for women's greater propensity to suffer from anxiety is that it is associated with depression (Tanaka-Matsumi & Kameoka, 1986). Therefore, because women are also more likely to suffer from depression, they are also by proxy, more likely to suffer from anxiety. However, it is important to note that the constructs are

conceptually distinct and can be empirically distinguished (McWilliams, Cox, & Enns, 2001).

Overall, anxiety can be a destructive mental health concern that can cause dissatisfaction, discouragement, and lower quality of life. Also, consistent with the previously mentioned health concerns of low self-esteem and depression, women are more likely to suffer from anxiety, and the explanations are both cultural and biological.

Relationships Among These Variables

Thornton and Nagurney (2011) sought to identify perceptions of infidelity by utilizing the gender-related traits of agency, communion, unmitigated agency, and unmitigated communion. They found that communion and unmitigated communion were positive correlated with perceived infidelity (i.e., the number of acts perceived as infidelity) and that unmitigated agency was negatively correlated with perceived infidelity. Further analyses revealed that although communion was correlated with sexual, emotional, and fantasy acts of infidelity, the unmitigated versions of both communion and agency were correlated with only fantasy acts of infidelity. Little disagreement about sexual activity (i.e., sexual acts constituting infidelity) may lie behind the lack of correlation for that type in the latter findings. However, the lack of correlation with emotional acts of infidelity is surprising and warrants further study.

While previous studies have helped to further research by clarifying some of the connections between infidelity and gender-related traits (Thornton & Nagurney, 2011), none have been done with consideration of other mitigating factors that might alter one's perception of infidelity. Based on the reviewed research, such possible mitigating factors may be the mental health constructs of self-esteem, depression, and anxiety.

Over the past 30 years, research has examined gender-specific personality traits in relation to mental health. Agency is related to high self-esteem, high self-confidence and emotional regulation (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006; Helgeson, 1993; 1994b; Helgeson & Fritz, 2000) and communion is related to positive relational outcomes, such as social support and marital satisfaction (Helgeson & Fritz, 2000). While agency and communion are positively related to self-esteem and well-being, unmitigated agency and unmitigated communion are positively related to anxiety and depression (Helgeson & Fritz, 1999). Previous research correlates unmitigated agency with traits such as hostility, greed, and arrogance, and with being overly concerned with oneself. Conversely, unmitigated communion is correlated with traits such as low self-esteem and a more co-dependent nature, and with being overly concerned or obsessive with the state of a relationship or with the partner involved (Helgeson & Fritz, 1999). In reviewing this research, it is fair to conclude that all of these personality and mental health constructs are gender-biased. For example, if women tend to score in greater possession of unmitigated communion, then women tend to also have lower self-esteem. Likewise, if men tend to be higher in unmitigated agency, then men tend to be more hostile and aggressive (than women).

Overall, the literature reveals that all of these constructs are similarly intertwined, and that possession of one trait may lead to a greater likelihood to become depressed, thereby altering one's perceptions of infidelity, for example. The current research seeks to find the best predictors of perceived infidelity while also accounting for these interrelationships.

III. METHOD

This chapter provides information about the study's participants; research design, variables, and procedure; and instruments, reliability, and construct validity.

Participants

Participants were 302 students who were enrolled in undergraduate courses in the Psychology Department at Texas State University. Regarding gender, 76% were female and 24% were male. Regarding age, 82% were 18-21 years of age, 11% were 22-25, 4% were 26-29, and 3% were 30 or older. Regarding ethnicity, 37% were Caucasian, 40% were Hispanic, 14% were African American, and 9% were of another ethnicity unspecified. These student participants received a small portion of extra credit in their Psychology course in exchange for their participation.

Research Design, Variables, and Procedure

This research utilized a correlational design with eight predictor variables (gender, self-esteem, depression, anxiety, communion, unmitigated communion, and agency, unmitigated agency) and three criterion variables (sexual infidelity, emotional infidelity, and fantasy infidelity). All variables were assessed with questionnaires (see Appendix A) that were completed by participants after informed consent. Approval from the Institutional Review Board was granted prior to assessment.

Instruments, Reliability, and Construct Validity

Self-esteem was assessed with the *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale* (RSE, Rosenberg, 1965). For this scale, a higher score on the measurement represents a higher level of self-esteem. Several research studies have been done to assess the validity and

reliability of the scale, all of which have concluded that it has demonstrated consistencies in both (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1993).

Depression was assessed with the *Beck Depression Inventory* (BDI, Beck, 1961). The BDI has been found to be positively correlated with other widely used depression scales, and has also been shown to have a high one-week test–retest reliability ($r = .93$), suggesting that it was not overly sensitive to daily variations in mood, therefore providing a more accurate picture of clinical, as opposed to situational, depression. The test also has high internal consistency with Cronbach’s α of .91 (Beck, Steer, Ball, & Ranieri, 1996).

Anxiety was assessed with the *Beck Anxiety Inventory* (BAI, Beck, 1988). A meta-analysis revealed that the BAI showed good to very good internal consistency with a Cronbach’s α of .83 (De Ayala, Vonderharr-Carlson, & Kim, 2005). The BAI was chosen over other anxiety measures as a result of research that has shown it to be less contaminated by depressive content, therefore assisting in differentiating the two (Enns, Cox, Parker, & Guertin, 1998).

Communion, agency, and unmitigated agency were assessed with the *Personal Attributes Questionnaire* (Spence et al., 1979). Each subscale consists of eight items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Agency items reflect a positive orientation toward the self (e.g., independent, self-confident, never gives up). Unmitigated agency items reflect a negative orientation toward the self that is exclusive of others (e.g., arrogance, greed) and a negative view of others (e.g., hostile, cynical). Communion items reflect a positive orientation to others (e.g., helpful, aware of others’ feelings, understanding of others). These subscales have high internal consistencies and well-established reliability and validity (Spence et al., 1979; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). In the pioneer study, the

internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's α was .76 for agency, .72 for unmitigated agency, and .76 for communion (Thornton & Nagurney, 2011).

Unmitigated communion was assessed with the *Revised Unmitigated Communion Scale* (Fritz and Helgeson, 1998). Participants rate their agreement with items on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale applies to those who place others' needs before their own and distress over concern for others. Examples of the items include "I always place the needs of others above my own," "I can't say no when someone asks me for help," and "I often worry about other people's problems." Previous research has shown that this scale demonstrates acceptable internal consistency, ranging from .7 to .8, and high test-retest reliability (Fritz & Helgeson, 1998; Helgeson, 1993; Helgeson & Fritz, 1999; Thornton & Nagurney, 2011).

Perceived infidelity was assessed with a revised infidelity questionnaire (Thornton & Nagurney, 2011). The infidelity questionnaire is a recently developed checklist used to assess individuals' perceptions of infidelity. The revised questionnaire consists of 15 items that may potentially be perceived as acts of infidelity, and the participants' task is to indicate whether each item is perceived as infidelity. The original version of the questionnaire was revised for the purpose of increasing the internal reliability of the fantasy subscale (now has five rather than four items) and emotional infidelity subscale (now has five items that relate solely to emotional bonds rather than casual flirting); the sexual infidelity subscale includes the same five items that were on this subscale in the original questionnaire. With the current study's data, a factor analysis with varimax rotation revealed three factors: sexual infidelity, emotional infidelity, and

fantasy infidelity (see Table 1). Subsequent analyses revealed Cronbach's alpha for these three subscales to be .91, .78, and .86, respectively.

Table 1

Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation for Perceived Infidelity Questionnaire

Item	Factor loadings		
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Sexual infidelity			
Being in a committed, monogamous relationship while hiding a physical attachment to someone other than your partner	.65*	.09	.29
Sharing an intimate kiss (kiss on the lips) with someone other than your partner	.80*	-.02	.34
Engaging in sexual intercourse with someone other than your partner	.89*	-.02	.07
Engaging in oral sex with someone other than your partner	.90*	-.04	.15
Having a sexual phone conversation or sexting (sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically) with someone other than your partner	.88*	.04	.20
Emotional infidelity			
Being in a committed, monogamous relationship while hiding an emotional attachment to someone other than your partner	.42	.14	.56*
Sharing an intimate emotional bond with someone other than your partner	.25	.10	.71*
Falling in love with someone other than your partner, but not acting on those feelings	.33	.09	.64*
Having an intimate emotional friendship with someone other than your partner	.03	.15	.78*
Having an intimate emotional phone conversation with someone other than your partner	.35	.11	.69*
Fantasy infidelity			
Fantasizing about someone other than your partner	.18	.52*	.51
Watching pornographic movies	.01	.93*	.07
Viewing pornographic pictures in magazines or on the internet	-.02	.94*	.10
Masturbating	-.18	.79*	.11
Going to a strip club without your partner	.28	.67*	.16

*Highest factor loadings

IV. RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the statistical analyses that were used to analyze the data for this thesis research.

Gender Differences in Perceived Infidelity

The first set of research questions addressed whether men and women differ in their perceptions of sexual, emotional, and fantasy acts of infidelity. To answer these questions, three independent-samples *t* tests were conducted. None of these analyses were significant, revealing that men and women did not significantly differ in their perceptions (see Table 2).

Table 2

Gender Differences in Perceived Infidelity

Infidelity	<i>M (SD)</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Men	Women		
Sexual	16.95 (3.90)	17.96 (3.66)	1.87	.06
Emotional	13.03 (3.47)	13.99 (3.61)	1.84	.07
Fantasy	9.90 (3.54)	10.28 (3.91)	0.68	.50

Predictions Based on Personality and Mental Health Variables

The remaining questions addressed whether perceived infidelity may be predicted by personality (agency, unmitigated agency, communion, and unmitigated communion) or mental health (self-esteem, depression, and anxiety), and whether the personality and mental health variables would interact with one another in the prediction of perceived infidelity. To answer these questions, three linear regression analyses were conducted (see Table 3), one for each criterion variable (sexual, emotional, and fantasy infidelity).

Table 3

Regression Analyses

Infidelity Criterion	Entered in Step 1 (correlated criteria)	Entered in Step 2 (predictors)	Entered in Step 3 (interactions)
Agency			
Sexual	Emotional infidelity, fantasy infidelity	Agency, unmit. agency, communion, unmit. communion, self-esteem, depression, anxiety	Agency x self-esteem, agency x anxiety, agency x depression, unmit. agency x self-esteem, unmit. agency x anxiety, unmit. agency x depression, communion x self-esteem, communion x anxiety, communion x depression, unmit. communion x self-esteem, unmit. communion x anxiety, unmit. communion x depression
Emotional	Sexual infidelity, fantasy infidelity	Agency, unmit. agency, communion, unmit. communion, self-esteem, depression, anxiety	Agency x self-esteem, agency x anxiety, agency x depression, unmit. agency x self-esteem, unmit. agency x anxiety, unmit. agency x depression, communion x self-esteem, communion x anxiety, communion x depression, unmit. communion x self-esteem, unmit. communion x anxiety, unmit. communion x depression
Fantasy	Emotional infidelity, sexual infidelity	Agency, unmit. agency, communion, unmit. communion, self-esteem, depression, anxiety	Agency x self-esteem, agency x anxiety, agency x depression, unmit. agency x self-esteem, unmit. agency x anxiety, unmit. agency x depression, communion x self-esteem, communion x anxiety, communion x depression, unmit. communion x self-esteem, unmit. communion x anxiety, unmit. communion x depression

Preliminary correlation analyses revealed significant intercorrelations among the predictor variables and among the criterion variables (see Appendix B). To reduce this

variance, all variables that were entered into the regression analyses were first centered, whereby the data values were subtracted from the mean score for the respective variable. Additionally, the correlated criterion variables, which were not of interest in the particular analysis, were entered into Step 1 of the regression analyses. The predictor variables were entered in Step 2, and the interactions between the personality and mental health variables were entered in Step 3.

Perceived Sexual Infidelity

The results of the first regression analysis, predicting perceived sexual infidelity, are presented in Table 4. Perceived sexual infidelity was positively correlated with communion ($\beta = .13, p = .02$) and with anxiety ($\beta = .13, p = .04$), and negatively correlated with self-esteem ($\beta = -.16, p = .02$). Regarding the latter correlation, however, the more telling finding was a significant interaction between agency and self-esteem ($\beta = .15, p = .03$). To assess the directionality of this interaction, a median split was performed to separate participants into groups of low-agency and high-agency individuals, and the regression analysis was repeated separately for these two groups. For participants who were low in agency, the negative correlation between self-esteem and perceived sexual infidelity remained significant ($\beta = -.29, p < .001$); in contrast, for participants who were high in agency, self-esteem and perceived sexual infidelity were not significantly correlated ($\beta = .08, p = .37$).

The only other significant finding from this first regression analysis was an interaction between unmitigated agency and depression ($\beta = .16, p = .03$). Comparable to the method for assessing the directionality of the previous interaction, a median split was performed to separate participants into groups of low and high levels of unmitigated

agency, and the regression analysis was repeated separately for these two groups. For participants who were low in unmitigated agency, there was a significant negative correlation between depression and perceived sexual infidelity ($\beta = -.27, p = .007$); in contrast, for participants who were high in unmitigated agency, depression and perceived sexual infidelity were not significantly correlated ($\beta = .09, p = .42$).

Table 4

Regression Analysis Predicting Perceived Sexual Infidelity

	Beta	T	p
Agency (A)	.06	0.94	.35
Unmitigated agency (UA)	-.05	-0.92	.36
Communion (C)	.13	2.42	.02*
Unmitigated communion (UC)	-.03	-0.58	.56
Self-esteem (SE)	-.16	-2.42	.02*
Depression (D)	-.14	-1.92	.06
Anxiety (An)	.13	2.09	.04*
A x SE	.15	2.25	.03*
A x D	.00	0.03	.97
A x An	.11	1.59	.11
UA x SE	.08	1.37	.17
UA x D	.16	2.16	.03*
UA x An	.01	0.08	.94
C x SE	.06	0.85	.40
C x D	.09	1.22	.22
C x An	.04	0.55	.58
UC x SE	.00	0.03	.98
UC x D	-.11	-1.38	.17
UC x An	.08	1.05	.29

* $p < .05$

Perceived Emotional Infidelity

The results of the second regression analysis, predicting perceived emotional infidelity, are presented in Table 5. The only significant findings from this analysis were interactions between agency and self-esteem ($\beta = -.15, p = .02$) and between agency and anxiety ($\beta = -.15, p = .03$).

Table 5

Regression Analysis Predicting Perceived Emotional Infidelity

	Beta	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Agency (A)	-.03	-0.58	.56
Unmitigated agency (UA)	.06	1.23	.22
Communion (C)	-.04	-0.76	.45
Unmitigated communion (UC)	.03	0.58	.56
Self-esteem (SE)	.12	1.93	.06
Depression (D)	.10	1.38	.17
Anxiety (An)	-.08	-1.34	.18
A x SE	-.15	-2.38	.02*
A x D	-.01	-0.13	.90
A x An	-.15	-2.21	.03*
UA x SE	.02	0.42	.68
UA x D	-.02	-0.21	.84
UA x An	-.00	-0.05	.96
C x SE	-.11	-1.51	.13
C x D	-.02	-0.31	.76
C x An	-.04	-0.56	.58
UC x SE	.03	0.40	.69
UC x D	.10	1.23	.22
UC x An	-.13	-1.77	.08

* $p < .05$

To assess the directionality of these interactions, the regression analyses were repeated separately for the low-agency and high-agency groups. Regarding self-esteem, for participants who were low in agency, there was a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and perceived emotional infidelity ($\beta = .30, p < .001$); in contrast, for participants who were high in agency, self-esteem and perceived emotional infidelity were not significantly correlated ($\beta = -.09, p = .30$). Regarding anxiety, the correlation between anxiety and perceived emotional infidelity was positive for low-agency individuals ($\beta = .05, p = .53$) but negative for high-agency individuals ($\beta = -.13, p = .23$); however, neither of these correlations were significant.

Perceived Fantasy Infidelity

The results of the third regression analysis, predicting perceived fantasy infidelity, are presented in Table 6. None of the results from this analysis were significant.

Table 6

Regression Analysis Predicting Perceived Fantasy Infidelity

	Beta	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Agency (A)	.06	0.91	.36
Unmitigated agency (UA)	-.06	-1.05	.30
Communion (C)	-.01	-0.21	.84
Unmitigated communion (UC)	.09	1.49	.14
Self-esteem (SE)	.05	0.63	.53
Depression (D)	-.05	-0.57	.57
Anxiety (An)	.12	1.53	.13
A x SE	.06	0.71	.48
A x D	.12	1.06	.29
A x An	-.00	-0.03	.98
UA x SE	-.01	-0.07	.94
UA x D	.02	0.21	.84
UA x An	-.04	-0.47	.64
C x SE	-.00	-0.04	.97
C x D	-.03	-0.34	.74
C x An	-.02	-0.19	.85
UC x SE	-.04	-0.47	.64
UC x D	-.07	-0.75	.45
UC x An	.14	1.60	.11

**p* < .05

V. DISCUSSION

In this final chapter, interpretation of the results, study limitations, and implications for future research will be discussed. The primary objective of this study was to assess types of perceived infidelity and gender-related traits, and to further investigate possible mitigating mental health variables. These aims were reached by examining participants' self-report scores on seven independent variable measures, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Beck Depression Inventory, the Beck Anxiety Inventory, the Personal Attributes Questionnaire, the Revised Unmitigated Communion Scale, and the Perceived Infidelity Questionnaire, as well as a demographic survey.

Discussion of Results

Gender Differences in Perceived Infidelity

The present study was directed by four hypotheses. The first hypothesis stated that compared to men, women will perceive more items as constituting acts of sexual, emotional, and fantasy infidelity. Based on previous research, this finding has consistently been revealed (Thornton & Nagurney, 2011). Evolutionary psychologists believe that because of paternity uncertainty, males should become more jealous over their partners' sexual infidelity than emotional infidelity. This is because sexual infidelity presents the possibility of the evolutionary cost of devoting resources to the offspring of another male. In contrast, females are certain about their genetic link to their offspring, but face the threat that their mates will withdraw resources from their offspring, and mates' attachment to another female is likely to lead to diversion of resources to that female and her offspring. Thus, the theory suggests that females are more likely to become upset by signs of resource withdrawal (foreshadowed by emotional infidelity) by

their mates than by signs of perceived sexual infidelity. This theory is the currently accepted wisdom about evolved responses to infidelity, and best explains why there are gender differences in response to perceptions of infidelity (e.g., Buss, Larsen, Westen, & Semmelroth, 1992; Buss, 2000; DeSteno & Salovey, 1996; Harris & Christenfeld, 1996; Sabini & Green, 2004; Sagarin, 2005). However, in this study, men and women did not significantly differ in their perceptions, and one possible explanation is that gendered ideals are becoming more progressive and, therefore, so are perceptions regarding perceived acts of infidelity.

Perceived Sexual Infidelity

Perceived sexual infidelity was positively correlated with communion and with anxiety. An explanation for this finding could be that individuals who are high in communion (those who tend to focus on others) may perceive sexual acts of infidelity as more intimate than those of emotional infidelity, i.e. being physically intimate versus emotionally intimate. Despite past research indicating that women were more afflicted by the concept of emotional infidelity, perhaps anxiety as a mitigating factor helped to reveal a different angle that shows us when anxiety is high, greater amounts of insecurity are revealed, and tangible acts of infidelity (such as kissing and sex) become more of a concern.

Perceived sexual infidelity was negatively correlated with self-esteem, indicating that those high in self-esteem may consider themselves to be more secure, and those low in self-esteem may, therefore, be more threatened with acts of sexual infidelity because they are a more real affront to one's personal identity and concept of self. Regarding the latter correlation, however, the more telling finding was a significant interaction between

agency and self-esteem. For participants who were low in agency, the negative correlation between self-esteem and perceived sexual infidelity remained significant, helping to further reiterate the idea that those who are low in agency, but also self-esteem, may feel a greater personal betrayal in regards to sexual infidelity. In contrast, for participants who were high in agency, self-esteem and perceived sexual infidelity were not significantly correlated, also implying that individuals with the characteristic traits of agency (such as confidence) may not be as likely to suffer from low self-esteem, and because of that may have a greater sense of self that does not allow them to feel significantly threatened when faced with issues concerning sexual infidelity.

The only other significant finding was an interaction between unmitigated agency and depression. For this interaction, it is possible that those who possess traits associated with unmitigated agency, such as exclusion of others, may as a result feel depressed due to lacking social support. For participants who were low in unmitigated agency, there was a significant negative correlation between depression and perceived sexual infidelity. Perhaps these individuals, who do not exclusively focus on themselves, are more concerned with acts of sexual infidelity the less depressed they are because they are more capable and more willing to pay attention to things that are important to them, whereas when they are more depressed, this trend is opposite, and their motivation to focus on another threat may not be as pressing or necessary. In contrast, for participants who were high in unmitigated agency, depression and perceived sexual infidelity were not significantly correlated, and this may result from the fact that individuals high in unmitigated agency tend to focus on themselves exclusively, and therefore other factors, such as depression, may have less control over them.

Perceived Emotional Infidelity

The only significant findings regarding perceived emotional infidelity were interactions between agency and self-esteem, and between agency and anxiety. Regarding self-esteem, for participants who were low in agency, there was a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and perceived emotional infidelity. Perhaps a reason for this finding is that individuals who are low in agency are not as confident and self-assured, and as their self-esteem (their sense-of-self) increases, so does their insecurity about the more emotionally intimate acts of infidelity that are a greater threat to their identity than an act of sexual infidelity, which is often considered to be more superficial. In contrast, for participants who were high in agency, self-esteem and perceived emotional infidelity were not significantly correlated, and an explanation for this finding may be that individuals high in agency have an identity that is not easily swayed, and therefore they do not feel threatened as easily. Regarding anxiety, the correlation between anxiety and perceived emotional infidelity was positive for low-agency individuals but negative for high-agency individuals; however, neither of these correlations were significant.

Perceived Fantasy Infidelity

Regarding perceived fantasy infidelity, none of the findings were significant. An explanation for the lack of results may be that the concept of fantasy infidelity is not as serious or threatening as the other, more well-known and established types of infidelity, sexual and emotional. Individuals may feel lax when it comes to perceived acts of infidelity in this category, and it may be that it is an entirely personal concern that is not

predicted based on gender or personality traits. Another reason may be that, because of its nature, concepts of fantasy infidelity are often kept a secret. Therefore, individuals may not feel threatened by these acts as it may not have been an apparent or obvious issue in their previous or current relationships.

Implications for Future Research

While previous research has explored perceptions of infidelity and gender-related traits (Thornton & Nagurney, 2011), research on the mitigating factors that mental health variables may have on perceptions of infidelity and gender-related traits had not been conducted prior to the current study.

Further research can be done in evaluating more variables, such as age, type of relationship the individual was involved in, and sexual orientation. Also, while previous research has focused on perceptions of infidelity and gender-related traits, it would be appropriate to conduct a study that focuses on perceptions of infidelity and mental health variables exclusively. Most importantly, this research could potentially be extended to include actual behaviors rather than asking participants to consider “what if” situations.

Future research should also attempt to test these findings on a larger scale (i.e., a larger sample size, individuals who are not in college and a more diverse age range).

Future studies should also look into whether participants' race/ethnicity has any correlation with the sub-scales of the measure. Additionally, future research should also include an equal number of men and women, and should allow for a more personal and private area for individuals to participate in the study.

Practical Applications

The pilot study (Thornton & Nagurney, 2011) has already acknowledged several and realistic practical applications, such as noting that there are a few combinations of personality types that could result in very negative outcomes. These personality types, in conjunction with mental health concerns such as depression and anxiety, could cause even greater negative outcomes for the relationship and the individuals involved. Also, it could be helpful in a relationship to be aware of a partner's personality type, and to be able to recognize that certain traits are more closely associated with different types of mental health issues. In knowing this, it may help to foster a greater understanding between the two individuals, and allow one another to learn various but effective ways of communicating if these issues should ever arise.

Regarding perceptions of infidelity, these may also be helpful in order to better understand a partner's insecurity. If a partner claims to be more affected by emotional infidelity, then taking steps to recognize when this may be occurring unintentionally could be an important tool in a healthy relationship.

Strengths and Limitations

Potential flaws in this study are the sample of college students who completed the questionnaire. The students were a convenience sample, making it hard to generalize to the rest of the population. Also, college students are a unique sample of individuals, and their views on sex and infidelity are potentially equally unique. College students may also be less emotionally experienced, and therefore more prone to mental concerns such as depression, anxiety, and self-esteem. As a result, these views could have skewed the ability to generalize to the population. Were this study to be conducted again, a different

sample of individuals would be used, specifically a sample with a broader age range, and not consisting entirely of college students. This would be done in order to show perceptions of all types of individuals, not just college students, making the results generalizable to the larger population.

Another inevitable limitation of the study is social desirability. The questionnaires were administered to large classrooms of students, and because the surveys contained visibly personal information, many students may not have felt comfortable being completely honest in selecting the items that they did or did not consider infidelity. For example, if an individual had a high tolerance for concepts of infidelity, but thought that it would look improper to select fewer items than the average individual, they may have selected more items on the infidelity questionnaire to compensate. It is also possible that the opposite effect could be present in that participants may have selected fewer items than appropriate in order to not appear too “open-minded” when it comes to perceptions of infidelity. They also may not have felt comfortable identifying with statements regarding their level of depression, anxiety, and self-esteem. Therefore, they may have inaccurately reflected their true feelings due to embarrassment and fear that someone next to them might see. This is a limitation that must be considered in deciphering the honesty of the participants.

A third potential flaw in the study is that the questionnaire used to access all of the variables for this study was relatively lengthy. While students may have initially answered honestly, due to the amount of questions, the students may have gotten tired and chosen any answer to sooner complete the questionnaire. This cannot be known for

sure, but is something to take into consideration regarding the findings, as well as for future research.

Summary and Conclusion

It is obvious that the implications of infidelity can have many effects upon an individual and their relationships. It is evident from the results of the current study that perceptions of infidelity can be influenced by factors such as possession of specific personality traits and mental health variables. This study will serve in furthering the research available about infidelity, as well as research available about the gender-related personality traits (communion, agency, unmitigated communion, and unmitigated agency) and related mental health variables (depression, self-esteem, and anxiety).

APPENDIX SECTION

Research Survey

Please record your responses to the following survey questions on the scantron provided. Do NOT record your name on this survey or on the scantron. Thank you.

Part 1: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

Please record the response that indicates your degree of agreement with each statement.

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
a. Strongly Agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly Disagree
2. At times, I think I am not good at all.
a. Strongly Agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly Disagree
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
a. Strongly Agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly Disagree
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
a. Strongly Agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly Disagree
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
a. Strongly Agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly Disagree
6. I certainly feel useless at times.
a. Strongly Agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly Disagree
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
a. Strongly Agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly Disagree
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
a. Strongly Agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly Disagree
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
a. Strongly Agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly Disagree
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
a. Strongly Agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly Disagree

Part 2: Beck Depression Inventory

Please record the response that indicates the statement (from among the group of four) in each question that best describes how you have been feeling during the past six months.

11.
 - a. I do not feel sad.
 - b. I feel sad.
 - c. I am sad all the time and I can't snap out of it.
 - d. I am so sad and unhappy that I can't stand it.

12.
 - a. I am not particularly discouraged about the future.
 - b. I feel discouraged about the future.
 - c. I feel I have nothing to look forward to.
 - d. I feel the future is hopeless and that things cannot improve.

13.
 - a. I do not feel like a failure.
 - b. I feel I have failed more than the average person.
 - c. As I look back on my life, all I can see is a lot of failures.
 - d. I feel I am a complete failure as a person.

14.
 - a. I get as much satisfaction out of things as I used to.
 - b. I don't enjoy things the way I used to.
 - c. I don't get real satisfaction out of anything anymore.
 - d. I am dissatisfied or bored with everything.

15.
 - a. I don't feel particularly guilty.
 - b. I feel guilty a good part of the time.
 - c. I feel quite guilty most of the time.
 - d. I feel guilty all of the time.

16.
 - a. I don't feel I am being punished.
 - b. I feel I may be punished.
 - c. I expect to be punished.
 - d. I feel I am being punished.

17.
 - a. I don't feel disappointed in myself.
 - b. I am disappointed in myself.
 - c. I am disgusted with myself.
 - d. I hate myself.

18.
 - a. I don't feel I am any worse than anybody else.
 - b. I am critical of myself for my weaknesses or mistakes.
 - c. I blame myself all the time for my faults.
 - d. I blame myself for everything bad that happens.

19.
 - a. I don't have any thoughts of killing myself.
 - b. I have thoughts of killing myself, but I would not carry them out.
 - c. I would like to kill myself.
 - d. I would kill myself if I had the chance.

20.
 - a. I don't cry any more than usual.
 - b. I cry more now than I used to.
 - c. I cry all the time now.
 - d. I used to be able to cry, but now I can't cry even though I want to.

21.
 - a. I am no more irritated by things than I ever was.
 - b. I am slightly more irritated now than usual.
 - c. I am quite annoyed or irritated a good deal of the time.
 - d. I feel irritated all the time.
22.
 - a. I have not lost interest in other people.
 - b. I am less interested in other people than I used to be.
 - c. I have lost most of my interest in other people.
 - d. I have lost all of my interest in other people.
23.
 - a. I make decisions about as well as I ever could.
 - b. I put off making decisions more than I used to.
 - c. I have greater difficulty in making decisions more than I used to.
 - d. I can't make decisions at all anymore.
24.
 - a. I don't feel that I look any worse than I used to.
 - b. I am worried that I am looking old or unattractive.
 - c. I feel there are changes in my appearance that make me look unattractive.
 - d. I believe that I look ugly.
25.
 - a. I can work about as well as before.
 - b. It takes an extra effort to get started at doing something.
 - c. I have to push myself very hard to do anything.
 - d. I can't do any work at all.
26.
 - a. I can sleep as well as usual.
 - b. I don't sleep as well as I used to.
 - c. I wake up 1-2 hours earlier than usual and find it hard to get back to sleep.
 - d. I wake up several hours earlier than I used to and cannot get back to sleep.
27.
 - a. I don't get more tired than usual.
 - b. I get tired more easily than I used to.
 - c. I get tired from doing almost anything.
 - d. I am too tired to do anything.
28.
 - a. My appetite is no worse than usual.
 - b. My appetite is not as good as it used to be.
 - c. My appetite is much worse now.
 - d. I have no appetite at all anymore.
29.
 - a. I haven't lost much weight, if any, lately.
 - b. I have lost more than five pounds.
 - c. I have lost more than ten pounds.
 - d. I have lost more than fifteen pounds.
30.
 - a. I am no more worried about my health than usual.
 - b. I am worried about problems like aches, pains, upset stomach, or constipation.
 - c. I am very worried about physical problems and it's hard to think of much else.
 - d. I am so worried about physical problems that I cannot think of anything else.

31. a. I have not noticed any recent change in my interest in sex.
 b. I am less interested in sex than I used to be.
 c. I have almost no interest in sex.
 d. I have lost interest in sex completely.

Part 3: Beck Anxiety Inventory

Please record the response that indicates how much you have been bothered by the given anxiety symptom during the past month, including today.

32. Numbness or tingling
 a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
33. Feeling hot
 a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
34. Wobbliness in legs
 a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
35. Unable to relax
 a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
36. Fear of worst happening
 a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
37. Dizzy or lightheaded
 a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
38. Heart pounding/racing
 a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
39. Unsteady
 a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
40. Terrified or afraid
 a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot

41. Nervous
a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
42. Feeling of choking
a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
43. Hands trembling
a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
44. Shaky / unsteady
a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
45. Fear of losing control
a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
46. Difficulty in breathing
a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
47. Fear of dying
a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
48. Scared
a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
49. Indigestion
a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
50. Faint / lightheaded
a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
51. Face flushed
a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot
52. Hot/cold sweats
a. Not at all b. Mildly - didn't bother me much c. Moderately - wasn't pleasant at times d. Severely - bothered me a lot

Part 4: Personal Attributes Questionnaire

Please record the response that indicates where you fall on the scale between the extremes of the two contradictory statements. **Record "a" for "1", "b" for "2", "c" for "3", "d" for "4", and "e" for "5".**

53.	Not at all arrogant	1	2	3	4	5	Very arrogant
54.	Not at all independent	1	2	3	4	5	Very independent
55.	Not at all emotional	1	2	3	4	5	Very emotional
56.	Looks out for self	1	2	3	4	5	Looks out for others
57.	Very passive	1	2	3	4	5	Very active
58.	Not at all egotistical	1	2	3	4	5	Very egotistical
59.	Difficult to devote self completely to others	1	2	3	4	5	Easy to devote self completely to others
60.	Very rough	1	2	3	4	5	Very gentle
61.	Not at all helpful to others	1	2	3	4	5	Very helpful to others
62.	Not at all boastful	1	2	3	4	5	Very boastful
63.	Not at all competitive	1	2	3	4	5	Very competitive
64.	Not at all kind	1	2	3	4	5	Very kind
65.	Not at all aware of others' feelings	1	2	3	4	5	Very aware of others' feelings
66.	Can make decisions easily	1	2	3	4	5	Difficulty making decisions
67.	Not at all greedy	1	2	3	4	5	Very greedy
68.	Gives up easily	1	2	3	4	5	Never gives up
69.	Not at all self-confident	1	2	3	4	5	Very self-confident
70.	Feels very inferior	1	2	3	4	5	Feels very superior
71.	Not at all dictatorial	1	2	3	4	5	Very dictatorial
72.	Not at all understanding of others	1	2	3	4	5	Very understanding of others

73. Not at all cynical 1 2 3 4 5 Very cynical
74. Very cold in relations 1 2 3 4 5 Very warm in relations
with others With others
75. Not at all hostile 1 2 3 4 5 Very hostile
76. Go to pieces under pressure 1 2 3 4 5 Stand up well under pressure

Part 5: Revised Unmitigated Communion Scale

Please record the response that indicates your degree of agreement with each statement. Think of the people close to you –friends and family –in responding to each statement.

77. I always place the needs of others above my own.
a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree d. Strongly Agree
78. I never find myself getting overly involved in others' problems.
a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree d. Strongly Agree
79. For me to be happy, I need others to be happy.
a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree d. Strongly Agree
80. I worry about how others get along without me when I am not there.
a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree d. Strongly Agree
81. I have no trouble getting to sleep at night when other people are upset.
a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree d. Strongly Agree
82. It is impossible for me to satisfy my own needs when they interfere with the needs of others.
a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree d. Strongly Agree
83. I cannot say no when someone asks me for help.
a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree d. Strongly Agree
84. Even when exhausted, I will always help other people.
a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree d. Strongly Agree
85. I often worry about other people's problems.
a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree d. Strongly Agree

Part 6: Perceived Infidelity Questionnaire

Please record the response that indicates whether you believe each of the following acts constitutes infidelity.

86. Being in a committed, monogamous relationship while hiding an emotional attachment to someone other than your partner
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Definitely NOT infidelity | b. Probably NOT infidelity | c. Probably infidelity | d. Definitely infidelity |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
87. Being in a committed, monogamous relationship while hiding a physical attachment to someone other than your partner
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Definitely NOT infidelity | b. Probably NOT infidelity | c. Probably infidelity | d. Definitely infidelity |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
88. Sharing an intimate kiss (kiss on the lips) with someone other than your partner
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Definitely NOT infidelity | b. Probably NOT infidelity | c. Probably infidelity | d. Definitely infidelity |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
89. Fantasizing about someone other than your partner
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Definitely NOT infidelity | b. Probably NOT infidelity | c. Probably infidelity | d. Definitely infidelity |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
90. Sharing an intimate emotional bond with someone other than your partner
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Definitely NOT infidelity | b. Probably NOT infidelity | c. Probably infidelity | d. Definitely infidelity |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
91. Engaging in sexual intercourse with someone other than your partner
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Definitely NOT infidelity | b. Probably NOT infidelity | c. Probably infidelity | d. Definitely infidelity |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
92. Watching pornographic movies
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Definitely NOT infidelity | b. Probably NOT infidelity | c. Probably infidelity | d. Definitely infidelity |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
93. Viewing pornographic pictures in magazines or on the internet
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Definitely NOT infidelity | b. Probably NOT infidelity | c. Probably infidelity | d. Definitely infidelity |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
94. Engaging in oral sex with someone other than your partner
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Definitely NOT infidelity | b. Probably NOT infidelity | c. Probably infidelity | d. Definitely infidelity |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
95. Masturbating
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Definitely NOT infidelity | b. Probably NOT infidelity | c. Probably infidelity | d. Definitely infidelity |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
96. Having an intimate emotional phone conversation with someone other than your partner
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Definitely NOT infidelity | b. Probably NOT infidelity | c. Probably infidelity | d. Definitely infidelity |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|

97. Having a sexual phone conversation or sexting (sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically) with someone other than your partner
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Definitely NOT infidelity | b. Probably NOT infidelity | c. Probably infidelity | d. Definitely infidelity |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
98. Going to a strip club without your partner
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Definitely NOT infidelity | b. Probably NOT infidelity | c. Probably infidelity | d. Definitely infidelity |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
99. Falling in love with someone other than your partner, but not acting on those feelings
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Definitely NOT infidelity | b. Probably NOT infidelity | c. Probably infidelity | d. Definitely infidelity |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
100. Having an intimate emotional friendship with someone other than your partner
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Definitely NOT infidelity | b. Probably NOT infidelity | c. Probably infidelity | d. Definitely infidelity |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|

Part 7: Demographic Survey

So that we may ensure that our sample of participants is representative of the general population, please record the appropriate response to the demographic questions below.

101. Gender:
- | | |
|---------|-----------|
| a. Male | b. Female |
|---------|-----------|
102. Age:
- | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------------|
| a. 18-21 | b. 22-25 | c. 26-29 | d. 30 or older |
|----------|----------|----------|----------------|
103. Academic status:
- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| a. Freshman | b. Sophomore | c. Junior | d. Senior |
|-------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
104. Ethnicity:
- | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|---------------------|----------|
| a. Caucasian | b. Hispanic | c. African American | d. Other |
|--------------|-------------|---------------------|----------|

Thank you so much for your participation!

APPENDIX B

Correlation Analyses

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Self-esteem	-	-.62**	-.52**	.58**	-.12*	.11*	-.17**	-.06	.07	.09
2. Depression		-	.69**	-.46**	.08	-.24**	.12*	-.03	-.03	-.03
3. Anxiety			-	-.33**	.07	-.06	.21**	.09	.01	.04
4. Agency				-	.17**	.11	-.11	.02	.06	.08
5. Unmitigated agency					-	-.32**	-.16**	-.05	.01	-.05
6. Communion						-	.42**	.19**	.07	.07
7. Unmiti. communion							-	.10	.07	.12*
8. Sexual infidelity								-	.60**	.13*
9. Emotional infidelity									-	.38*
10. Fantasy infidelity										-

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