PERSONALITY TRAITS AND FORGIVENESS AFTER INFIDELITY

Tammy Porter

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

School of Behavioral Sciences

Liberty University

July 11, 2022

PERSONALITY TRAITS AND FORGIVENESS AFTER INFIDELITY

by Tammy Porter

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

School of Behavioral Sciences

Liberty University,

Lynchburg, VA

July 11, 2022

APPROVED BY:

Dr. Keena K. Cowsert, Ed.D., Committee Chair

Dr. Summer Kuba, Center for Counseling & Family Studies, Ph.D., Ed.S., MSW Reader

Abstract

This correlative phenomenological study aims to discover the relationship between personality traits and forgiveness, specifically when infidelity has taken place. The purpose is to identify personality traits that are positively associated with forgiveness after infidelity. The research analyzed responses from both married and divorced couples that participate in a Facebook event. The theory guiding this study is the Big Five personality traits model with the analysis of those traits related to forgiveness, specifically for infidelity. The study took a close look at each personality trait within the Big Five Personality Model as it relates to forgiveness for the couple for infidelity. The research design uses forgiveness as the moderator and utilizes Everett Worthington's work as a basis for assessing forgiveness. Furthermore, there was an analysis of forgiveness for partner infidelity as the moderator in the relationship between neuroticism and relationship satisfaction. Higher relationship satisfaction is found in individuals who are forgiveness-minded (Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017). There was also an analysis of forgiveness as the moderator between the personality trait openness and marital satisfaction. The research design used the Emotional Forgiveness Scale (EFS), Decisional Forgiveness Scale (DFS), and the Big Five Personality Test (BFI) for the statistical data. The platform used for final analyzation was the professional service, Survey Monkey, which will gathered and synthesize the information.

Keywords: Infidelity, Big Five Personality Traits, forgiveness, marriage, divorce, marital satisfaction

Dedication

This manuscript is dedicated to my Lord, Jesus, and His Body of believers. I sincerely pray that this research provides insight into dealing with this challenging topic. This work is dedicated to the call of our Lord in His precious Word, Philippians 3:12-14. As Believers, we have been called to follow His example, and I am devoted to press on toward the goal of winning the prize for which God has called me. I hope that I can help others to do the same.

Acknowledgments

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

Adult Assessment Inventory (AAI)

Big Five Personality Inventory (BFI)

Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale (CSWS)

Decisional Forgiveness Scale (DFS)

Emotional Forgiveness Scale (EFS

Chapter One: Introduction

This study was designed to identify specific individual personality traits that correlate with forgiveness when partners are faced with the betrayal of infidelity. Specifically, a discovery of personality traits that correlate with forgiveness. This work took a close look into those personality traits as it relates to forgiveness, after partner infidelity. Some additional factors are discussed such as emotional and decisional forgiveness as it is related to the infidelity.

Background

Infidelity in most cultures is considered immoral, yet research shows that 30-40% of men and 30-45% of women engage in the act (Allen & Atkins, 2012; Barna Group, 2009; DeMaris, 2013; Jackman, 2015). Infidelity has been problematic from the beginning of time and can be found in some of the earliest historical records, including the Bible (Jeremiah 5:7, Hosea 1:2, Jeremiah 23:14, John 8:3, Judges 19:4). Even though most cultures believe the act of infidelity to be sinful, deviant, and unacceptable behavior, most research reveals high statistics of both men (22-25%) and women (11-15%) who engage in extramarital sexual relations (Jackman, 2015; Weiser et al., 2014). Dating relationship statistics reveal to have higher infidelity rates than marital relationships (Jackman, 2015; Toplu-Demirtaş & Fincham, 2017).

Negative adult attachments, transgenerational infidelity, and personality traits are predictive factors concerning adultery that are firmly established in the literature (Ebrahimi & Ali Kimiaei, 2014; Weiser & Weigel, 2017). Alternatively, there is abundant research on marital stability promoting variables like church attendance, children, faith, and healthy attachments, (Atkins & Kessel, 2008; Jeanfreau & Mong, 2019). Research on the topic of infidelity as well as forgiveness has yielded information that has been utilized in various situations in therapy, marital

well-being, overall well-being, and many other worthy causes (Abbasi, 2019a; Worthington &

DiBlasio, 1990).

There has been abundant research that adds to the understanding of areas such as

promoting healthy marriages, which are protective factors against infidelity (Atkins & Kessel,

2008; Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019), precursors to a marital affair (Abbasi, 2019a; Allen et al.,

2008), and marital well-being (Christensen et al., 2010). Furthermore, there has also been a

considerable amount of research on forgiveness, and it's benefits to marital satisfaction (Al-

Mabuk et al., 1995; Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019; Chi et al., 2019; Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017;

Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990).

There is copious work devoted to motivations and influences behind infidelity as well as

the intentions of the extramarital activities (Abbasi, 2019a; Allen et al., 2008; Fish et al., 2012;

Gibson et al., 2016; Isma & Turnip, 2019). The research into one's childhood experience with

infidelity impacts views of infidelity (Kawar et al., 2019; Platt et al., 2008). For example,

Jackman (2015) revealed that infidelity victims have more negative attitudes toward it, whereas

those who committed infidelity have more positive attitudes toward infidelity. Additionally,

those who hold strong religious beliefs have a more negative attitude towards infidelity

behaviors (Jackman, 2015).

Regardless of attitude toward infidelity, there are variables that promote working through

issues such as infidelity (Abrahamson et al., 2011). Research has revealed some variables for

relationship sustainment, including motivation that they do not want to lose their union or

commitment by quitting the relationship, treasuring acts of kindness in forgiving, making

meaning of the affair and what the couple endured in the infidelity, and otherwise, and finally

support both internally and external support systems (Abrahamson et al., 2011). To understand a

partner's marital view, a close look at the Christian partner's marital covenant position and a more in-depth look at the origins of the marriage is in order. The marriage union is more than love and fidelity due to a marriage contract; instead, love and faithfulness are freely given as a sacramental understanding of marriage, just as with Christ and the church (Eph. 5:22-32; Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017).

Although these are positive variables, there is a lack of research concerning specific variables after the infidelity that either promotes or inhibits marital endurance and satisfaction. Having this detailed information is vital in understanding risks, protective factors for marriages, and familial well-being. Also, treatment modalities will be more effective when there is an understanding of how those particular variables and factors influenced the decision to commit infidelity in relation to the commitment.

In this research, details such as looking at personality types in relation to forgiveness, specifically after infidelity, are correlated. The work on personality types has been extensive (DeYoung et al., 2010; Judge et al., 1999; Mahambrey, 2020). Research reveals that neuroticism is linked with infidelity behaviors and has been indicated in persons characterized as having a lack of positive psychological adjustment, moodiness, and anxiousness (Gibson et al., 2016). Further neuroticism is linked with low self-esteem, rumination, and emotional dysregulation (DeYoung et al., 2010). Consider how this may affect each person in a marriage where there has been an infidelity and how those characteristics would manifest respectively. Typically, a person who committed adultery and has a propensity towards neuroticism would likely behave and view marital healing differently from the spouse of the cheating husband (Mahambrey, 2020).

Problem Statement

Church attendance, faith, healthy attachments, and forgiveness are well-established variables to promote a strong union (Abbasi, 2019a; Atkins & Kessel, 2008; Ebrahimi & Ali Kimiaei, 2014). However, a clear understanding of what specific variables are in place after disclosing infidelity is necessary to gain appropriate predictions, therapeutic modalities, and greater possibilities of repairing the broken relationship. There has been a plethora of work on forgiveness (Al-Mabuk et al., 1995; Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019; Chi et al., 2019; Fehr et al., 2010; Mróz et al., 2020) and how it correlates to personality traits. However, the work is limited in how forgiveness correlates with the personality traits after infidelity (Mróz et al., 2020).

There is evidence revealing personality traits that are positively correlated to infidelity behaviors. However, research is lacking data detailing how those personality traits encourage marital sustainment after infidelity and how combinations within the marriage support healing. Further, there is a lack of research on forgiveness after partner infidelity. Barta and Kiene, (2005) revealed motivations for infidelity behaviors related to the Big Five (explained later) and listed the four as sex, anger, neglect, and dissatisfaction.

Identifying variables for both the participating and non-participating partner can help identify solutions in treatment, marital survival, and overall well-being. Personality traits have a significant role in the characteristics of human behaviors (Gibson et al., 2016). For example, a person who scores high with the personality trait neuroticism is more inclined to have infidelity behaviors (Gibson et al., 2016; Mahambrey, 2020). Alternatively, one who is more willing to go along with or try something new, will score high on agreeableness, which might indicate a trait that will promote marital longevity after adultery. Looking closer at one who scores high in neuroticism a correlation can be found in the likelihood of those to participate in infidelit-like

behaviors (Mahambrey, 2020). Whisman et al. (2007) found that neuroticism is a likely

personality trait for infidelity behaviors. However, this is not the case when religiosity is

considered, as it reveals a negative association with infidelity when coupled with neuroticism

(Whisman et al., 2007).

They found that these motivations were directly correlated with individual personality

traits. For example, dissatisfaction in marriage is related to extraversion personality traits (Barta

& Kiene, 2005). Those experiencing marital dissatisfaction have a higher probability of

committing infidelity (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2006; Ebrahimi & Ali Kimiaei, 2014; French et

al., 2019). The problem is that while there is work defining how personality traits and their

relation to infidelity, there is not sufficient work determining those same personality traits and

how they relate to healing after infidelity. Discovering those Big Five personality traits and how

they correlate with partner forgiveness after infidelity is a worthy discussion.

Purpose Statement

This study aimed to discover how personality traits, through the Big Five model,

correlate with forgiveness, specifically after an indiscretion occurs within the marriage. The

theory guiding this study is understanding the established research of the Big Five personality

traits and forgiveness as it relates to infidelity in the marriage. Further, this study looks at which

of those variables or characteristics actively encourage sustainment of the marriage and which

ones do not. The study is corelative and examines personality traits (independent variable) and

forgiveness (dependent variable) after an infidelity.

Counselors find that couples who are impacted by infidelity find the experience traumatic

and experience strong emotional reactions (Dean, 2011; Moller & Vossler, 2015). These

reactions are often the precursor to therapy for married couples (De Stefano & Oala, 2008;

Vossler & Moller, 2014). Most therapists will encounter clients who have experienced infidelity in their relationships (Moller & Vossler, 2015). It is crucial for clinicians to be able to quickly identify those characteristics for individuals in order to provide services for them like psychoeducation.

Currently, research is lacking in identifying personality traits related to forgiveness and infidelity. Further, research is lacking in correlating personality traits and what type of forgiveness (emotional or decisional). At the time of this writing, there is a lack of research detailing marital survival after five, ten, and fifteen years after infidelity. This study used a self-report survey modality to identify those whose unions survived an affair along with those whose relationships were ended. This study identified each person's personality traits using the Big Five questionnaire (BFI), the Decisional Forgiveness Scale (DFS), and the Emotional Forgiveness Scale (EFS), and a questionnaire using Survey Monkey. This research determined specific personality types and correlations with forgiveness after partner infidelity.

Significance of the Study

Research shows personality traits can lead to an understanding of various behaviors which in turn can provide therapeutic modalities that have an eventual positive impact for many (Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019; DeWall et al., 2011; DeYoung et al., 2010; Judge et al., 1999; Mahambrey, 2020). Understanding specific personality traits as they relate to forgiveness in infidelity within the marital relationship, can provide vital information in facilitating an appropriate therapeutic modality for promoting marital sustainment.

The importance of this type of data can be used in therapeutic settings where evidence has revealed an understanding of infidelit-like behaviors have occurred is paramount for the victims (Christensen et al., 2010; Fish et al., 2012; McCarthy & Wald, 2013; Vossler & Moller,

2020). A more effective therapeutic modality can enhance the marital survival rate causing families to remain intact, resulting in many positive benefits (Weiser & Weigel, 2017; Weiser et al., 2015).

When families remain cohesive and intact, the overall societal effect is positive (decrease in mental health disorders, poverty rates), and an exorbitant number of adverse outcomes are avoided (Kendler et al., 2017; Taye et al., 2020). For example, divorce is linked with the onset of alcohol use disorders in men (5-6%) and women (6-7%) (Kendler et al., 2017). A small sample of some of those negative societal effects include former spouses and children living a much lower standard of living, higher risk of poverty, and more so for females (especially if the woman has children), and higher risks of mental health issues and various other negative effects, all of which can rely on public funding for resources (Bourreau-Dubois & Doriat-Duban, 2016; Klein Velderman et al., 2016).

Research Questions

There is an enormous amount of research into understanding infidelity. However, there are still some questions left unanswered (Jeanfreau & Mong, 2019). Within that context, the following research questions are asked:

R1.   Is there a significant correlation between the personality trait of neuroticism and decisional forgiveness after partner infidelity?

R2.   Is there a significant correlation between the personality trait of neuroticism and emotional forgiveness after partner infidelity?

R3.   Is there a significant correlation between the personality trait of openness and decisional forgiveness after partner infidelity?

R4.   Is there a significant correlation between the personality trait of openness and emotional

forgiveness after partner infidelity?

Definitions

Infidelity can be challenging to define. Moller and Vossler (2015) define infidelity into

three segments: infidelity as sexual intercourse, infidelity as extradyadic sexual activities, and

infidelity as an emotional betrayal. Added to this discussion is internet infidelity. Internet

infidelity is a unique consideration as today's culture is engulfed in online activities where

opportunities are as close as the next electronic device (Vossler, 2016).

Infidelity, or adultery, is found in Scripture in both the New and Old Testaments. The Old

Testament notes infidelity as voluntary cohabitation of a married woman with a man or other

than a lawful spouse (Elwell, 2001). Further, marriage is pointed out as a union of a man and

woman living together and having a sexual relationship with the approval of their social and

cultural groups (Douglas et al., 1996). The New Testament references sex outside of the

marriage as improper and cohabitation (known sexual relations) of unmarried people (Elwell,

2001). The act is forbidden in Scripture as the sanctity of the home and family must be valued

(Exodus 20:14, Deuteronomy 5:18, Matthew 5:32, 19:9). Throughout Scripture, one can see that

extra-marital affairs bring pain, unrest, and suffering (Douglas et al., 1996) in the lives of David

(2 Samuel11, 13) and Solomon (1 Kings 11:1-8). Stories concerning the difficulties in the lives

of children born to one other than the wife are peppered throughout Scripture (Leah, Rebekkah,

Sarah).

Big Five

The Big Five is a grouping of personality characteristics that generalizes those traits into

five areas: Extraversion (E), Neuroticism (N), Openness (O), Agreeableness (A), and

Conscientiousness (C) (DeYoung et al., 2010; Judge et al., 1999; Mahambrey, 2020; Seligman & Reichenberg, 2014). The Big Five model assumes individuals score in the average range with lows or highs of their specific personality trait, revealing that individuals personality (Elleman et al., 2018).

Marriage

Marriage is defined as a legal, social, and biological union of two people for the purposes of relationship, sexual relationship, establishing family, and mating (Wimalasena, 2016). Even for those who are not religious or associate with a religious affiliation, marriage is often an agreement before God, family, and friends; a religious ritual, with many witnesses; a civil and legal contract, and often the way in which property is inherited throughout generations (Hutton, 2019). God's original intent and design for marriage can be seen in the relationship between Adam and Eve (Douglas et al., 1996; Genesis 2:18-25; Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017).

Defining marriage is often controversial and is often associated with great debate (Hutton, 2019). Heterosexual marriage is recognized by all states in the United States and by the federal government; however, same-sex couples face opposing legal and social acceptance obstacles (Rosenfeld, 2014). For this study, the focus will be on heterosexual marriages, specifically those who have a church affiliation. For the purposes of this study, heterosexual marriages are the focus.

Infidelity: Sexual Intercourse

Defining sexual intercourse as infidelity might be described as troublesome as particular groups may not recognize sexual intercourse with another as infidelity. Some partner groups include swinging couples, polyamorous couples, and some male same-sex couples (Moller & Vossler, 2015). Sexual intercourse (Coitus) is a reproductive act in which the male inserts his

penis into the female's vagina (Britannica Academic, 2021). Like other sexual activities, sexual intercourse provides great orgasmic pleasure and excitement (Barnett et al., 2016; Britannica Academic, 2021). Sexual intercourse as infidelity is the only form of infidelity that has potential for conception, proving this type of infidelity can be the most life-altering for all parties (Allen et al., 2006).

Infidelity: Extradyadic Sexual Activities

In the same vein, extradyadic sexual activities (watching pornography together, kissing, having sexual fantasies) can be interpreted as infidelity (Moller & Vossler, 2015). Extradyadic sexual activities include actions outside of the marital covenant's expectation, including oral sex, coitus, anal sex, petting, and kissing (Lalasz & Weigel, 2011; Negash et al., 2013).

Infidelity: Emotional Affair or Betrayal

Emotional infidelity is defined as attending important events with someone else, deceiving one's partner about feelings, and being emotionally attached/detached from someone (Guitar et al., 2017). Emotional infidelity is a different kind of betrayal due to the powerful emotional attachment outside the marriage (Carpenter, 2012).

An individual's willingness to variability about sexual engagement in or out of an established relationship is referred to as sociosexuality (Rodrigues et al., 2016b; Thompson & O'Sullivan, 2015). Sociosexuality can be described as "restrictive" or "unrestrictive," respectively (Rodrigues, 2016a). When assessing the damage, meaning, healing, and many other aspects of sexual behavior in a committed relationship, sociosexuality is influential in obtaining comprehension. For example, an individual raised in a violent home where there are many life stressors it is predicted that individual will have more sex partners and view short-term mating

with a positive attitude (Patch & Figueredo, 2017). However, if that person is a Christian or

becomes a Christian within the marriage, those beliefs and behaviors will be impactful.

Internet Infidelity

Defining internet infidelity is necessary and can be limited similarly to offline

infidelities (Vossler & Moller, 2020). Vossler and Moller (2020) have found that behaviors

classified as cybersex are indeed found to be internet infidelity. Internet infidelity is described as

cybersex, exchanging sexual self-images, online dating, online flirting, and watching online

pornography (Vossler, 2016). Octaviana and Abraham (2018) define internet infidelity as an

interaction that occurred or began through online contact with a third party. The relationship and

or communication is kept secret from significant others.

Online infidelity has become an area of many recent studies. The emotional reaction is

similar to the response when offline (Schneider et al., 2012). Reportedly, the psychological

results have been described as traumatizing, feelings of betrayal and broken trust, loneliness,

jealousy, and self-worth have been damaged (Schneider et al., 2012). Furthermore, online EMS

tolerance (Octaviana & Abraham, 2018) is parallel to offline infidelity, and reactions are

reportedly similar (Octaviana & Abraham, 2018).

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is inclusive of a positive psychological alternative toward the offender (Chi

et al., 2019; Mróz et al., 2020). Selman et al. (2002) accurately describe forgiveness as an action

in which a person is set free from guilt by God or humans and is primarily about personal aspects

of redemption and the removal of sin. Those who have received sincere forgiveness by God

forgives others (Matthew 6:14-15; 18:21-35) (Selman et al., 2002). It is thought there are two

types of forgiveness, decisional and emotional (Kaleta & Mróz, 2021; Worthington, 2006).

Decisional forgiveness

Decisional forgiveness includes the psychological resolve to forgive and let go of negative outcomes (anger, resentment, frustration) toward the wrongdoer (Worthington, 2021).

Emotional Forgiveness

Emotional forgiveness includes an exchange of negative emotions (fear, anger, resentment) with positive emotions (love, sympathy, empathy) (Worthington, 2021). Worthington (2021) found that emotional forgiveness has more benefits (health, well-being, stress reduction).

Personality Traits

Personality traits are classifications of various tendencies, behaviors, and beliefs that are assigned to a person at birth (Kotov et al., 2010; Soto & Tackett, 2015). Personality traits are those characteristics that one is known by or for (McCrae & Terracciano, 2005). Examples of personality traits are grouped in the Big Five Personality model and include traits such as patience, attitude, and social skills (Kotov et al., 2010; Mahambrey, 2020; McCrae & Costa, 1996; McCullough et al., 2001). Considerable research reveals that personality traits are consistent in all cultures (McCrae & Costa, 1999; McCrae & Terracciano, 2005).

REACH Model

The REACH model is a forgiveness model used therapeutically and created by Everett Worthington (Worthington, 2006). The model is an acronym standing for the process of forgiveness: recall, empathize, altruism, committing, and holding on (Worthington, 2006).

Summary

Variables that promote strong unions are firmly established in literature (Abbasi, 2019a; Abbasi & Alghamdi, 2017; Atkins & Kessel, 2008; Ebrahimi & Ali Kimiaei, 2014). Additionally, research on forgiveness has a firm foundation in literature (Balliet, 2010; Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019; Bendixen et al., 2018; Kaleta & Mróz, 2018). There is solid work in the area of personality traits as they relate to predicting infidelity behaviors (Apostolou & Panayiotou, 2019; Gibson et al., 2016; Isma & Turnip, 2019). In the same vein, there has been much work on how personality traits correlate to forgiveness (Mróz et al., 2020). However, there is little to no work in how personality traits, using the Big Five, correlate to forgiveness specifically related to infidelity. The research for how personality traits as they correlate to forgiveness of infidelity is important as it is correlated with the sustainment of marital unions.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

There is much dedicated to the topic of infidelity (Abbasi, 2019a; Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019). Adultery is considered morally wrong for most Americans and around the world (Abbasi & Alghamdi, 2017; Munsch, 2012). Finding factors, circumstances, and variables that promote the marriage's viability after such an assault on the marriage is not enough. The devastation that comes from this type of betrayal (divorce, emotional toll, children, financial) is not something many can withstand. This literature review identifies current findings on the topic of infidelity with a focus on forgiveness as it relates to personality traits.

It is important to recognize personality traits and how they correlate with forgiveness, specifically when coupled with infidelity. For many reasons people must define personality traits and examine how they correspond to forgiveness after infidelity. Some vital reasons include giving professional clinicians tools in effectively treating and helping couples through the crisis of infidelity, promoting marital sustainment, and finally, keeping the family intact. (Allen & Atkins, 2012). The positive impact of the family surviving and remaining together on society is considerable (Allen & Atkins, 2012). Some of those benefits include a more stable financial household versus a single-parent home which often results in a lower standard of living, often causing poverty issues for children, and employment issues for single parents (Bourreau-Dubois & Doriat-Duban, 2016).

Second, having this information builds on the available work that has been performed in identifying predictors, patterns, and traits of those who acted deceitfully. Data related to this work will be of further assistance in marital sustainment (Abrahamson et al., 2011; Allen et al., 2012; Ziv et al., 2017). Further, identifying personality traits and how they relate to forgiveness,

specifically when the marriage survives the infidelity and does not end in divorce, is important

when considering the value of marital sustainment and forgiveness.

Third, the power of forgiveness and its benefits is astounding (Booth et al., 2018; Chi et

al., 2019; Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017). Worthington (2006) and others found some of those

benefits include a) a reduction in stress reaction which in turn reverses the effects of stress on the

body (suppressed immune system, cardiovascular issues); b) a reduction in ruminating which is

linked to mental health disorders (obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety, depression, bi-polar

disorder); and lastly c) promoting healthy relationships, repairing relationships, and reconciling

vital relationships promoting over all well-being (Worthington, 2006; Worthington, 2021;

Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990).

Forgiveness is necessary for the sustainment of the marriage (Abrahamson et al., 2011;

Chi et al., 2019; Hall & Fincham, 2006). Abrahamson et al. (2011) found in a study that

forgiveness helped those affected by the infidelity to move forward and begin the healing process

although it is often a process over time. In addition, those who choose to work through the

traumatic event and begin processing forgiveness often feel more powerful and in control versus

dissolving the marriage and severing all ties (Abrahamson et al., 2011). Forgiveness also has

benefits for the involved parties even if there is a decision to end the marriage (Hall & Fincham,

2006). The benefits are powerful in that they have the potential to help the non-involved partner

cope with stress and benefit physical and mental health (Chi et al., 2019; Hall & Fincham, 2006).

Most Americans (97%) believe infidelity is a betrayal of the union, but as discussed,

extramarital affairs (emotional and sexual) are prevalent (Campbell & Wright, 2010; Norona et

al., 2018; Ziv et al., 2017). Reportedly, 25% of married men and 20% of married women

commit adultery at some point in their marriage (Abrahamson et al., 2011; McNulty & Widman,

2014). More research on this contradiction is needed to better understand the discrepancies in what is reportedly believed versus behaviors and factors contributing to or hindering successful marriages (Zapien, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

The first known human behavioral psychologist to delve into the complex work of human personality traits was Sir Francis Galton (Galton, 1883; 2004; Glad, 2007; Michell, 2021). Sir Francis Galton, a half-cousin of Charles Darwin and best-selling author, founded Differential Psychology, which looks at psychological differences of people versus traits (Galton, 1869). Galton (1869) is widely unknown and does not receive credit for his instrumentation methods used today. He was the first to categorize personality traits systematically (Galton, 1869). Sir Francis Galton founded some of his work in the lexical hypothesis believing that personality characteristics become part of the proposed group's language, further thinking that personality characteristics are more likely to become part of that group's language the more primary the personality traits (Galton, 1883).

McCrae and Costa (1985) worked to finalize their major personality inventory, which led to the eventual development of the Big Five personality traits taxonomy founded in psychology's trait theory (McCrae & Costa, 1985; 1989). Seligman and Reichenberg (2014) believe the Big Five is one of the most accepted personality models used internationally. However, the Myers Briggs Type Indicator is widely accepted as a personality scale (The Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine et al., 2011). In fact, Indeed, an employment agency, lists the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator as the leading personality assessment used by employers (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021). For the purposes of this research, the Big Five will be investigated with its relationship with forgiveness, specifically as it relates to infidelity.

Personality Traits

Personality psychology directs attention to individual differences in behaviors, emotions, motivations, and cognitions through the lens of personality traits (DeYoung et al., 2010). Personality traits can be strong predictors of infidelity as their specific characteristics display similar traits as behaviors that elicit infidelity (Apostolou & Panayiotou, 2019; Barta & Kiene, 2005; Gibson et al., 2016; Isma & Turnip, 2019; Mahambrey, 2020). Adulthood is linked to having consistently stable personality traits, commonly known as the Big Five (Barta & Kiene, 2005; Feldman, 2014). The assessment results are stable unless, of course, there is an interference by way of a traumatic event that can cause mental illness, which can cause changes in personality traits (Seligman & Reichenberg, 2014). Current research reveals the Big Five personality scale can identify and potentially predict infidelity behaviors (forgiveness), relationships (healthy, boundaries), well-being, and relationship satisfaction (Gibson et al., 2016; DeYoung et al., 2010).

Core Elements of Personality

Core elements of personality include basic tendencies, characteristic adaptations, and self-concept (McCrae & Costa, 1985; 1996; 2003). Within each of these core elements, personality theory can be better understood as each includes an integral part of the concept (Feist & Feist, 2009). According to McCrae and Costa (1996), there are three secondary components: biological bases, objective biography, and external influences. Feist and Feist (2009) call them peripheral and consider those segments a better description. For the purposes of this study, a focus will be on the core elements of the personality theory, using the Big Five personality traits. These elements describe one's propensity towards a specific characteristic or trait by high and low scores, respectively.

Core Elements of the Big Five

The ideas behind the Big Five model sprouted substantial roots when Earnest Tupes (1957, 1959) recognized personality traits could be predictive of various outcomes in Airmen's performance based on personality. In 1986, Digman solidified five factors of personality when he classified his findings as introversion-extroversion, conscience-governed concern for others, will, anxiety, and intellect (Digman & Inouye, 1986). Lewis Goldberg, soon after, fine-tuned the 5-factor model to a more recognizable design with a comprehensive set of traits (Goldberg, 1990; 1992).

The Big Five model today includes: Extraversion (E), Neuroticism (N), Openness (O), Agreeableness (A), and Conscientiousness (C) (DeYoung et al., 2010; Judge et al., 1999; Mahambrey, 2020; Seligman & Reichenberg, 2014). The Big Five postulates that most people are somewhere in the middle range of each trait, with scoring extreme (low or high) on each provide concepts of that individual's personality traits (Elleman et al., 2018).

Neuroticism

Neuroticism is characterized as moodiness, anxiousness, self-criticism, lack of positive psychological adjustment, emotional instability, hostility, depression, and impulsiveness (Feldman, 2014; Judge et al., 1999). Costa and McCrae's (1985) five-factor model reveals those who have the personality trait of (N) score high in anxiousness are temperamental, self-pitying, self-conscious, emotional, and vulnerable. Alternatively, they will reveal low scores in being calm, even-tempered, self-satisfied, comfortable, unemotional, and hardy (McCrae & Costa, 1985).

Neuroticism can be associated with areas of the brain that show evidence of self-appraisal, emotional impression, low self-esteem or worth, deliberation (rumination), and

emotional agitation (DeYoung et al., 2010). These areas include (amygdala, anterior and mid-cingulate cortex, medial prefrontal cortex, hippocampus) (DeYoung et al., 2010). High scores in neuroticism are linked positively with the likelihood of participating in infidelity (Mahambrey, 2020; Whisman et al., 2007). Neuroticism displays characteristics of those who bear difficulty with psychological adjustments, challenges in emotional stability and often demonstrate issues regulating emotions (Gibson et al., 2016). However, infidelity is not connected with neuroticism when religiosity is considered, as it reveals a negative association with infidelity when coupled with neuroticism (Whisman et al., 2007).

Extroversion

Extroversion personality trait indicates how outgoing or shy a person is (Feldman, 2014). This trait makes it easy for one to participate in extra binary relationships as they do not struggle to be personable (Gibson et al., 2016). Some of the traits that encompass extraversion include assertiveness, sociability, and talkativeness (DeYoung et al., 2010). Also, extraversion traits have recently been linked to a sensitivity to reward and the brain's reward system (DeYoung et al., 2010). Extroversion is tied to experiences of positive emotions and social behaviors (DeYoung et al., 2010). Costa and McCrae's (1985) five-factor model reveals those who have the personality trait of (E) scored high in being loving, a team-player, chatty, fun-loving, lively, and zealous. Those same personality traits that fit (E) will score low in being restrained, an introvert, hushed, serious, yielding, and unemotional (McCrae & Costa, 1985).

Openness

This personality trait displays one's willingness to engage or interest in new experiences and their curiosity level (Feldman, 2014). Reportedly, those who score high on this trait are open to out-of-the-norm situations, thoughts, imagination, intellectual engagement, aesthetic interest,

and sensations, providing a productive environment for new relationships (Gibson et al., 2016; DeYoung et al., 2010). Being open to new relationships or habits could promote extramarital relationships revealed in recent research (Mahambrey, 2020).

Costa and McCrae's (1985) five-factor model reveals those who have the personality trait of (O) scored high in being imaginative, creative, original, prefer variety, curious, and are generally more liberal. Those same personality traits that fit (O) will score low in being practical, menial, ceremonious, formal, nonchalant, possible intellectual disability, and a tendency to be one who likes tradition (Gibson et al., 2016; McCrae & Costa, 1985).

Agreeableness

Agreeableness relates to how easygoing and accommodating one is (Feldman, 2014). Agreeableness can be seen in two ways: having traits of altruism, revealing prosocial traits and antisocial traits such as callousness and aggression (DeYoung et al., 2010). Gibson et al. (2016) reported low agreeableness is associated with infidelity, particularly with those who engage in extramarital relationships.

Those who score low in agreeableness can be seen as tending to be disagreeable, uncooperative, deceitful, non-empathic, and lacking in trust. Interestingly, agreeableness has a firm place in predicting the outcome of infidelity (Mahambrey, 2020). For example, when the involved person is remorseful and the uninvolved partner decides to forgive the offender, agreeableness offers the opportunity to remain together (Mahambrey, 2020).

As mentioned earlier, relationships with substantial investments such as duration, investments, and financial assets are more likely to forgive the indiscretion, particularly if the individual is high in agreeableness (Mahambrey, 2020).

Costa and McCrae's (1985) five-factor model reveals those who have the personality trait of (A) scored high in being softhearted, trusting, generous, acquiescent, lenient, good-natured. Those same personality traits that fit (A) will score low in being ruthless, suspicious, stingy, antagonistic, critical, and irritable (McCrae & Costa, 1985).

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness is linked with those who are organized, generally tidy, and reliable (Gibson et al., 2016; Feldman, 2014; DeYoung et al., 2010). Those who commit infidelity and score low in conscientiousness are unhappy in marriages, unreliable, and generally disorganized (Gibson et al., 2016; Mahambrey, 2020). Both conscientiousness and agreeableness are wanted characteristics in searching for a healthy relationship (Mahambrey, 2020). It is of particular importance that conscientiousness traits are related to the ability and likelihood to restrain impulses to follow the rules and commitments (DeYoung et al., 2010). Further, conscientiousness is considered an imperative characteristic trait for a full-functioning romantic relationship (Mahambrey, 2020). Costa and McCrae's (1985) five-factor model reveals those who have the personality trait of (C) scored high in being conscientious, hardworking, well-organized, punctual, ambitious, and perseverant. Those same personality traits that fit (C) will score low in being negligent, lazy, disorganized, late, aimless, and the tendency to quit (McCrae & Costa, 1985).

Conscientiousness and Agreeableness Combined

Conscientiousness and agreeableness are unique when considering infidelity and frequently can be discussed together. For example, when one scores high on agreeableness and low on conscientiousness, they tend to have a lower risk for infidelity (Mahambrey, 2020). Additionally, those who are low in agreeableness and conscientiousness are associated with

unfaithfulness in committed relationships (Mahambrey, 2020). This is an important consideration particularly within the context of forgiveness related to infidelity.

The Big Five and Forgiveness

Historically, the Big Five personality traits have been measured and applied to various situations like forgiveness (Kaleta & Mróz, 2018; Mróz et al., 2020). However, little evidence applies to forgiveness related to infidelity in a marriage (Chi et al., 2019; Hall & Fincham, 2006; Shrout & Weigel, 2017). McCullogh and Hoyt (2002) estimate that the link between personality and one's propensity to forgive lies within one's perception of the transgressor, how one experiences those offenses, and the quality of the relationship between the two. In other words, personality traits influence the interpretation of the event (Rey & Extremera, 2014).

Neuroticism

People who score high in Neuroticism have a propensity toward hostile reactions and tend to ruminate over negative life events (McCullough & Hoyt, 2002). It is thought that Neuroticism, or those who score high in neuroticism have high levels of interpersonal stress (McCullough & Hoyt, 2002). Interpersonal stress, ruminating and hostile reactions leave one who scores high in Neuroticism with the possibility of being less forgiving than those who score low in Neuroticism (McCullough & Hoyt, 2002; Rey & Extremera, 2014). Those with high scores in Neuroticism regularly experience negative affect with tremendous sensitivity to negative events predisposing them to becoming easily offended (McCullough et al., 2001).

Extroversion

Those who score high in Extroversion have a greater probability to forgive offenses (McCrae & Costa, 1999; McCullough & Hoyt, 2002). This is likely due to the natural tendencies to desire having positive social relationships (McCrae & Costa, 1996; 1999; 2003; McCullough

& Hoyt, 2002). Those who score high in Extroversion are generally more satisfied within their relationship providing for less opportunity to engage in extra-marital activities (Heller et al., 2004; Tov et al., 2014).

Openness

One who scores high on Openness has a propensity to view things through a positive lens, being open to new things (Mahambrey, 2020; McCrae & Costa, 1996). Anger and rumination are negatively correlated with those who score high in Openness (Zeng & Xia, 2019). In other words, those who score high in Openness have a lower propensity towards anger and tend to ruminate less (Zeng & Xia, 2019).

Agreeableness

One who scores high in agreeableness has a predisposition toward forgiveness. In other words, those who have high scorers on agreeableness are forgiving and noted for not being vengeful (McCrae & Costa, 1985; McCullough & Hoyt, 2002; Rey & Extremera, 2014). It is thought that agreeable people tend to regularly have less conflict, assert less power, particularly in disagreements, appraise offenses as less offensive, and have high levels of empathy (McCullough et al., 2001; McCullough & Hoyt, 2002). Additionally, those who score higher on Agreeableness tend to be more trusting, empathetic, and generally seek peace when possible (Kaleta & Mróz, 2021a; Rey & Extremera, 2014). Alternatively, those who score low in Agreeableness tend to have more conflict with peers, commitment, and relational closeness providing opportunity for unforgiveness (McCullough et al., 2001).

Conscientiousness

Historical research reveals a positive correlation with forgiveness (Balliet, 2010). Those who score high in conscientiousness are generally more skillful at containing and suppressing

anger (Jensen-Campbell et al., 2007). It is thought that self-control is a facet of those who score high in conscientiousness, as they tend to engage in altruistic behaviors toward those who offend (Jensen-Campbell et al., 2007; Roberts et al., 2005).

Forgiveness and How It Relates

Forgiveness within relationships began gaining much recognition about thirty years ago and continues today (Al-Mabuk et al., 1995; Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2020; Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990). Clear evidence addressed the multi-faceted benefits of forgiveness in the lives of those seeking therapeutic intervention. Findings reveal benefits of forgiveness in physical health, well-being, altruism, interpersonally, biologically, socially, and overall well-being (Allen et al., 2006; Al-Mabuk et al., 1995; Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019; Chi et al., 2019; Harper et al., 2014; Heintzelman et al., 2014; Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017; Worthington, 2021; Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990). Some reports reveal an overall positive relationship satisfaction for those who tend to forgive (Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017).

For purposes of this study, Worthington's work, specifically his REACH model, will be correlated with personality traits identified within the Big Five. Within the forgiveness framework, the goal is to replace negative outcomes of unforgiveness with positive outcomes of forgiveness (Worthington, 2006; Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990). Unfavorable outcomes in unforgiveness related to infidelity include: bitterness, isolation, anger, fear, and numerous others (Harper et al., 2014). Positive outcomes with forgiveness include: peace, harmony, compassion, sympathy, love, empathy, and countless others (Harper et al., 2014).

Decisional Forgiveness

Worthington (2021) recognizes two types of forgiveness. The first is decisional forgiveness (Worthington, 2021). According to Worthington (2021), decisional forgiveness is the

most critical in repairing and reconciling relationships, which are foundational for a marriage

that has the wound of infidelity. Simply put, this is the decision to forgive and put away or let go

of negative outcomes (anger, resentment, frustration) toward the wrongdoer.

Emotional Forgiveness

The second type of forgiveness is emotional (Worthington, 2021). Emotional forgiveness

involves replacing negative emotions (fear, anger, resentment) with positive emotions (love,

sympathy, empathy) (Worthington, 2021). Worthington (2021) found that emotional forgiveness

includes the most health benefits, including a reduction in stress reactivity and rumination.

Worthington's REACH Model

The REACH model for forgiveness includes a five-step process (Worthington, 2021).

The model is broken into five simple steps in which one works through a six-hour workbook.

The REACH acronym stands for the following:

Recall

The first step of the training aims to help the individual practice recalling and

remembering the injustice (infidelity) as objectively as possible (Worthington, 2006;

Worthington, 2021).

Empathize

The second step of the work is empathizing. The goal here is to empathize with the

wrong-doer and attempt to understand the violator's viewpoint (Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990).

Altruism

Thirdly, altruism is considering your past and an occasion when you hurt someone and

were forgiven (Worthington, 2021). At that point, a consideration of extending the olive branch

of the same forgiveness you were given to the wrongdoer presents itself.

Committing

The fourth step is committing. Committing includes publicly forgiving the wrongdoer (Worthington, 2021). The ways one may do this may be socially, on social media and with family.

Holding On

The fifth step of this process according to Worthington (2021) is one of allowing oneself to forgive. Worthington states the decision as letting go of the hurt; not forgetting it but remembering that the choice was to forgive the offender.

<div align="center">

Related Literature

</div>

Research shows two personality traits that positively correlate with infidelity behaviors, agreeableness and conscientiousness (Brineman & MCAnulty, 2017; Schmitt, 2004). Another study took a close look into an individual's inclination to not commit adultery and found high levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness were in line with those who are more likely to not commit the act (Apostolou & Panayiotou, 2019). Additionally, those less satisfied with their marriage are more likely to commit adultery (Mahambrey, 2020). Marital satisfaction is a prominent reason cited for committing adultery (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2006). Personality traits can be correlated with infidelity behavior and marital satisfaction (Isma & Turnip, 2019; Mark et al., 2011; Whisman et al., 2007).

Divorce

In an era where divorce is commonplace, it is becoming more critical to recognize variables that contribute, predict, and prevent or promote marital stability. Not all agree on the prevalence of divorce. However, research reports that 33% of adults have been through a divorce at least once (Allen & Atkins, 2012; Barna Group, 2009; Taye et al., 2020).

Allen and Atkins (2012) state that extramarital sex (EMS) is a principal reason for divorce, solidifying the necessity of understanding this human behavior on the topic. Reports reveal an upwards of 20% of all marriages have experienced an EMA (Labrecque & Whisman, 2017; Zapien, 2016). Extramarital affairs (infidelity) are responsible for a significant percentage, 31% men and 45% women, and on average, 40% result in divorce (DeMaris, 2013; Allen & Atkins, 2012). Data such as this is fundamental when infidelity is often the promoter of divorce (Allen & Atkins, 2012).

Understanding extramarital behaviors is necessary to better understand the functions of a positive marital relationship. A close look into variables that promote the solidarity of marriage after infidelity is essential in producing viable work for clinicians providing therapy and for the sanctity of covenantal marriage.

A cross-cultural study recognized that there are specific personality traits associated with the propensity to commit adultery (Mahambrey, 2020). Apostolou and Panayiotou (2019) found that individuals with high levels of openness were more likely to partake in infidelity. Additionally, neuroticism is linked with the likelihood of cheating (Whisman et al., 2007).

Physical and emotional infidelity are cited as the reason for divorce (DeMaris, 2013; Mark et al., 2011). The impact is emotionally traumatic for all those affected directly and indirectly (Allen et al., 2008; Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019; Scuka, 2015). The consequences of infidelity include negative effects on physical, mental, spiritual, and economic aspects of each person's life and results in divorce (Barna Group, 2009; Larson & Halfon, 2013; De Stefano & Oala, 2008).

Divorce for offspring has a caveat of negative results, including lowered well-being in adulthood and long-term survival, decreased adult education, fewer social network ties, more

depression, and worse health practices (Larson & Halfon, 2013). Children suffer lower academic scores and achievement, have behavioral issues, score lower on psychological and emotional well-being, possess lower self-esteem, and experience negative social relationship issues while growing up (Klein Velderman et al., 2016). Additionally, infidelity behaviors are positively correlated with family-of-origin experiences (Weiser & Weigel, 2017; Weiser et al., 2015). In other words, children who experience infidelity in their families later in life are more likely to have experiences with cheating.

Forgiveness After Infidelity

The type of infidelity is associated with decisions to forgive after an affair (Carpenter, 2012; Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017; Schneider et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 2020). Recent research reveals interesting statistics on marital dissolution after infidelity. Reportedly, about 20.4% break up due to infidelity, while 27.3% broke up for other reasons, 21.8% maintain the relationship after disclosure, and 28.3% maintained the relationship with the other partner, not knowing about the infidelity (Selterman et al., 2020).

Emotional reactivity varies based on sex (Carpenter, 2012; Ellis & Kleinplatz, 2018; Selterman et al., 2020). Men and women do not differ in dissolution rates; however, there are always exceptions (Selterman et al., 2020). Forgiveness from each spouse is vital when considering emotional reactivity (Chi et al., 2019; McCullough & Hoyt, 2002). The sex of the involved partner has an equally important role in the decision to forgive (Lalasz & Weigel, 2011; Ziv et al., 2017). Additionally, gender can dictate the emotional reaction (jealousy) based on the type of infidelity (sexual or emotional) (Leeker & Carlozzi, 2014).

Sexual and emotional infidelity may generate different reactions. Sex plays an essential role in reactivity to cheating, especially regarding jealousy (Zandbergen & Brown, 2015). When

forced to choose, some men and women stated they would be more upset if their partner committed emotional infidelity rather than sexual (Carpenter, 2012). However, this is not the consensus across the board. Men react stronger in irrational jealousy to a partner having sexual infidelity than emotional infidelity as opposed to women (Guadagno & Sagarin, 2010).

All of this is crucial in understanding forgiveness after infidelity. Research appears to be lagging in evidence that contributes to understanding forgiveness after infidelity, despite indications of the enormous number of various benefits of doing so (Chi et al., 2019; Hall & Fincham, 2006; Shrout & Weigel, 2017).

Males

Men in heterosexual relationships generally have a strikingly more robust response to their partner's sexual infidelity versus a woman finding her partner has elicited an emotional affair (Dijkstra et al., 2013; Harris, 2002). Evidence in some studies reveals reveals that men demonstrate stronger reactivity to their partner having an extramarital sexual encounter (Guadagno & Sagarin, 2010). However, Carpenter (2011) found the opposite: a proportionate response to both genders' physical and emotional affairs.

In the face of exposed infidelity, men respond with avoidant behaviors revealing a motivation of unforgiveness to their partner (Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019). The conflict becomes naturally more complicated for a Christian man as forgiveness is an important component of the faith (Worthington et al., 2019). Sexual infidelity is associated with devasting emotional responses such as: anger, humiliation, shame, fear, sadness, guilt, and rejection (Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019). Sociosexuality is a vital consideration in reactivity as well. Unrestrictive sociosexuality is associated with more significant distress for both men and women (Ellis & Kleinplatz, 2018).

Self-worth and self-esteem are strong predictors of emotional reactivity for males and females and provided an investigation on the contingent sense of self-worth (CSW) using the Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale (CSWS) Ellis & Kleinplatz (2018). The CSWS model created by Crocker et al. (2003) focuses on sources of self-esteem in college students, including: academics, appearance, approval, competition, family support, God's love, and virtue. Ellis & Kleinplatz (2018) found that for men, self-worth related to competition is associated with higher levels of emotional reactivity and distress from sexual infidelity. God's Word discusses the wrath of having sexual relations or looking upon another man's wife, perhaps giving a glimpse into the natural reaction related to self-worth. "For jealousy drives a man into a rage: he will show no mercy when he takes revenge" (Proverbs 6:34, The Complete Jewish Bible Version).

Females

Women find emotional infidelities more distressing than sexual infidelities (Carpenter, 2012; Guadagno & Sagarin, 2010). Evolutionary psychology historically states that stereotypes indicate that women who have sexual intercourse do so because they are in love. Oppositely, men have no emotional connectivity if it is a "fling" (Carpenter, 2012). Understanding these perspectives gives an awareness of the emotional reactivity of females.

Women's reactivity is similar to men's when confronted with the betrayal of infidelity (Carpenter, 2012). Women react strongly and report significant stress and jealousy at the thought of their husband having an emotional connection to another woman (Guadagno & Sagarin, 2010). The response was the same regardless of online or conventional infidelity (Guadagno & Sagarin, 2010). Like men, women often report anger, disgust, and jealousy at

disclosure of infidelity (Guadagno & Sagarin, 2010). Interestingly, the same emotionality or

reaction was present, whether online or physically (Guadagno & Sagarin, 2010).

Predictors of Infidelity

Sex

Predictors of infidelity are identified in males, as opposed to females who committed

adultery (Allen et al., 2006; Mahambrey, 2020). Reportedly, there is a consensus that gender is a

strong predictor of extradyadic behaviors (Martins et al., 2016). Along those same lines, married

males report extradyadic behaviors more than women and, in dating relationships, men

reportedly engage in extradyadic sexual acts (Martins et al., 2016). Men are categorized as

having significantly lower sexual satisfaction, more insufficient positive communication, and

higher female invalidation (Allen et al., 2008).

Interestingly, females who have committed infidelity are not characterized as

such. Females are described as having significantly lower levels of positive female

communication, higher levels of male and female negative interaction, and high levels of male

and female invalidation (Allen et al., 2008). Mahambrey (2020) found that gender is not a

significant variable when other factors are included: duration of the marriage, relationship

quality, and sexual intimacy.

Duration of Marriage

A substantial predicting variable for infidelity is the duration of the marriage

(Mahambrey, 2020). It is important to note here that cohabitating couples have statistically

higher infidelity involvement rates (Allen et al., 2008; Mahambrey, 2020; Mark et al., 2011).

Married couples, and the impact of infidelity on marriage, specifically forgiveness for the

infidelity is the theme throughout. It is crucial here to note that longevity is a predictor of

infidelity. In other words, the longer a couple is married, the less likely they are to be involved in infidelity (DeMaris, 2009).

Mahambrey (2020) found in his study that couples are married for at least ten years before infidelity. Marital sustainment contributes to the considerable investments (children, homes, financial assets) made within the first ten years of marriage (Mahambrey, 2020). Information like this can prove to be beneficial for educating couples in pre-marital counseling, revealing a protective variable while educating the couple.

Parental Infidelity

Parental infidelity and satisfaction are mainly related to offspring infidelity (Weiser et al., 2015; Weiser & Weigel, 2017). The impact of infidelity on children is negatively powerful, traumatic, and often life changing. The negative effects are known to be long-lasting for children (Kawar et al., 2019; Weiser & Weigel, 2017). Because offspring often understand the violation of trust that occurs, trust becomes challenging when developing relationships for them throughout adulthood (Kawar et al., 2019). Additionally, offspring who see infidelity between their parents are more likely to look more favorably at cheating, providing for the pattern to continue as each generation views it in this positive light (Weiser & Weigel, 2017). Some familial cultures accept infidelity, and those behaviors are noticeable in transgenerational data (Weiser & Weigel, 2017).

Interestingly, male offspring who see their fathers engage in infidelity are more likely than daughters to engage in infidelity (Havlicek et al., 2011). However, the offspring's trust concerning adultery varies if the parents forgive and work through the indiscretion (Havlicek et al., 2011). More research in the area of forgiveness and progeny is needed to gain a better understanding of forgiveness in offspring and how it relates to trust if the parents forgive.

Children

Children can also predict infidelity due to their physical presence, which makes having an affair more challenging (Jeanfreau & Mong, 2019). Additionally, parents who actively participate in their children's lives simply do not have the time it takes to devote themselves to an extramarital affair (Jeanfreau & Mong, 2019). An assumption can be made that a high level of investment in children is a deterrent to infidelity behaviors (Jeanfreau & Mong, 2019).

Contributing Factors

Internet Infidelity

Internet infidelity (cybersex, exchanging sexual self-images, online dating, online flirting, and watching porn) has been considered relevant as face-to-face infidelity (Vossler, 2016). Internet infidelity can be both sexual and emotional (Abbasi, 2019a). Recognizing the nature of internet infidelity is necessary in today's world to understand the contributing factors. Research for this area of adultery is still somewhat in the juvenile stages (Vossler, 2016).

A prominent feature of internet interactions is a lack of self-inhibition, creating fertile ground for emotional affairs (Abbasi, 2019a). Some specific factors for internet infidelity include: acceptability, ambiguity, and accommodation (Vossler, 2016). Social media provides a productive environment for both emotional and physical infidelity (Abbasi, 2019). While evidence reveals these vulnerabilities to the marriage, there still appears to be a lack of research on motivations that promote those vulnerabilities in engaging in infidelity online (Octaviana & Abraham, 2018).

Acceptability

Behaviors typically understood as wrong and ethically or morally inappropriate in society are often acceptable online (Vossler, 2016). Individual difference can be seen concerning an

impartial bias toward online sexual behaviors (OSB). Liu & Zheng, (2019) describe this as

sociosexuality. In other words, if a partner has more restrictive views on (OSB), they are

generally more intolerant of internet infidelity (Liu & Zheng, 2019; Rodrigues et al., 2016a;

Rodrigues et al., 2016b).

Understanding sociosexuality is a vital characteristic in understanding infidelity

behaviors. Mark et al. (2011) found that those who participated in one-night stands or those who

engaged in anal sex engaged in infidelity more than those who did not engage in those behaviors.

In the same vein, the number of sexual partners before marriage makes them more likely to

commit adultery (Smith, 2011). Partners' views in how they see their partner's sexual values

directly correspond with acts of infidelity. Additionally, perceived incompatibility concerning

sexual values is correlated with infidelity for both males and females (Mark et al., 2011). A

significant contributing factor for online and offline infidelity is sociosexuality (Liu & Zheng,

2019; Rodrigues et al., 2016a; Rodrigues et al., 2016b).

Ambiguity

Everyone has beliefs, morals, expectations, values, and so on. This is also true regarding

how one perceives the marital union or relationship. Most marital unions assume their

relationship is monogamous (Thompson & O'Sullivan, 2016). Personality traits may become

important in the relationship where the question of ambiguity is concerned. Openness, for

example, is associated with being adventurous and imaginative (Mahambrey, 2020). Historically,

low levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness are seen as protective variables against

infidelity (Mahambrey, 2020).

A study revealed the attitudes and perceptions related explicitly to infidelity were

consistent with other behaviors, like deceit (Wilson et al., 2011; Thompson & O'Sullivan, 2015).

In this same study, there were three categories: ambiguous behaviors (going places with someone other than a partner), deceptive behaviors (lying, thinking of someone else), and explicit behaviors (sexual intercourse) that correlate with the likelihood of being unfaithful (Thompson & O'Sullivan, 2015) providing the correlation of attitudes and perceptions as related to behaviors.

Accommodation

Personal infidelity judgments usually inform or influence affective reactions to infidelity (Thompson & O'Sullivan, 2015). Additionally, infidelity judgments are thought processes associated with impressions of what is and is not infidelity or infidelity behaviors. At the same time, attitudes reflect our understanding of the extradyadic behavior in viewing it as right or wrong or the perception of what is right or wrong (Rodrigues et al., 2016a; Thompson & O'Sullivan, 2015).

Another consideration is that individuals who have more unrestricted sociosexuality reveal less commitment in the relationship (Rodrigues et al., 2016a). Infidelity is correlated with lack of dedication or less commitment and unrestricted sociosexual perceptions (Rodrigues et al., 2016a). Interestingly, research shows that, although an individual may perceive infidelity as morally wrong, the current mood or thought of being caught are variables that promote infidelity behavior (Mark et al., 2011).

Promoting Factors

Social Networks

Social networks include: Facebook, Snapchat, Tumblr, Yik Yak, and Instagram (Abbasi, 2019b). A person's social networks are powerful variables in promoting or acting as a barrier to infidelity (McDaniel et al., 2017). Glass & Staeheli (2004) discuss in detail *friends of the marriage* and their value fortifying the sanctity of the marriage. Additionally, these positive

social networks prove to be reinforcements for fidelity. Social networks can also act as a deterrent to infidelity when considering the wreckage to children, moral values, friendships, and family and friends' disappointments (Jeanfreau & Mong, 2019).

On the other hand, having friendships or social networks that support or enforce unrestrictive sexual conduct would promote infidelity or deceitful acts within the union while tearing down protective barriers (Jeanfreau & Mong, 2019; Glass & Staeheli, 2004; Liu & Zheng, 2019; McDaniel et al., 2017). Negative behaviors such as deceitfulness falls in line with addictive behaviors (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). In fact, social media outlets are shown to promote addictive behaviors for some (Andreassen et al., 2012; Elphinston & Noller, 2011). Social networks can promote opportunities for infidelity-related behaviors (McDaniel et al., 2017), particularly on social media when personal information is shared through pictures and posts. Research shows an association between Facebook usage and adverse relationship outcomes (McDaniel et al., 2017). Snapchat has had similar outcomes infidelity behaviors (Dunn & Ward, 2019).

Additionally, as discussed earlier, inhibition is significantly affected when using an online platform (Abbasi, 2019a; Abbasi & Alghamdi, 2017; Carter, 2018). It is not uncommon for individuals to be bolder in providing intimate, confidential, and personal information like their thoughts and emotions (Abbasi, 2019a; Abbasi & Alghamdi, 2017; Carter, 2018). Such behaviors naturally allow for more opportunity for infidelity-like behaviors. There are clear warnings in God's Word concerning this very thing (1 Corinthians 15:33, Provers 22:25, 1 Corinthians 6:9, Matthew 24:4, 11, 24, Galatians 6:7).

Occupational Availability

Those who have more opportunities are more likely to engage in marital unfaithfulness (Jeanfreau & Mong, 2019; Glass & Staeheli, 2004). Millennials are working exceptionally long hours, often more than in previous generations, therefore experience more opportunities for infidelity (Munsch & Yorks, 2018). Occupational availability to engage in infidelity provides more opportunities for both men and women (Munsch & Yorks, 2018). In the workplace, the social make-up of men and women may have unevenly distributed personal relationships, granting more opportunity to engage in riskier behaviors (Munsch & Yorks, 2018).

Preventive Factors

Church Attendance, Religious Services, and Spirituality

Attending religious services has a powerful implication that attendance is a protective measure against infidelity (Atkins & Kessel, 2008; Jeanfreau & Mong, 2019; Mark et al., 2011). Consistently, religious commitment reveals a barrier in the final decision to have an affair and or elicit infidelity (Jeanfreau & Mong, 2019; Adamopoulou, 2013; Mark et al., 2011). Love, which ultimately comes from God and faith in God, is an additional barrier worthy of consideration (Jeanfreau & Mong, 2019; Krishek, 2014; 1 John 4:7).

An important consideration is recognizing religious attendance and faith in God alone is not a protective factor independently. However, a deep relationship with one's religious views, relationship with God, and a participating belief in one's faith are solid protective factors against infidelity (Esselmont & Bierman, 2014; Jeanfreau & Mong, 2019). Further, church attendance or religious affiliation does not promote barriers in protecting the marriage, but the personal value of religion and belief of biblical inerrancy has the weightier barrier (Esselmont & Bierman, 2014).

Many studies reveal personal religiosity (a personal commitment to religious beliefs) as the defining variable for religion being a protectant against infidelity (Esselmont & Bierman, 2014). In other words, it is not enough to attend religious services or say recited prayers, but to have a relationship with God is the significant protectant (Esselmont & Bierman, 2014). Of particular note, prayer has shown to be an effective deterrent in lowering extradyadic thoughts and behaviors (Fincham et al., 2010). Furthermore, the Bible reveals many benefits of having a relationship with Him. "I keep my eyes on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken." (Psalm 16:8, New International Version).

Religiosity, within the marriage, acts as a barrier to marital infidelity, according to Jeanfreau & Mong (2019). Religious behaviors (church attendance, church functions, praying, bible reading) demands recognition of relational contentment, commitment, values, and morals while condemning extradyadic relationships (Jeanfreau & Mong, 2019). Ziv et al. (2017) recently revealed four factors that prompted abstaining from extramarital activities: 1) having strong moral standards, 2) concern about the effects on children, 3) fear of alienation, 4) and not wanting to cause harm to others. Morals and value systems regularly are seen in religious and faith considerations, respectively.

Recognizing the importance of faith, attendance (church, religious services, or otherwise), and their relationship with their Creator is substantial in overall well-being adding to marital satisfaction (Jeanfreau & Mong, 2019; Atkins & Kessel, 2008). Religious affiliation and relationship with God must be considered in tandem as a protective factor. Considering that same religious affiliation and relationship with God during and immediately following the indiscretion is at the root of finding what variables are in place that support the marriage. It is not enough to

say that faith and religious attendance is sufficient to support satiation as infidelity is a prominent

issue today in Christianity (Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017).

Further, understanding how Scripture might influence one's reaction, vocabulary, and

feelings in the aftermath of the infidelity could bring forth information not previously known

(unwarranted shame). Forgiveness has been cited as foundational for moving forward and

working on a marriage that has been violated by an act of infidelity (Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017;

Worthington et al., 2019). Being in a covenantal marriage often brings the assumption that

marriage is forever (Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017); however, this is not always the case. A strong

spiritual relationship with God produces faith for favorable outcomes.

Fostering Values & Beliefs supporting Monogamy

Having like-minded values that support monogamy is a preventative variable as these

values align with their partner's standards and culture (Fye & Mims, 2019). Reportedly, the

association of relationship betrayals and the influence of religion (where values are based) are

repeatedly correlated (Gibson, 2008). A couple has a foundational need to understand their

couple system in viewing their: values, beliefs, religious beliefs, and thoughts about spirituality

(Gibson, 2008). Additionally, it is not uncommon for individuals to mimic family of origin

values solidifying their value system.

Fye & Mims (2020) identify five factors that preserve monogamy in marriages. Those

factors include practicing congruence, fostering values and beliefs which support monogamy,

coping individually and as a couple, behavioral, cognitive, and relationship boundaries, building

secure attachment/emotional bonds, and sexual satisfaction within the marriage (Fye, 2019). Fye

(2019) focuses on the benefits of promoting protective factors in monogamy. The focus is on

maintaining monogamy in marriage rather than after infidelity in couples counseling when one

has had an affair (Fye & Mims, 2020).

Sex in Marriage

Sexual satisfaction is critical in protecting against infidelity. Sexual satisfaction is

described as emotional connection and sex, communication about sex, remaining sexually active,

and coping with sex in marriage (Fye, 2019). Meeting sexual needs, keeping their sex life

interesting with a realist perspective, and expressing the importance of sex were responses by

participants in her study (Fye, 2019). Interestingly, this is congruent with other work (Fye &

Mims, 2019; Ebrahimi & Ali Kimiaei, 2014). Additionally, boundaries are essential in promoting

trust and attachments in marriage (Fye & Mims 2019). The clear lines of expectation enable

healthy communication, which results in respect for the other partner.

Coping

Coping abilities as a couple are essential to prevent infidelity. One's ability to cope with

adultery will have an impact on how the information is processed. Having the appropriate

coping skills and utilizing them respectively promotes altruism, helps with practicing self-care,

balancing roles, and other outcomes (Fye & Mims, 2019). Coping as a couple brings

reassurances and solidarity to the union, providing improved outcomes (Fye & Mims, 2019).

Some religious coping mechanisms include: prayer, relinquishment of injustices to the

Creator, and Scripture (Pargament et al., 2000; Worthington et al., 2019). It is not uncommon for

the forgiveness process to be used as a strategy for surviving trauma and stress in a situation

(Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019; Booth et al., 2018; Chi et al., 2019; Harper et al., 2014;

Worthington et al., 2019). Unforgiveness provokes negative feelings (anxiety, stress, cortisol

increase, negative physical effects) revealing a stress response (Worthington, 2006; Worthington

et al., 2019). The benefits of forgiveness are powerful and work to benefit emotional, physical, as well as spiritual health (Worthington et al., 2019; Psalm 65:3; Romans 12:17).

Summary

Infidelity is traumatic for all involved, including extended family members. Scuka (2015) defines infidelity as trauma and describes the hurt partner as having experienced feelings of betrayal resulted from trusted boundaries and values being violated. There are often feelings of intense emotional turmoil and confusion with an acute feeling of: disbelief, anger, resentment, jealousy, hopelessness, and an extreme sense of loss (Scuka, 2015; Dijkstra et al., 2013). Personality traits influence how one processes such a violation and betrayal of trust impacts emotional reactivity.

Forgiveness is a vital part of the process of attempting to work through the traumatic event. Forgiveness comes with many benefits, including health, social, and myriad others (Al-Mabuk et al., 1995; Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019; Chi et al., 2019; Mróz et al., 2020). However, perhaps the most significant benefit of forgiving is relative to infidelity based on the weightiness of the covenant between a man and woman (Abrahamson et al., 2011; Apostolou & Panayiotou, 2019; Atkins & Kessel, 2008; Catholic Church, 2003).

With extensive work historically on infidelity, a close look into personality traits and the potential influence it may have on forgiveness after infidelity is essential in producing viable work for clinicians and providing profitable therapy for those affected by the trauma of infidelity, particularly where personality traits can be identified. The therapeutic work can be explicitly directed towards those characteristics for each person. Therapeutic work for couples is generally accepted as a positive intervention (Parker & Campbell, 2017; Peluso & Spina, 2008).

Currently, there is a considerable gap in research regarding gender reactivity to infidelity. Evidence reveals in some studies that men demonstrate stronger reactivity to their partner having an extramarital sexual encounter (Guadagno & Sagarin, 2010). It stands to reason then, that identifying specific reasons for the reactivity through the lens of unmet personal needs could prevent infidelity. As long as it is relative to personality traits and characteristics, there is potential for positive results in marriage sustainment.

Gender response is critical information in the treatment of infidelity for clinicians. However, Carpenter (2011) found the opposite: a proportionate response to both genders' physical and emotional affairs. How a spouse processes those emotions (jealousy, anger, disappointment, grief) can have pivotal healing consequences. Additionally, those responses give a tremendous amount of information in finding therapy treatments.

As noted, this gap in research specific to infidelity is worthy of investigation in finding the variables. It is also valuable to take a close look into contributing factors or difficult life circumstances in the lives of those impacted by infidelity. For example, how one reacts emotionally to infidelity during an already stressful time (income, job, children, pressures) may be very different than when those specific stressors are absent (emotional well-being, nearness of others) in addition to personality traits for the individuals involved. For individuals who suffer a crisis, their coping skills may be compromised in dealing with an additional trauma (Cook et al., 2005).

Research qualifies personality traits present in marriages and reveals them as predictors or precursors (Apostolou & Panayiotou, 2019; Mahambrey, 2020). As discussed earlier, accommodation and ambiguity have a role in one's perception of infidelity (Thompson & O'Sullivan, 2016). If culture conditions one's personality, it stands to reason that his or her

perception of infidelity would, or could, be conditioned. However, there has been little work in determining what factors are in place, specifically with and within the involved individuals, in considering healing from infidelity.

There is much work on forgiveness, covenantal forgiveness, and other spiritual aspects (Chi et al., 2019; Fehr et al., 2010; Fincham, 2000). Fincham (2000) makes an astute claim; he recognizes that while humans are social and hurt one another, the focus becomes maintaining relatedness. He furthers his stance in declaring that forgiveness is unconditional and can contain conditions that influence forgiveness and eventual healing (Fincham, 2000; Fincham et al., 2010). Some of those conditions include apology, confession, empathy, and explanation (Fincham, 2000).

Further, forgiveness, as it relates to personality traits, is not fully evident. For example, McCullough and Hoyt (2002) state that while people with particular characteristics are more likely to forgive than others (i.e., Agreeableness and Neuroticism), the relationship type has a significant role and reveals that the personality trait may not be evident in every relationship. More work is needed as it relates to marital union and infidelity.

Forgiveness for Christians is woven into the fabric of their identity (Colossians 3:13, Isaiah 55:7, Jeremiah 31:34, Romans 7:1, Luke 23:34, Proverbs 28:13, Psalm 32:5, James 5:16) and is salient. However, in the face of infidelity and its confusion and pain, forgiveness may not come easily. Covenantal forgiveness can be described as the connectedness position with God (Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017). In this context, the decision to forgive is intentional, directional, and reconciliatory based on that connectedness and creates a positive marital bond (Chi et al., 2019; Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017).

Still, there is limited research on how an individual's relationship with God impacts the healing and process of working through issues to sustain the marriage through the lens of personality characteristics and forgiveness. The issue of infidelity runs deep for the Christian marriage (Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017). Sauerheber and Ponton (2017) explain the root concept of the cultural understanding and acceptance of marriage can be found in John Calvin's (1509-1564) work. The Catholic Church acknowledged the marriage partnership is a natural response in men and women, as they come from God representing the supernatural love of Christ and His church (Catholic Church, 2003).

Believers in the Christian faith are believed to be called to marriage divinely representing the relationship of God with one another, their children, family, and the community (Catholic Church, 2003; Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017). When the violence of betrayal fractures the union, the very foundation of the Christian believer is shaken. The love between the individuals, which is thought to be divine, has been violated in the most non-sacred way. However, this is also an opportunity for the belief in Scriptural forgiveness as another foundational truth for the believer since it is a mandate from Christ Himself (Ephesians 4:32).

Frameworks for future treatment modalities, specifically for clinicians on the front lines of marital counseling, are fragile in that there is a necessity for more data (Dean, 2011; McCarthy & Wald, 2013). It is not uncommon for the clinician to be ill-equipped to handle the explosive, volatile, and often aggressive encounters of parties enduring the hardships of infidelity in the marriage due to a lack of understanding (Dean, 2011; De Stefano & Oala, 2008; McCarthy & Wald 2013; Parker & Campbell, 2017; Vossler, 2014). Unfortunately, this proves to make treatment less effective, drain the clinician, and provide an ethical dilemma in that the therapist is not qualified to handle such a task (Parker & Campbell, 2017).

Clinicians treating couples in therapy who are working through infidelity must recognize the position of the non-offending and offending individual to be effective (Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017). More importantly, is recognizing personality traits as it relates to forgiveness specifically in situations where there has been infidelity. Future work in understanding personality traits and forgiveness can provide the clinician with appropriate tools in helping married couples understand, work out, and eventually work through the difficult situation the infidelity created.

Chapter Three: Methods

The purpose of this study was to investigate the correlation between personality traits and forgiveness when a marriage encounters a spouse's betrayal by infidelity. The investigator utilized a quantitative methodology to address the research questions. Specifically, a moderation model research design was employed to understand the correlation between personality traits and forgiveness with the moderator in this research as forgiveness. This research examined how the Big Five personality traits as those traits of neuroticism and openness are related to forgiveness after infidelity (Apuke, 2017).

Design

The correlational research design was employed to understand the relationship between personality traits and forgiveness, specifically after infidelity (Cohen et al., n.d.). The rationale for using a correlational design is to determine differences in forgiveness between individuals based on personality traits (Knapp, 2020). In addition, the design improved the understanding of the relationship between personality traits and forgiveness as it relates to infidelity (Knapp, 2020). In doing so, a close look at the independent variables (neuroticism and openness) and the dependent variable (decisional forgiveness and emotional forgiveness) were explored. Gaining a perspective of those variables provided unique information for those who have endured infidelity in a marriage.

Research Questions

R1.   Is there a significant correlation between the personality trait of neuroticism and decisional forgiveness after partner infidelity?

R2.   Is there a significant correlation between the personality trait of neuroticism and emotional forgiveness after partner infidelity?

R3.   Is there a significant correlation between the personality trait of openness and decisional forgiveness after partner infidelity?

R4.   Is there a significant correlation between the personality trait of openness and emotional forgiveness after partner infidelity?

Hypotheses

Individuals who are more inclined to forgive have more satisfying relationships (Sauerheber & Ponton, 2017; Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990). Those who score high in neuroticism have negative relational traits like internal stress, anxiousness, self-conscious, are emotional, rumination, hostility, and bitterness (McCullough & Hoyt, 2002). The consensus is that they are generally less likely to forgive (McCullough & Hoyt, 2002).

$H1_0$: There is no significant correlation between the personality trait of neuroticism and decisional forgiveness after infidelity.

$H1_a$: There is a significant correlation between the personality trait of neuroticism and decisional forgiveness after partner infidelity.

$H2_0$: There is no significant correlation between the personality trait of neuroticism and emotional forgiveness after partner infidelity.

$H2_a$: There is a significant correlation between the personality trait of neuroticism and emotional forgiveness after partner infidelity.

$H3_0$: There is no significant correlation between the personality trait of openness and decisional forgiveness after partner infidelity.

$H3_a$: There is a significant correlation between the personality trait of openness and decisional forgiveness after partner infidelity.

H4$_0$: There is no significant correlation between the personality trait of openness and emotional forgiveness after partner infidelity.

H4$_a$: There is a significant correlation between the personality trait of openness and emotional forgiveness after partner infidelity.

Participants and Setting

The participants for this research were drawn from a Facebook event. The rationale for using a Facebook page is to utilize the potential of the maximum number of participants. The target participants were those who have experienced infidelity in some capacity. A focus was on those whose trust was violated. The goal was to collect personality data from participants who experienced infidelity, forgave, and remained in the partner relationship. The participants' personality traits relating to forgiveness were studied. Participants of this study were a) 18years of age, and b) have experienced infidelity from a partner at any time in their lifetime. Infidelity was described as sexual intercourse, infidelity as extradyadic sexual activities, and infidelity as an emotional betrayal outside of the relationship.

A Facebook page facilitated through a professional counseling agency (Creative Counseling, LLC.) was created to recruit the participants, while keeping the participant's data confidential by the links attached for those who chose to participate. The page contained a link to the study survey that participants accessed anonymously. The information for participation was provided on the page for the individuals who chose to participate. The participants' responses remained anonymous, as the survey link will direct participants to another website (SurveyMonkey) and no personally identifying information was collected. Participants did not have the ability to engage in conversation concerning the research unless it was done outside of the event page.

The participants of the study received a description of the purpose and objectives of the study, in addition to the investigator's contact information. Participants had the opportunity to contact the investigator if they have questions or concerns about the study. Willing participants who volunteered for the study had access to the survey by following the link provided on the Facebook page.

To determine the number of participants needed for the study, a power analysis was conducted using G*Power software (Faul, et al., 2020). The power analysis was calculated for Pearson correlation analysis with an estimated medium effect size (r=.30), a statistical power level of .80, and an alpha level of .05. Based on those parameters, 84 participants were needed for the study.

Instrumentation

Four instruments were used in this study: A Demographic Sheet, The Big Five Personality Test (BFI) (Goldberg, 1992), the Decisional Forgiveness Scale (DFS) (Worthington, 2006), and the Emotional Forgiveness Scale (EFS) (Worthington, 2006). The demographic and general information collected included age, gender, marital status, and occupation. The instruments were merged into a single questionnaire using the online *SurveyMonkey* platform. There was an informed consent document that provided information concerning risks of participating in the study. The participants were informed that they can discontinue participation at any time during the research.

The Big Five Personality Test

The Big Five Personality Test (BFI) has evolved and there have been several instruments created for various reasons (Lim & Chapman, 2021). Goldberg (1992) created the trustworthy 100-point marker assessment for the Big Five factor structure. The BFI is one of the most used

and accepted models for measuring participants' personalities. This scale is based on a statistical study of personality items responses that are within the dimensions of the inventory: extroversion vs. introversion, agreeableness vs. antagonism, conscientiousness vs. lack of direction, neuroticism vs. emotional stability, and openness vs. closedness to experience.

For this study Saucier's (1994) mini marker set of the BFI was used as it is a shorter 40-item instrument compared to the original 100 markers developed by Goldberg (1992). Participants responded to each item using a 9-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (extremely inaccurate) to 9 (extremely accurate). The survey was able to be completed in 3-8 minutes. The instrument measured five dimensions of personality: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. All instrument items included in the survey preserve the instrument's validity. However, only the dimensions of neuroticism and openness were analyzed. The assessment instrument has been declared to be public domain, meaning that anyone can use the work without fear of copyright issues (Srivastava, 2022).

Saucier (1994) established the validity of the 40-item version of the test using an exploratory factor analysis on samples of college students. The results of the factor analysis showed that all 40 items loaded most strongly on their expected Big Five factor, and the magnitude of the item loadings on the expected factors were more than double compared to the loadings on any other factor. In the same study, Saucier (1994) established the reliability of the 40-item version of the test using Cronbach's alpha analysis. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .76 to .86, demonstrating good reliability for the instrument.

Decisional Forgiveness Scale

The DFS was used to collect data on the participants' willingness to forgive their partners after infidelity. Decisional forgiveness is an intentional behavioral stance to hold out against

unforgiveness (Worthington et al., 2007). This instrument determined the decisional forgiveness for the participants. The scale as developed by Worthington et al. (2007) and has eight items. The DFS forgiveness assessment instrument is self-reporting. Participants responded to the items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 5 (agree strongly) The DFS has items such as *I intend to try to hurt him or her in the same way he or she hurt me* (Worthington, 2006).

A recent investigation by (Cavalcanti et al., 2018) demonstrated the validity of the DFS using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. The analyses supported a two-factor structure and all items loaded strongly (above .40) on their respective factors. Cavalcanti et al. (2019) also demonstrated the reliability of the DFS using Cronbach's alpha analyses. The DFS had a Cronbach's alpha of .80, indicating good reliability.

Emotional Forgiveness Scale

EFS also was used to collect data on the participants' willingness to forgive their partners after infidelity. Emotional forgiveness is described as replacing pessimistic and unforgiving emotions with different emotions (Worthington et al., 2007). The instrument consists of eight items, and like the DFS, participants respond to the items on the EFS using a 5-point Likert scale. The EFS has questions such as *I care about him or her* (Worthington, 2006). The survey can be completed in 3-8 minutes.

Cavalcanti et al. (2019) demonstrated the validity of the EFS in addition to the DFS using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. The analyses supported a two-factor structure and all items loaded strongly (above .40) on their respective factors. Cavalcanti et al. (2019) also demonstrated the reliability of the EFS using Cronbach's alpha analyses. The EFS had Cronbach's alphas ranging from .70 to .73, indicating acceptable reliability.

Demographic Questionnaire

A demographic questionnaire was collected from the participants to ensure consistency and diverseness of the sample. The questionnaire is necessary as it is specifically for the purpose of the study and the sensitivity of the topic. The information on the questionnaire was the participant's age, gender, marital status, and occupation.

<div align="center">

Procedure

</div>

The study began after approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The investigator sought approval to conduct the study from the IRB through email. After approval, the investigator created the Facebook page and utilize Creative Counseling Services, LLC. to invite potential participants. The Facebook page description included the purpose and importance of the study. Using the contact details from the page, participants had the ability to email or call the investigator for further clarification. The investigator explained the benefits and potential risks of participating in the study through a written description on the page. The investigator then directed the participants utilize the *SurveyMonkey* link and compile information on the completed surveys. The Survey Monkey platform is an electronic survey company used to gather data through various surveys (*SurveyMonkey*, 2021). The data will be kept secure through the SurveyMonkey platform, and the links are associated through the same platform ensuring the anonymity of data. The first page of the survey included an informed consent button, which participants were required to click "Agree" to access the questionnaire items. The collected data will be kept anonymous as no personal identifying information will be collected, and the results will only be viewed by the researcher. The study used closed-ended questions to allow for quantitative analysis of the responses. The survey included 56 items: BFI questionnaire (40), EFS (8), and DFS (8).

In accordance with a correlational research design, quantitative data measuring personality traits and forgiveness were collected so that the correlation between the variables may be determined (Flynn & Korcuska, 2018). The purpose of the study was to determine the correlation between Big Five personality traits and forgiveness after infidelity. This study is delimited to individuals who have experienced infidelity. Additionally, the study is delimited to the examination of specific personality traits (neuroticism and openness) and dimensions of forgiveness (decisional and emotional).

A limitation of the correlational design is that causal conclusions cannot be made from the results; the results of the study will not demonstrate that having certain personality traits causes people to be more likely to forgive. Rather, the study is only be able to demonstrate if personality traits and forgiveness are statistically related. Another limitation is the selection of instruments. The instruments are self-reporting, and although they are the most cost and time-efficient, they may not always have the same accuracy and validity as other instruments such as the Adult Assessment Interview (AAI) (Pace & Bufford, 2018).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 25. The data was cleaned using Excel and exported to SPSS for further analysis. Data analysis was conducted in two phases using a framework similar to Bird et al. (2008). The first phase included a demographic analysis of the participants. The investigator used percentages and frequencies to describe the participants' demographic information in this phase, including race, gender, and marital status. The second phase involved inferential analysis using Pearson correlations to determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to quantify the strength and direction of

the linear relationship between two variables (Field, 2017). A Pearson correlation computed between each independent variable (neuroticism and openness) and each dependent variable (decisional forgiveness and emotional forgiveness) that answered the research questions. Each analysis was conducted at the .05 significance level, the maximum allowable probability of a type I error.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the relationship between personality traits, based on the Big Five model, and forgiveness, specifically after an indiscretion occurs within a marriage. A quantitative methodology was applied to facilitate objective data analysis using statistical techniques. A correlational design was selected to allow for the examination of relationships between personality traits and forgiveness after partner infidelity (Apuke, 2017). Data was collected using four instruments: a demographic sheet, DFS, EFS, and BFI. Pearson correlation analysis was performed using SPSS to answer the research questions. The study was initiated after IRB approval, and all ethical considerations involving human participants were addressed.

Chapter Four: Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the correlation between personality traits and forgiveness when a marriage encounters a spouse's betrayal by infidelity. A survey was conducted to measure the Big Five personality traits of neuroticism and openness, as well as decisional and emotional forgiveness of individuals who had experienced infidelity. A Pearson correlation analysis was performed on the survey responses to determine if personality traits are related to forgiveness after infidelity. This chapter contains a description of the collected data and the results of the analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

A total of 110 survey responses were received. Twenty-one respondents were excluded from the analysis because they indicated that they had not experienced infidelity. Six additional respondents were excluded because they did not complete one or more entire sections of the survey. A final total of 83 participants were included in the analysis. Among the participants included in the analysis, less than 0.1% of their data were missing. All missing data values were replaced using mean substitution.

Table 1 presents a demographic profile of the sample. The majority of participants were women ($n = 69$, 83.1%), and the largest proportion of participants were in the 45-54 age bracket ($n = 26$, 31.3%). Most participants identified their race as White/Caucasian ($n = 65$, 78.3%). The most common type of infidelity experienced by participants was sexual/physical infidelity ($n = 63$, 75.9%).

Table 1

Sample Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Age		
18-24	3	3.6
25-34	17	20.5
35-44	17	20.5
45-54	26	31.3
55-64	10	12.0
65+	10	12.0
Gender		
Female	69	83.1
Male	11	13.3
No answer	3	3.6
Race		
Asian or Asian American	1	1.2
Black or African American	12	14.5
Hispanic or Latino	1	1.2
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1	1.2
White or Caucasian	65	78.3
Another race	3	3.6
Infidelity experienced		
Sexual/physical infidelity	63	75.9
Extradyadic sexual activities	28	33.7
Emotional infidelity	52	62.7

Results

The responses to the survey items were scored to quantitatively operationalize the variables of neuroticism, openness, decisional forgiveness, and emotional forgiveness. Participants responded to each item using a 5-point Likert scale. After reverse-scoring appropriate items, the responses to the items pertaining to each variable were summed to create a score for that variable. Descriptive statistics for the variable scores are displayed in Table 2. For neuroticism and openness, the scores had a possible range of 10 to 50. The sample average score

was 31.01 (SD = 7.28) for neuroticism and 36.52 (SD = 4.35) for openness. For decisional and

emotional forgiveness, the scores had a possible range of 8 to 40. The sample average score was

30.71 (SD = 4.92) for decisional forgiveness and 26.20 (SD = 5.13) for emotional forgiveness.

The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's α) for these measures ranged from .69 to .90 in this

sample.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Personality Traits and Forgiveness Measures

Variable	Min.	Max.	*M*	*SD*	Items	α
Neuroticism	11	47	31.01	7.28	10	.90
Openness	24	50	36.52	4.35	10	.71
Decisional forgiveness	16	40	30.71	4.92	8	.78
Emotional forgiveness	13	38	26.20	5.13	8	.69

Hypotheses

H1$_0$: There is no significant correlation between the personality trait of neuroticism and

decisional forgiveness after infidelity.

H1$_a$: There is a significant correlation between the personality trait of neuroticism and

decisional forgiveness after partner infidelity.

To test Hypothesis 1, a Pearson correlation was computed between neuroticism and

decisional forgiveness. A scatterplot showing the relationship between neuroticism and

decisional forgiveness is displayed in Figure 1. No curvilinear patterns or outliers were observed

in the scatterplot. The Pearson correlation was not significant (r = -.11, p = .327), indicating that

there was no correlation between neuroticism and decisional forgiveness. The null hypothesis

(H1$_0$) was not rejected.

Figure 1

Scatterplot Between Neuroticism and Decisional Forgiveness
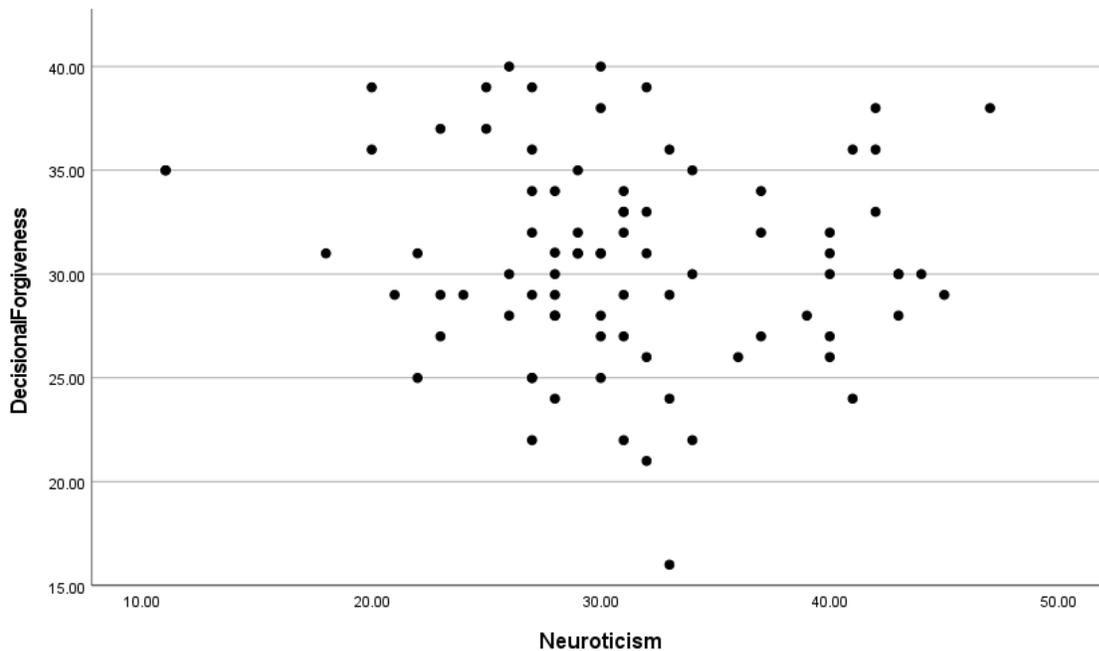
H2$_0$: There is no significant correlation between the personality trait of neuroticism and emotional forgiveness after partner infidelity.

H2$_a$: There is a significant correlation between the personality trait of neuroticism and emotional forgiveness after partner infidelity.
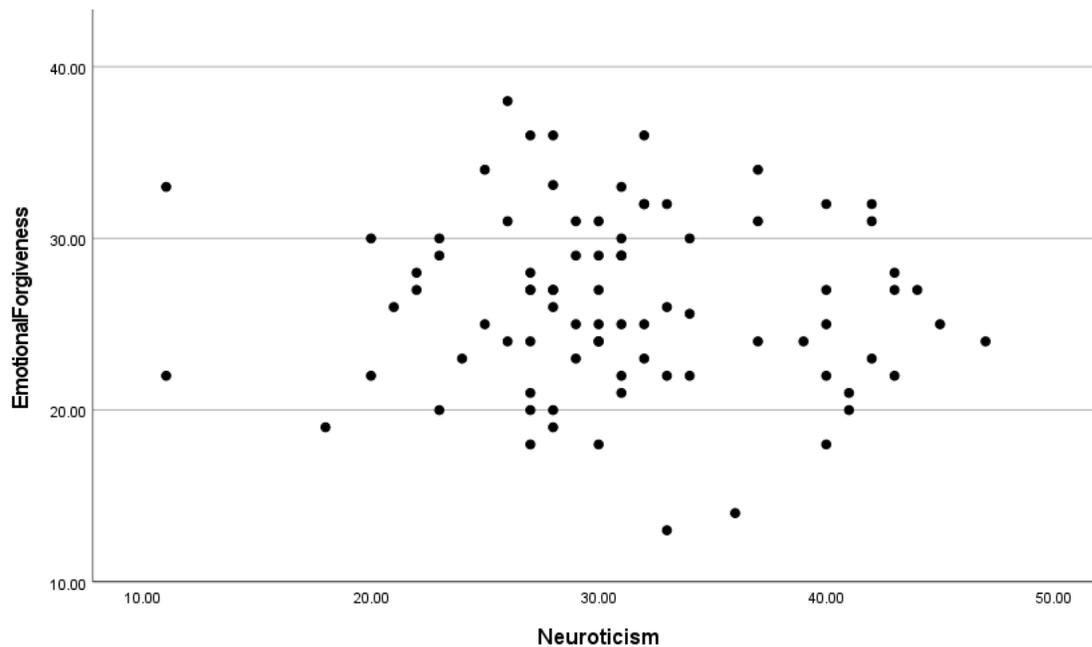
To test Hypothesis 2, a Pearson correlation was computed between neuroticism and emotional forgiveness. A scatterplot showing the relationship between neuroticism and emotional forgiveness is displayed in Figure 2. No curvilinear patterns or outliers were observed in the scatterplot. The Pearson correlation was not significant ($r = -.08$, $p = .498$), indicating that there was no correlation between neuroticism and emotional forgiveness. The null hypothesis (H2$_0$) was not rejected.

Figure 2

Scatterplot Between Neuroticism and Emotional Forgiveness

H3$_0$: There is no significant correlation between the personality trait of openness and decisional forgiveness after partner infidelity.

H3$_a$: There is a significant correlation between the personality trait of openness and decisional forgiveness after partner infidelity.

To test Hypothesis 3, a Pearson correlation was computed between openness and decisional forgiveness. A scatterplot showing the relationship between openness and decisional forgiveness is displayed in Figure 3. No curvilinear patterns or outliers were observed in the scatterplot. The Pearson correlation was not significant ($r = .11$, $p = .330$), indicating that there was no correlation between openness and decisional forgiveness. The null hypothesis (H3$_0$) was not rejected.

Figure 3

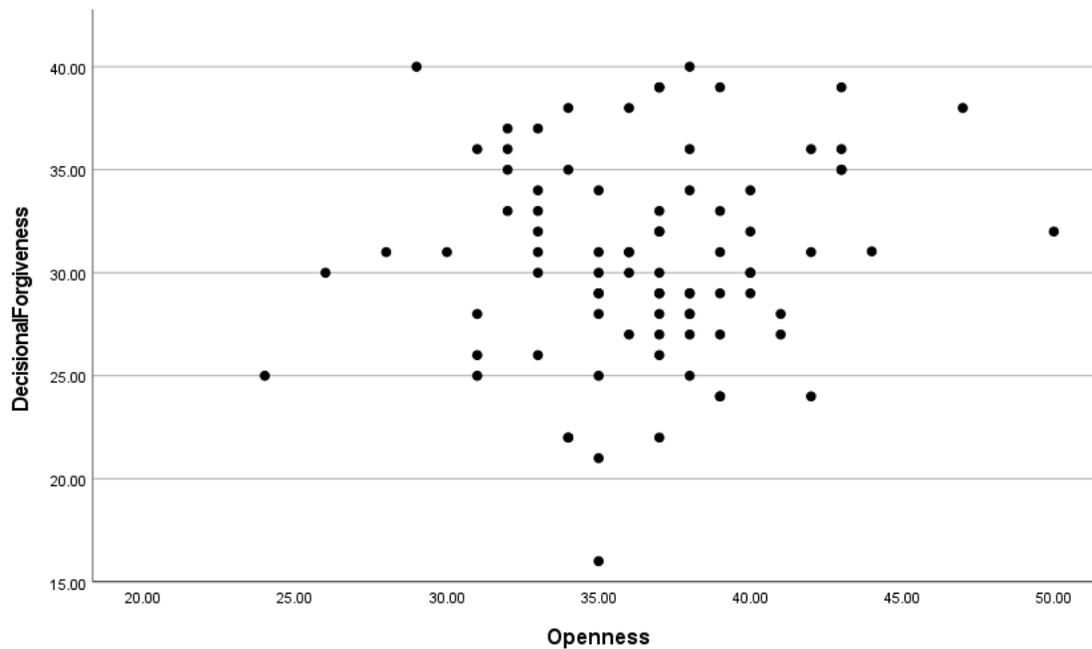*Scatterplot Between Openness and Decisional Forgiveness*

H4$_0$: There is no significant correlation between the personality trait of openness and emotional forgiveness after partner infidelity.

H4$_a$: There is a significant correlation between the personality trait of openness and emotional forgiveness after partner infidelity.

To test Hypothesis 4, a Pearson correlation was computed between openness and emotional forgiveness. A scatterplot showing the relationship between openness and emotional forgiveness is displayed in Figure 4. No curvilinear patterns or outliers were observed in the scatterplot. The Pearson correlation was not significant ($r = .09$, $p = .433$), indicating that there was no correlation between openness and emotional forgiveness. The null hypothesis (H4$_0$) was not rejected.
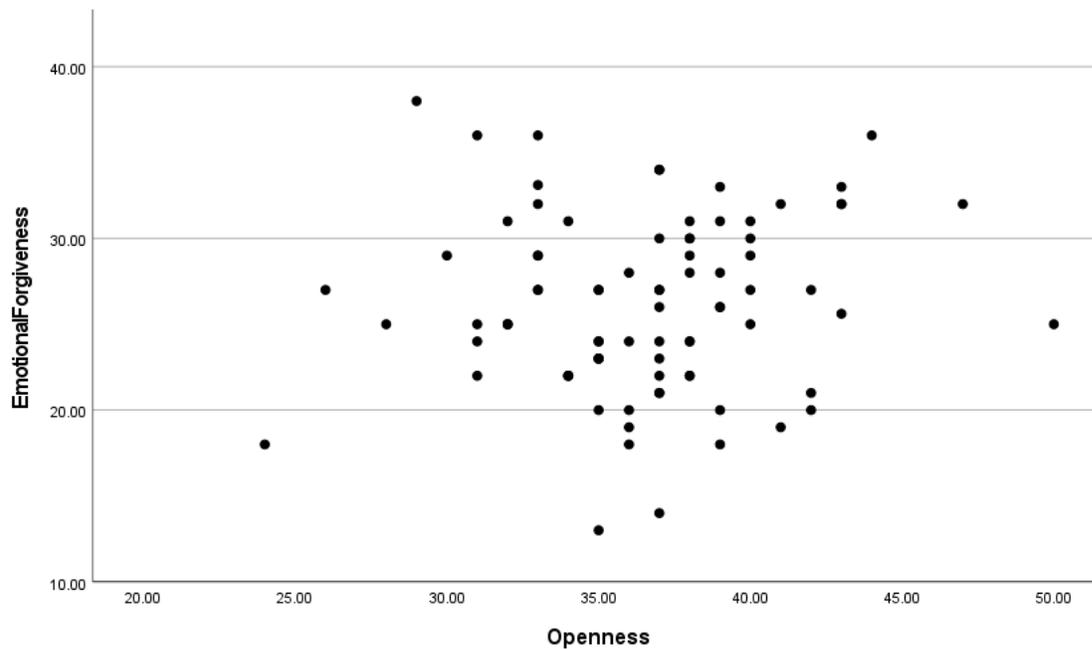
Figure 4

Scatterplot Between Openness and Emotional Forgiveness

Summary

A Pearson correlation analysis was performed on data from 83 survey respondents to determine if personality traits are related to forgiveness after infidelity. The null hypothesis for Research Question 1 was not rejected, as the Pearson correlation between neuroticism and decisional forgiveness was not significant. The null hypothesis for Research Question 2 was not rejected, as the Pearson correlation between neuroticism and emotional forgiveness was not significant. The null hypothesis for Research Question 3 was not rejected, as the Pearson correlation between openness and decisional forgiveness was not significant. Finally, the null hypothesis for Research Question 4 was not rejected, as the Pearson correlation between openness and emotional forgiveness was not significant.

Chapter Five: Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between personality traits, based on the Big Five model, and forgiveness, specifically after an indiscretion occurs within a marriage. Church attendance, faith, healthy attachments, and forgiveness are well-established variables to promote a strong union (Abbasi, 2019a; Atkins & Kessel, 2008; Ebrahimi & Ali Kimiaei, 2014). However, a clear understanding of what specific variables are in place after disclosing infidelity is necessary to gain appropriate predictions, therapeutic modalities, and greater possibilities of repairing the broken relationship. There is a large body of work devoted to forgiveness (Al-Mabuk et al., 1995; Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019; Chi et al., 2019; Fehr et al., 2010; Mróz et al., 2020) and how it correlates to personality traits. However, research is limited in how forgiveness correlates with the personality traits after infidelity (Mróz et al., 2020). This work adds to the knowledge base, while still leaving some questions to consider.

This research had results that correlate and have been well documented concerning the personality type Neuroticism in that historically those who score high in Neuroticism are negatively correlated with forgiveness (McCullough & Hoyt, 2002). The results for those scoring high for the personality type Openness revealed the opposite. The four research questions have been addressed respectively. The correlation between the personality trait Neuroticism and decisional and emotional forgiveness after infidelity are negatively correlated. The results of this study reveal there is no correlation with decisional and emotional forgiveness after infidelity for those who scored high in Neuroticism.

Forgiveness is when the offended has a positive psychological attitude toward the offender (Chi et al., 2019; Mróz et al., 2020). Those who have received sincere forgiveness by God forgives others are thought to be free from guilt by God and the one they offended

(Matthew 6:14-15; 18:21-35) (Selman et al., 2002). It is thought there are two types of forgiveness, decisional and emotional (Kaleta & Mróz, 2021; Worthington, 2006). Decisional forgiveness includes the psychological decision to forgive and let go of controlling negative outcomes (anger, resentment, frustration) toward the offender (Worthington, 2021). People who score high in Neuroticism are known to become hostile and or have reactions to negative life events (McCullough & Hoyt, 2002). These characteristics (interpersonal stress, ruminating, becoming easily offended, and hostile reactions) are important because they are left with the potential of being less forgiving than those who score low in Neuroticism (McCullough & Hoyt, 2002; Rey & Extremera, 2014).

Emotional forgiveness includes changing negative emotions (fear, anger, resentment) for positive emotions (love, sympathy, empathy) (Worthington, 2021). One who scores high on Openness generally view things through a more positive lens and are known for being open to new things (Mahambrey, 2020; McCrae & Costa, 1996). Opposite of those who score high in Neuroticism, anger and rumination are negatively correlated with those who score high in Openness (Zeng & Xia, 2019). Individuals who score high in Openness are not prone to anger and tend to ruminate less (Zeng & Xia, 2019). Additionally, high scorers in Openness are more likely to forgive (Mahambrey, 2020; McCrae & Costa, 1996).

<div align="center">Discussion</div>

Findings in this research indicate a lack of evidence correlating the personality trait Openness to forgiveness. These findings are inconsistent with current research showing a strong correlation between personality type and forgiveness (Cavalcanti et al., 2018). Understanding personality types as it correlates with forgiveness have been researched to predict results (Abrahamson et al., 2011; Cavalcanti et al., 2018; Hall & Fincham, 2006; Rey & Extremera,

2014). This research is important because of the lack of data exploring those personality traits that encourage marital sustainment after infidelity and how combinations within the marriage support healing. Barta and Kiene, (2005) revealed motivations for infidelity behaviors related to the Big Five and listed the four as sex, anger, neglect, and dissatisfaction. However, there is a lack of research on forgiveness after partner infidelity.

There are some personality traits that are positively correlated to infidelity behaviors (Abrahamson et al., 2011). There are many predictive factors concerning adultery, including personality types (Ebrahimi & Ali Kimiaei, 2014; Weiser & Weigel, 2017). Neuroticism is positively correlated with infidelity (Mahambrey, 2020; Whisman et al., 2007). Additionally, Neuroticism is negatively correlated with forgiveness (McCullough & Hoyt, 2002). Alternatively, Openness is linked to forgiveness (DeYoung et al., 2010).

These results did not reveal a positive correlation with personality type Openness and forgiveness. Historically, those who score high in personality type Openness look more optimistically at situations and are negatively correlated with anger (Mahambrey, 2020; McCrae & Costa, 1996; Zeng & Xia, 2019). Additionally, these individuals welcome new and out-of-the-ordinary situations, which lend to benefits within relationships (DeYoung et al., 2010; Feldman, 2014; Gibson et al., 2016; Mahambrey, 2020).

Based on these behaviors within the personality type of Openness, the hypothesis that forgiveness after infidelity would be predictable. Interestingly, forgiveness is positively correlated with Openness (DeYoung et al., 2010). However, this research reveals a negative correlation between personality trait Openness and both decisional and emotional forgiveness after infidelity.

Alternatively, the data shows the personality trait Neuroticism did not reveal a positive correlation with forgiveness after infidelity. The null hypothesis was rejected stating that there is a significant negative correlation between the personality trait and decisional or emotional forgiveness. Research shows these same results in that there is not a positive correlation of forgiveness and the personality trait (Hall & Fincham, 2006). Personality type Neuroticism tend to display hostile reactions, ruminate over negative life events, and are less likely to forgive (McCullough & Hoyt, 2002; Extremera, 2014). In fact, as indicated those scoring high in Neuroticism experience extreme sensitivity to negative events making them more susceptible to being offended (McCullough et al., 2001).

The correlation between the personality trait Openness and decisional and emotional forgiveness after infidelity are negatively correlated. The null hypothesis of both decisional and emotional forgiveness was not rejected. The correlation between personality trait Openness and decisional and emotional forgiveness were not strong enough to be positively correlated as discussed. The null hypothesis of both decisional and emotional forgiveness was not rejected. The Pearson correlation between openness and emotional forgiveness was not strong enough to be significant. Alternatively, the results of this study are not consistent with research in that those who scored high in Openness are not positively correlated with both decisional and emotional forgiveness after infidelity.

Implications

Research Implications

This research opens the door for much discussion concerning forgiveness after infidelity for personality types. Historically, Openness has been predictable in forgiveness (DeYoung et al., 2010; Jensen-Campbell et al., 2007; Mahambrey, 2020). There is much work on personality

traits using the Big Five and some concerning infidelity (Judge et al., 1999; Mahambrey, 2020; Srivastava, 2022). In the same vein, much research on forgiveness relates to Big Five personality traits (Jensen-Campbell et al., 2007; Mróz et al., 2020). However, little to no research with personality traits and forgiveness after infidelity. Openness historically has been considered a personality trait that leads to forgiveness (DeYoung et al., 2010; Kaleta & Mróz, 2018; 2021a; McCrae & Costa, 2003). A significant contribution has been made to this study. Even so, this research did not rend the same results. When faced with infidelity, individuals scoring high in Openness were not inclined to show forgiveness. The implication of this work is inconclusive, and it is unclear if historical characteristics of Openness are changing.

An additional research implication is the nature of the violation; in this case, it is infidelity. Infidelity is one of the most traumatic events for a family to go through (Jackman, 2015; Weiser et al., 2014). Reaction to infidelity is essential because it implies the nature of the violation could change personality predictability and, in turn, change the constructs of what have been the characteristics of Openness. In other words, research may shift the constructs of personality traits or characteristics based on the offense. Srivastava (2022) highlighted the significance of researching infidelity. Infidelity has many sobering consequences (Allen & Atkins, 2012; Barna Group, 2009; De Stefano & Oala, 2008; Larson & Halfon, 2013; Mahambrey, 2020). Further, this research reveals gender, women specifically, may be the driving factor in forgiveness when there has been an infidelity.

Neuroticism on the other hand, had conclusive findings. The data revealed the connection between Neuroticism and forgiveness are not related, as expected. The research gives indication that for infidelity, Neuroticism is reliable for predicting forgiveness. The results solidify the characteristics of Neuroticism as it relates to forgiveness.

Practical Implications

The implications for practice in reference to this work are far-reaching. Strong consideration should be made about forgiveness where the personality trait of Openness is concerned. Therapeutically, this research is valuable because research has shown personality traits can give more insight into various behaviors providing more beneficial and appropriate therapeutic modalities (Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019; DeWall et al., 2011; DeYoung et al., 2010; Judge et al., 1999; Mahambrey, 2020). Better modalities provide positive impacts and results for all involved, particularly marital sustainment (Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019; DeWall et al., 2011; DeYoung et al., 2010; Judge et al., 1999; Mahambrey (2020).

Historically understanding infidelity-like behaviors and the various reactions have been paramount for the victims of infidelity (Christensen et al., 2010; Fish et al., 2012; McCarthy & Wald, 2013; Vossler & Moller, 2020). These concepts are vital in understanding each partner's characteristics relating to their value system and eventual forgiveness. Research of this type can provide a more effective therapeutic modality that can enhance the marital survival rate causing families to remain intact, resulting in many positive benefits (Weiser & Weigel, 2017; Weiser et al., 2015).

Limitations

While this research is an essential contribution to the study of personality traits and how they relate to forgiveness, there are some limitations. The questions on the Decisional Forgiveness Scale (DFS: Worthington et al., 2007) ask if the participant is feeling the emotion currently or at the time of disclosing infidelity. For example, question 1 on the DFS asks if the participant intends to try to hurt their partner the same way their partner hurt them. The answer

could vary dependent on the current situation of the participant. An individual will respond and feel differently dependent of the time frame of the infidelity event. An individual will feel differently at discovering (shock, disbelief, embarrassed) then they feel after they have accepted that the betrayal (anger, frustration, betrayed) happened. As stated, the outlook can vary dependent on the stage of healing leaving the DFS with validity concerns. The demographic questionnaire had potential of eliminating this limitation if those questioned where asked.

Knowing if the participant has experienced infidelity in marriage or committed partnership is an additional area of limitation. Having that information is essential for answering questions surrounding marital sustainment after infidelity. Further, the research survey did not indicate if the participant experienced more than one infidelity situation; the number of infidelities can influence reactions and emotions (Shrout & Weigel, 2017).

Another limitation of this study is the gender of the participants, as 83% (69) were women, only 13% (11) were men, and 3% others participated in the survey. Gender in this research is problematic for several reasons. First, the sample does not adequately represent the infidelity population which estimates that 23% of men and 19% of women report experiencing infidelity (Abrahamson et al., 2011; Allen et al., 2012; Lee & O'Sullivan, 2019; McNulty & Widman, 2014; Taye et al., 2020). Second, it brings into question the availability of the survey. The research survey used a Facebook event through a counseling agency. And third, it puts into question how men process the act of infidelity. Men respond with avoidant behaviors revealing a motivation of unforgiveness concerning the act of infidelity (Beltran-Morillas et al., 2019). A motivation of unforgiveness brings into question the lack of participation of men and does not indicate valid participant outcomes. There is a chance that the lack of participation in men be understood to be avoidance.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of non-significance between Openness and forgiveness were not what is historically recorded for the personality trait in literature and the findings of previous research. Those who score high on Openness forgive more readily than those who score low on Openness. Further research is needed on the relationship between Openness and forgiveness as it relates to the type of offense, such as infidelity. Such research could involve more inquiry into the traits of Openness and the salience of these traits in various situations, as some violations are more easily forgiven than others (Kaleta & Mróz, 2021b).

Another recommendation would be to use a forgiveness instrument specific to the offense rather than a general one, such as Worthington's instrument. It is essential to be clear, as the results indicate it makes a difference. One similar to the Instrument of Unconditional Forgiveness used by Prieto-Ursua et al. (2018) would be ideal for this type of research. The Instrument of Unconditional Forgiveness utilized the concept of believing in the unconditional nature of forgiveness related to offense-specific forgiveness. This instrument shows potential in expounding the unexpected data results in this study concerning the personality trait Openness.

Summary

There is extensive data on personality traits and how personality traits correlate to forgiveness (Mróz et al., 2020). Additionally, research has consistently demonstrated the validity of personality traits and predicting infidelity behaviors (Apostolou & Panayiotou, 2019; Gibson et al., 2016; Isma & Turnip, 2019). There is, however, a lack of data for the forgiveness of infidelity based on personality traits. Data revealed, as expected, that those scoring high on

Neuroticism were less likely to provide emotional and decisional forgiveness to their partner. On the other hand, the findings revealed that participants scoring high on Openness provided surprising responses. They were also less likely to provide their partner emotional and decisional forgiveness. This result is not typical for individuals who score high on Openness, warranting more research on the relationship between Openness and forgiveness.

The contributions of this research have been significant. Particularly with the personality traits of Openness and forgiveness in that those personality traits were not consistent across the board concerning specific offenses. Data revealed that personality traits of Openness were not consistent with current research in the event of infidelity. Considerations for future work will help identify the shift in the personality trait of Openness and possible reasons for the change.

References

Aagaard, J. (2017). Introducing postphenomenological research: a brief and selective sketch of phenomenological research findings. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *30*(6), 519–533. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2016.1263884

Abbasi, D. S. (2019a). Social media addiction in romantic relationships: does user's age influence vulnerability to social media infidelity? *Personality and Individual Differences*, *139*, 277–280. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.10.038

Abbasi, I. (2019b). Social media addiction in romantic relationships: Does user's age influence vulnerability to social media infidelity? *Personality and Individual Differences*, *139*, 277–280. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.10.038

Abbasi, I., & Alghamdi, N. G. (2017). When flirting turns into infidelity: The Facebook dilemma. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, *45*(1), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/01926187.2016.1277804

Abrahamson, I., Hussain, R., Khan, A., & Schofield, M. J. (2011). What helps couples rebuild their relationship after infidelity? *Journal of Family Issues*, *33*(11), 1494–1519. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x11424257

Adamopoulou, E. (2013). New facts on infidelity. *Economics Letters*, *121*(3), 458–462. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econlet.2013.09.025

Al-Krenawi, A., & Graham, J. R. (2006). A comparison of family functioning, life and marital satisfaction, and mental health of women in polygamous and monogamous marriages.

International Journal of Social Psychiatry, *52*(1), 5–17.

https://doi.org/10.1177/00207640060061245

Al-Mabuk, R. H., Enright, R. D., & Cardis, P. A. (1995). Forgiveness education with parentally

love-deprived late adolescents. *Journal of Moral Education*, *24*(4), 427–444.

https://doi.org/10.1080/0305724950240405

Allen, E. S., & Atkins, D. C. (2012). The association of divorce and extramarital sex in a

representative U.S. sample. *Journal of Family Issues*, *33*(11), 1477–1493.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X12439692

Allen, E. S., Atkins, D. C., Baucom, D. H., Snyder, D. K., Gordon, K., & Glass, S. P. (2006).

Intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual factors in engaging in and responding to

extramarital involvement. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, *12*(2), 101–130.

https://doi.org/10.1093/clipsy.bpi014

Allen, E. S., Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., Loew, B., & Markman, H. J. (2012). The effects of

marriage education for army couples with a history of infidelity. *Journal of Family

Psychology*, *26*(1), 26–35. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026742

Allen, E. S., Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., Markman, H. J., Williams, T., Melton, J., &

Clements, M. L. (2008). Premarital precursors of marital infidelity. *Family Process*,

47(2), 243–259. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2008.00251.x

Andreassen, C., Torsheim, T., Brunborg, G., & Pallesen, S. (2012). Development of a facebook

addiction scale. *Psychological Reports*, *110*(2), 501–517.

https://doi.org/10.2466/02.09.18.pr0.110.2.501-517

Apostolou, M., & Panayiotou, R. (2019). The reasons that prevent people from cheating on their

    partners: An evolutionary account of the propensity not to cheat. *Personality and*

    Individual Differences, *146*, 34–40. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2019.03.041

Apuke, O. (2017). Quantitative research methods: A synopsis approach. *Kuwait Chapter of*

    Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review, *6*(11), 40–47.

    https://doi.org/10.12816/0040336

Atkins, D. C., & Kessel, D. E. (2008). Religiousness and infidelity: attendance, but not faith and

    prayer, predict marital fidelity. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *70*(2), 407–418.

    https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2008.00490.x

Balliet, D. (2010). Conscientiousness and forgivingness: A meta-analysis. *Personality and*

    Individual Differences, *48*(3), 259–263. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2009.10.021

Barna Group. (2009). New Marriage and Divorce Statistics Released. The Barna Group.

    https://www.barna.com/research/new-marriage-and-divorce-statistics-released/

Barnett, M. D., Melugin, P. R., & Cruze, R. M. (2016). Was it (or will it be) good for you?

    expectations and experiences of first coitus among emerging adults. *Personality and*

    Individual Differences, *97*, 25–29. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2016.03.008

Barta, W. D., & Kiene, S. M. (2005). Motivations for infidelity in heterosexual dating couples:

    The roles of gender, personality differences, and sociosexual orientation. *Journal of*

    Social and Personal Relationships, *22*(3), 339–360.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407505052440

Beltran-Morillas, A. M., Valor-Segura, I., & Exposito, F. (2019). Unforgiveness motivations in

    romantic relationships experiencing infidelity: Negative affect and anxious attachment to

the partner as predictors. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*(434), 1–17.

https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00434

Bendixen, M., Kennair, L. E. O., & Grontvedt, T. V. (2018). Forgiving the unforgivable:

couples' forgiveness and expected forgiveness of emotional and sexual infidelity from an

error management theory perspective. *Evolutionary Behavioral Sciences*, *12*(4), 322–335.

https://doi.org/10.1037/ebs0000110

Bird, M. H., Butler, M. H., & Fife, S. T. (2008). The process of couple healing following

infidelity: A qualitative study. *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, *6*(34), 1–25.

https://doi.org/https://www.tandfonline.com/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1300/J398v0

6n04_01

Booth, J. E., Park, T.-Y., Zhu, L., Beauregard, T., Gu, F., & Emery, C. (2018). Prosocial

response to client-instigated victimization: The roles of forgiveness and workgroup

conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *103*(5), 513–536.

https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000286

Bourreau-Dubois, C., & Doriat-Duban, M. (2016). Covering the costs of divorce: The role of the

family, the state and the market. *Population*, *71*(3), 457–477.

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://www.jstor.org/stable/44135472

Brineman, J. M., & MCAnulty, R. D. (2017). Infidelity in dating relationships. *Annual Review of

Sex Research*, *18*(1), 94–114. https://doi.org/10.1080/10532528.2007.10559848

Britannica Academic. (2021). *Sexual intercourse*. Britannica ACADEMIC. https://academic-eb-

com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/levels/collegiate/article/sexual-intercourse/67000

Campbell, K., & Wright, D. W. (2010). Marriage today: exploring the incongruence between Americans' beliefs and practices. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, *41*(3), 329–345. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41604361

Carpenter, C. J. (2012). Meta-analyses of sex differences in responses to sexual versus emotional infidelity: Men and women are more similar than different, *36*(1), 25–37. https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684311414537

Carter, Z. A. (2018). Emotional and sexual Facebook communication habits of married men with the opposite sex: The damaging marital effects of Facebook cyber infidelity. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, *37*(2), 153–161. https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/2099392650?pq-origsite=summon

Catholic Church. (2003). *Catechism of the catholic church* (2nd Revised & enlarged ed.). Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Cavalcanti, T., de Holanda Coelho, G., Rezende, A., Vione, K., & Gouveia, V. (2018). Decisional and emotional forgiveness scales: Psychometric validity and correlates with personality and vengeance. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, *14*(5), 1247–1264. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-018-9653-9

Chi, P., Tang, Y., Worthington, E. L., Chan, C. L. W., Lam, D. O., & Lun, X. (2019). Intrapersonal and interpersonal facilitators of forgiveness following spousal infidelity: A stress and coping perspective. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *75*(10), 1896–1915. https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22825

Christensen, A., Atkins, D. C., Baucom, B., & Yi, J. (2010). Marital status and satisfaction five years following a randomized clinical trial comparing traditional versus integrative

behavioral couple therapy. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *78*(2), 225–

    235. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018132

Chukhrova, N., & Johannssen, A. (2019). Fuzzy regression analysis: Systematic review and

    bibliography. *Applied Soft Computing*, *84*, 105708.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asoc.2019.105708

Cohen, P., Cohen, P., West, S. G., & Aiken, L. S. (n.d.). Applied multiple regression/correlation

    analysis for the behavioral sciences. *Psychology Press.*

    https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410606266

Cook, A., Spinazzola, J., Ford, J., Lanktree, C., Blaustein, M., Cloitre, M., DeRosa, R., Hubbard,

    R., Kagan, R., Liautaud, J., Mallah, K., Olafson, E., & van der Kolk, B. (2005). Complex

    trauma in children and adolescents. *Psychiatric Annals*, *35*(5), 390–398.

    https://doi.org/10.3928/00485713-20050501-05

Cowls, J., & Schroeder, R. (2015). Causation, correlation, and big data in social science research.

    Policy & Internet, *7*(4), 447–472. https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.100

Crocker, J., Luhtanen, R. K., Cooper, M., & Bouvrette, A. (2003). Contingencies of self-worth in

    college students: Theory and measurement. *Journal of Personality and Social

    Psychology*, *85*(5), 894–908. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.85.5.894

De Stefano, J., & Oala, M. (2008). Extramarital affairs: Basic considerations and essential tasks

    in clinical work. *The Family Journal*, *16*(1), 13–19.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480707309128

Dean, C. J. (2011). Psychoeducation: a first step to understanding infidelity-related systemic

    trauma and grieving. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and

    Families*, *19*(1), 15–21. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1066480710387487

DeMaris, A. (2009). Distal and proximal influences on the risk of extramarital sex: A

    prospective study of longer duration marriages. *Journal of Sex Research*, *46*(6), 597–607.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/00224490902915993

DeMaris, A. (2013). Burning the candle at both ends: Extramarital sex as a precursor of marital

    disruption. *Journal of Family Issues*, *3*(11), 1474–1499.

    https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0192513X12470833

DeWall, C. N., Lambert, N. M., Slotter, E. B., Pond, Jr., R. S., Deckman, T., Kinkel, E. J.,

    Luchies, L. B., & Fincham, F. D. (2011). So far away from one's partner, yet so close to

    romantic alternatives: avoidant attachment, interest in alternatives, and infidelity. *Journal*

    of Personality and Social Psychology, *101*(6), 1302–1316.

    https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025497

DeYoung, C. G., Hirsh, J. B., Shane, M. S., Papademetris, X., Rajeevan, N., & Gray, J. R.

    (2010). Testing predictions from personality neuroscience: Brain structure and the Big

    Five. *Psychological Science*, *21*(6), 820–828.

    https://doi.org/www.jstor.org/stable/41062296

Digman, J. M., & Inouye, J. (1986). Further specification of the five robust factors of

    personality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *50*(1), 116–123.

    https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.50.1.116

Dijkstra, P., Barelds, D. P., & Groothof, H. A. (2013). Jealousy in response to online and offline

    infidelity: The role of sex and sexual orientation. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*,

    54(4), 328–336. https://doi.org/10.1111/sjop.12055

Douglas, J. D., Bruce, F. F., Packer, J. I., Hillyer, N., Guthrie, D., Millard, A. R., & Wiseman, D.

    J. (1996). *New Bible Dictionary* (2nd ed.). InterVarsity Press.

Dunn, M. J., & Ward, K. (2019). Infidelity-revealing snapchat messages arouse different levels of jealousy depending on sex, type of message and identity of the opposite sex rival. *Evolutionary Psychological Science*, *6*(1), 38–46. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40806-019-00210-3

Ebrahimi, E., & Ali Kimiaei, S. (2014). The study of the relationship among marital satisfaction, attachment styles, and communication patterns in divorcing couples. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, *55*(6), 1540–4811. https://doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2014.931759

Elleman, L. G., Condon, D. M., Russin, S. E., & Revelle, W. (2018). The personality of U.S. states: Stability from 1999 to 2015. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *72*, 64–72. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2016.06.022

Ellis, M., & Kleinplatz, P. J. (2018). How contingencies of self-worth influence reactions to emotional and sexual infidelity. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, *27*(1), 43–54. https://doi.org/10.3138/cjhs.2017-0023

Elphinston, R. A., & Noller, P. (2011). Time to face it! Facebook intrusion and the implications for romantic jealousy and relationship satisfaction. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, *14*(11), 631–635. https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2010.0318

Elwell, W. A. (2001). *Evangelical dictionary of theology* (2nd ed.). Baker Academic.

Esselmont, C., & Bierman, A. (2014). Marital formation and infidelity: An examination of multiple roles of religious factors. *Sociology of Religion*, *75*(3), 463–487. https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/sru036

Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Buchner, A., & Lang, A. G. (2020). *G*Power Version* (3.1.9.7 Universität Kiel, Germany) [Apparatus and software].

Fehr, R., Gelfand, M. J., & Nag, M. (2010). The road to forgiveness: A meta-analytic synthesis

    of its situational and dispositional correlates. *Psychological Bulletin*, *136*(5), 894–914.

    https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019993

Feist, J., & Feist, G. J. (2009). *Theories of personality* (7th ed.). McGraw Hill.

Feldman, R. S. (2014). *Development across the lifespan* (7th ed.). Pearson.

Field, A. (2017). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics: North American edition*. Sage.

Fincham, F. D. (2000). The kiss of the porcupines: From attributing responsibility to forgiving.

    Personal Relationships, *7*(1), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.2000.tb00001.x

Fincham, F. D., Lambert, N. M., & Beach, S. R. (2010). Faith and unfaithfulness: can praying for

    your partner reduce infidelity? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *99*(4), 649–

    659. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019628

Fish, J. N., Pavkov, T. W., Wetchler, J. L., & Bercik, J. (2012). Characteristics of those who

    participate in infidelity: The role of adult attachment and differentiation in extradyadic

    experiences. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, *40*(3), 214–229.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/01926187.2011.601192

Flynn, S. V., & Korcuska, J. S. (2018). Credible phenomenological research: a mixed-methods

    study. *Counselor Education & Supervision*, *57*(1), 34–50.

    https://doi.org/10.1002/ceas.12092

French, J. E., Altgelt, E. E., & Meltzer, A. L. (2019). The implications of sociosexuality for

    marital satisfaction and dissolution. *Psychological Science*, *30*(10), 1460–1472.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797619868997

Fye, M. A., & Mims, G. A. (2019). Preventing infidelity: A theory of protective factors. *The*

    Family Journal, *27*(1), 22–30. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1066480718809428

Fye, M. A., & Mims, G. A. (2020). A training case of the theory of protective factors of

    monogamy. *The Family Journal*, *28*(2), 131–137.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480720911886

Galton, F. (1869). *Hereditary Genius* (2nd ed.). MacMillan.

Galton, F. (1883). Inquiries into human faculty and its development. MacMillan.

    https://doi.org/10.1037/14189-000

Galton, F. (2004). Inquiries into human faculty: Psychometric experiments (1879). *American*

    Imago, *61*(3), 365–378. https://doi.org/10.1353/aim.2004.0030

Gibson, D. M. (2008). Relationship betrayal and the influence of religious beliefs: A case

    illustration of couples counseling. *The Family Journal*, *16*(4), 344–350.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480708323085

Gibson, K. A., Thompson, A. E., & O'Sullivan, L. F. (2016). Love thy neighbor: Personality

    traits, relationship quality, and attraction to others as predictors of infidelity among young

    adults. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, *25*(3), 186–198.

    https://doi.org/10.3138/cjhs.253-A2

Glad, J. (2007). Eugenics and the Jew (reprinted from the Jewish Chronicle of July 29, 1910).

    Mankind Quarterly, *48*(2), 205–208. https://doi.org/10.46469/mq.2007.48.2.6

Glass, S. P., & Staeheli, J. C. (2004). *Not "just friends"; Rebuilding Trust and Recovering Your*

    Sanity After Infidelity. Free Press.

Goldberg, L. R. (1990). An alternative "description of personality": The big-five factor structure.

    Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, *59*(6), 1216–1229.

    https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.59.6.1216

Goldberg, L. R. (1992). The development of markers for the big-five factor structure. *Psychological Assessment*, *4*(1), 26–42. https://doi.org/10.1037/1040-3590.4.1.26

Guadagno, R. E., & Sagarin, B. J. (2010). Sex differences in jealousy: An evolutionary perspective on online infidelity. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *40*(10), 2636–2655. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2010.00674.x

Guitar, A. E., Geher, G., Kruger, D. J., Garcia, J. R., Fisher, M. L., & Fitzgerald, C. J. (2017). Defining and distinguishing sexual and emotional infidelity. *Current Psychology*, *36*(3), 434–446. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-016-9432-4

Hall, J. H., & Fincham, F. D. (2006). Relationship dissolution following infidelity: The roles of attributions and forgiveness. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *25*(5), 508–522. https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2006.25.5.508

Harper, Q., Worthington, E. L., Griffin, B. J., Lavelock, C. R., Hook, J. N., Vrana, S. R., & Greer, C. L. (2014). Efficacy of a workbook to promote forgiveness: A randomized controlled trial with university students. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *70*(12), 1158–1169. https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22079

Harris, C. R. (2002). Sexual and romantic jealousy in heterosexual and homosexual adults. *Psychological Science*, *13*(1), 7–12. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9280.00402

Havlicek, J., Husarova, B., Rezacova, V., & Klapilova, K. (2011). Correlates of extra-dyadic sex in Czech heterosexual couples: does sexual behavior of parents matter? *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *40*(6), 1153–1163. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-011-9869-3

Hayes, A. F. (2018). *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis: A Regression-Based Approach* (2nd ed.). The Guilford Press.

Heintzelman, A., Murdock, N. L., Krycak, R. C., & Seay, L. (2014). Recovery from infidelity:

Differentiation of self, trauma, forgiveness, and posttraumatic growth among couples in

continuing relationships. *Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice*, *3*(1),

13–29. https://doi.org/10.1037/cfp0000016

Heller, D., Watson, D., & Ilies, R. (2004). The role of person versus situation in life satisfaction:

A critical examination. *Psychological Bulletin*, *130*(4), 574–600.

https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.130.4.574

Hutton, C. (2019). Legal sex and marriage. In *The Tyranny of Ordinary Meaning* (pp. 59–81).

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-20271-2_3

Indeed Editorial Team. (2021). *8 Top personality tests used in psychology (and by employers)*.

Indeed.com. https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/types-of-

personality-test

Isma, M. P., & Turnip, S. S. (2019). Personality traits and marital satisfaction in predicting

couples' attitudes toward infidelity. *Journal of Relationships Research*, *10*(E13), 1–5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/jrr.2019.10

Jackman, M. (2015). Understanding the cheating heart: What determines infidelity intentions?

Sexuality & Culture, *19*(1), 72–84. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-014-9248-z

Jeanfreau, M. M., & Mong, M. (2019). Barriers to marital infidelity. *Journal of Family Review*,

55(1), 23–37. https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2018.1518821

Jensen-Campbell, L. A., Knack, J. M., Waldrip, A. M., & Campbell, S. D. (2007). Do big five

personality traits associated with self-control influence the regulation of anger and

aggression? *Journal of Research in Personality*, *41*(2), 403–424.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2006.05.001

Judge, T. A., Higgins, C. A., Thoresen, C. J., & Barrick, M. R. (1999). The big five personality

   traits, general mental ability, and career success across the life span. *Personnel

   Psychology*, *52*(3), 621–652. https://search-proquest-

   com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/220148920?pq-origsite=summon

Kaleta, K., & Mróz, J. (2018). Personality Traits and Two Dimensions of Forgivingness.

   Roczniki Psychologiczne, *21*(2), 147–162. https://doi.org/10.18290/rpsych.2018.21.2-3

Kaleta, K., & Mróz, J. (2021a). The effect of apology on emotional and decisional forgiveness:

   The role of personality. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *168*, 110310.

   https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110310

Kaleta, K., & Mróz, J. (2021b). The effect of apology on emotional and decisional forgiveness:

   The role of personality. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *168*, 110310.

   https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110310

Kawar, C., Coppola, J., & Gangamma, R. (2019). A contextual perspective on associations

   between reported parental infidelity and relational ethics of the adult children. *Journal of

   Marital and Family Therapy*, *45*(2), 354–363. https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12331

Kendler, K. S., Lönn, S., Salvatore, J., Sundquist, J., & Sundquist, K. (2017). Divorce and the

   onset of alcohol use disorder: A Swedish population-based longitudinal cohort and co-

   relative study. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *174*(5), 451–458.

   https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2016.16050589

Kim, J., Leung, M., Yip, B., Su, X., & Griffiths, S. (2017). Exploring cross-generational adult

   drinking patterns and physical child maltreatment: A study of Hong Kong adults. *Public

   Health*, *144*, 143–146. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2017.01.014

Klein Velderman, M., Pannebakker, F. D., van Vliet, W., & Reijneveld, S. A. (2016). Prevention of divorce-related problems in Dutch 4- to 8-year-olds. *Research on Social Work Practice*, *28*(4), 415–427. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731516644504

Knapp, T. R. (2020). Jmasm 54: A comparison of four different estimation approaches for prognostic survival oral cancer model. *Journal of Modern Applied Statistical Methods*, *18*(2), 2–35. https://doi.org/10.22237/jmasm/1556669580

Kotov, R., Gamez, W., Schmidt, F., & Watson, D. (2010). Linking "big" personality traits to anxiety, depressive, and substance use disorders: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *136*(5), 768–821. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020327

Krishek, S. (2014). In defense of a faith-like model of love: a reply to John Lippitt's "Kierkegaard and the problem of special relationships: Ferreira, Krishek, and the 'God filter'". *International Journal of Philosophy of Religion*, *75*, 155–156. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11153-013-9405-6

Kuss, D., & Griffiths, M. (2017). Social networking sites and addiction: Ten lessons learned. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *14*(3), 311. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph14030311

Labrecque, L. T., & Whisman, M. A. (2017). Attitudes toward and prevalence of extramarital sex and descriptions of extramarital partners in the 21st century. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *31*(7), 952–957. https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000280

Lalasz, C. B., & Weigel, D. J. (2011). Understanding the relationship between gender and extradyadic relations: The mediating role of sensation seeking on intentions to engage in sexual infidelity. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *50*(7), 1079–1083. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2011.01.029

Larson, K., & Halfon, N. (2013). Parental divorce and adult longevity. *International Journal of Public Health*, *58*, 89–97. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00038-012-0373-x

Lee, B. H., & Lucia F O'Sullivan. (2019). Walk the Line: How Successful Are Efforts to Maintain Monogamy in Intimate Relationships? *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 48*(6), 1735-1748. https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1007/s10508-018-1376-3

Leeker, O., & Carlozzi, A. (2014). Effects of sex, sexual orientation, infidelity expectations, and love on distress related to emotional and sexual infidelity. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *40*(1), 68–91. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0606.2012.00331.x

Lim, W., & Chapman, E. (2021). Development and preliminary evaluation of a brief five-factor personality instrument. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, *49*(7), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.10003

Liu, Y., & Zheng, L. (2019). Influences of sociosexuality and commitment on online sexual activities: the mediating effect of perceptions of infidelity. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, *5*, 395–405. https://doi.org/10.1080/0092623X.2018.1549632

Mahambrey, M. (2020). Self-reported big five personality traits of individuals who have experienced partner infidelity. *Personal Relationships*, *27*(2), 274–302. https://doi.org/10.1111/pere.12315

Mark, K. P., Janssen, E., & Milhausen, R. R. (2011). Infidelity in heterosexual couples: Demographic, interpersonal, and personality-related predictors of extradyadic sex. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *40*(5), 971–982. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-011-9771-z

McCarthy, B., & Wald, L. M. (2013). New strategies in assessing, treating, and relapse prevention of extramarital affairs. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, *39*(6), 493–509. https://doi.org/10.1080/0092623X.2012.665820

McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (1985). Comparison of epi and psychoticism scales with measures of the five-factor model of personality. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *6*(5), 587–597. https://doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869(85)90008-x

McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (1989). Reinterpreting the Myers-Briggs type indicator from the perspective of the five-factor model of personality. *Journal of Personality*, *57*(1), 17–40. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.1989.tb00759.x

McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (1996). *Toward a New Generation of Personality Theories: Theoretical Context for The Five-Factor Model* (J.S. Wiggins, The Five-Factor model of personality: Theoretical perspectives ed.). Guilford Press.

McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (1999). *A Five-Factor Theory of Personality, Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research (pp. 139-153)* (L.A. Pervin & O.P. John ed.). Guiliford Press.

McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (2003). *Personality in Adulthood: A Five-Factor Theory Perspective* (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.

McCrae, R. R., & Terracciano, A. (2005). Universal features of personality traits from the observer's perspective: Data from 50 cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *88*(3), 547–561. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.88.3.547

McCullough, M. E., Bellah, C., Kilpatrick, S., & Johnson, J. L. (2001). Vengefulness: Relationships with forgiveness, rumination, well-being, and the big five. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *27*(5), 601–610. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167201275008

McCullough, M. E., & Hoyt, W. T. (2002). Transgression-related motivational dispositions: Personality substrates of forgiveness and their links to the big five. *Personality and*

Social Psychology Bulletin, *28*(11), 1556–1573.

https://doi.org/10.1177/014616702237583

McDaniel, B. T., Drouin, M., & Cravens, J. D. (2017). Do you have anything to hide? Infidelity-related behaviors on social media sites and marital satisfaction. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *66*, 88–95. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.09.031

McHugh, M. L. (2013). The chi-square test of independence. *Biochemia Medica*, 143–149. https://doi.org/10.11613/bm.2013.018

McNulty, J. K., & Widman, L. (2014). Sexual narcissism and infidelity. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *43*(7), 1315–1325. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-014-0282-6

Michell, J. (2021). "The art of imposing measurement upon the mind": Sir Francis Galton and the genesis of the psychometric paradigm. *Theory & Psychology*, 095935432110176. https://doi.org/10.1177/09593543211017671

Moller, N. P., & Vossler, A. (2015). Defining infidelity in research and couple counseling: A qualitative study. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, *41*(5), 487–497. https://doi.org/10.1080/0092623X.2014.931314

Mróz, J., Kaleta, K., & Sołtys, E. (2020). Decision to forgive scale and emotional forgiveness scale in a polish sample. *Current Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-00838-6

Munsch, C. L. (2012). The science of two-timing: The state of infidelity research. *Sociology Compass*, *6*(1), 46–59. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2011.00434.x

Munsch, C. L., & Yorks, J. (2018). When opportunity knocks, who answers? infidelity, gender, race, and occupational sex composition. *Personal Relationships*, *25*(4), 581–595. https://doi.org/10.1111/pere.12261

Negash, S., Cui, M., Fincham, F. D., & Pasley, K. (2013). Extradyadic involvement and relationship dissolution in heterosexual women university students. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *43*(3), 531–539. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-013-0213-y

Norona, J. C., Olmstead, S. B., & Welsh, D. P. (2018). Betrayals in emerging adulthood: A developmental perspective of infidelity. *The Journal of Sex Research*, *55*(1), 84–98. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2017.1342757

Octaviana, B. N., & Abraham, J. (2018). Tolerance for emotional internet infidelity and it correlate with relationship flourishing. *International Journal of Electrical and Computer Engineering*, *8*(5), 3158–3168. https://doi.org/10.11591/ijece.v8i5.pp.3158-3168

Pace, A. L., & Bufford, R. K. (2018). Assessing adult attachment: Relation and validity of two dynamic-maturational model approaches. *Interpersona: An International Journal on Personal Relationships*, *12*(2), 232–253. https://doi.org/10.5964/ijpr.v12i2.318

Pargament, K. I., Koenig, H. G., & Perez, L. M. (2000). The many methods of religious coping: Development and initial validation of the cope. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *56*(4), 519–543. https://doi.org/10.1002/(sici)1097-4679(200004)56:43.0.co;2-1

Parker, M. L., & Campbell, K. (2017). Infidelity and attachment: The moderating role of race/ethnicity. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, *39*(3), 172–183. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-017-9415-0

Patch, E., & Figueredo, A. (2017). Childhood stress, life history, psychopathy, and sociosexuality. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *115*, 108–113. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2016.04.023

Peluso, P. R., & Spina, P. (2008). Understanding infidelity: Pitfalls and lessons for couples

counselors. *The Family Journal*, *16*(4), 324–327.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480708323282

Platt, R., Nalbone, D. P., Casanova, G. M., & Wetchler, J. L. (2008). Parental conflict and

infidelity as predictors of adult children's attachment style and infidelity. *The American

Journal of Family Therapy*, *36*(2), 149–161. https://doi.org/10.1080/01926180701236258

Prieto-Ursúa, M., Rafael Jódar, Elena Gismero-Gonzalez, Maria José Carrasco, Maria Pilar

Martínez & Virginia Cagigal (2018) Conditional or Unconditional Forgiveness? An

Instrument to Measure the Conditionality of Forgiveness, *The International Journal for

the Psychology of Religion, 28*(3), 206-222, DOI: 10.1080/10508619.2018.1485829

Rey, L., & Extremera, N. (2014). Positive psychological characteristics and interpersonal

forgiveness: Identifying the unique contribution of emotional intelligence abilities, big

five traits, gratitude and optimism. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *68*, 199–204.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2014.04.030

Roberts, B. W., Chernyshenko, O. S., Stark, S., & Goldberg, L. R. (2005). The structure of

conscientiousness: An empirical investigation based on seven major personality

questionnaires. *Personnel Psychology*. https://www-proquest-

com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/220142063?pq-origsite=summon

Rodrigues, D., Lopes, D., & Pereira, M. (2016a). Sociosexuality, commitment, sexual infidelity,

and perceptions of infidelity: Data from the second love web site. *The Journal of Sex

Research*, *54*(2), 241–253. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2016.1145182

Rodrigues, D., Lopes, D., & Smith, C. (2016b). Caught in a "bad romance"? Reconsidering the

    negative association between sociosexuality and relationship functioning. *The Journal of*

    Sex Research, *54*(9), 1118–1127. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2016.1252308

Rosenfeld, M. J. (2014). Couple longevity in the era of same-sex marriage in the United States.

    Journal of Marriage and Family, *76*(5), 905–918. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12141

Santrock, J. W. (2012). *Adolescence* (14th ed.). McGraw Hill.

Saucier, G. (1994). Mini-markers: A brief version of goldberg's unipolar big-five markers.

    Journal of Personality Assessment, *63*(3), 506–516.

    https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa6303_8

Sauerheber, J. D., & Ponton, R. F. (2017). Healing from infidelity: The role of covenantal

    forgiveness. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, *36*(1), 51–62. https://search-

    proquestcom.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1925376626/fulltext/8A06A2456ED7440BPQ

    /1?accountid=12085

Schmitt, D. P. (2004). The big five related to risky sexual behaviour across 10 world regions:

    Differential personality associations of sexual promiscuity and relationship infidelity.

    European Journal of Personality, *18*(4), 301–319. https://doi.org/10.1002/per.520

Schneider, J. P., Weiss, R., & Samenow, C. (2012). Is it really cheating? Understanding the

    emotional reactions and clinical treatment of spouses and partners affected by cybersex

    infidelity. *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity*, *19*(1-2), 123–139.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/10720162.2012.658344

Scuka, R. F. (2015). A clinician's guide to helping couples heal from the trauma of infidelity.

    Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy, *14*(2), 141–168.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/15332691.2014.953653

Seligman, L., & Reichenberg, L. W. (2014). *Theories of counseling and psychotherapy: systems, strategies, and skills* (4th ed.). Pearson.

Selman, M. J., Manser, M. H., & Travis, S. (2002). *MacMillan dictionary of the Bible* (1st ed.). Credo Reference. https://search-credoreferencecom.ezproxy.liberty.edu/content/title/macdbib?tab=entry_view&heading=forgiveness&sequence=0

Selterman, D., Garcia, J. R., & Tsapelas, I. (2020). What do people do, say, and feel when they have affairs? Associations between extradyadic infidelity motives with behavioral, emotional, and sexual outcomes. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/0092623x.2020.1856987

Shrout, M., & Weigel, D. J. (2017). "Should I stay or should I go?" Understanding the noninvolved partner's decision-making process following infidelity. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *36*(2), 400–420. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407517733335

Smith, T. (2011). Understanding infidelity: An interview with Gerald Weeks. *The Family Journal*, *19*(3), 333–339. https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480711405445

Soto, C. J., & Tackett, J. L. (2015). Personality traits in childhood and adolescence. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *24*(5), 358–362. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721415589345

Srivastava, S. (2022). *Measuring the Big Five Personality Factors*. Personality Dynamics Lab lab.uoregon.edu/bigfive.html. https://pages.uoregon.edu/sanjay/bigfive.html#where

SurveyMonkey. (2021). SurveyMonkey. https://www.surveymonkey.com/

Sweeney, M. M., & Horwitz, A. V. (2001). Infidelity, initiation, and the emotional climate of divorce: Are there implications for mental health? *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *42*(3), 295. https://doi.org/10.2307/3090216

Taye, C. E., S. Abebe, M., & G. Tsige, E. (2020). An assessment of the magnitude of divorce

    and associated factors in selected woredas of illubabor and buno bedelle zones, oromia,

    ethiopia. *PanAfrican Journal of Governance and Development (PJGD)*, *1*(1), 4–20.

    https://doi.org/10.46404/panjogov.v1i1.1371

The Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine, Ford-Martin, P., & Frey, R. J. (2011). Myers-Briggs type

    indicator. In (4th ed.). Gale: Cengage. https://go-gale-

    com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/ps/retrieve.do?resultListType=RELATED_DOCUMENT&user

    GroupName=vic_liberty&inPS=true&contentSegment=9781414486918&prodId=GVRL

    &isETOC=true&docId=GALE|CX1919601162

Thompson, A. E., Capesius, D., Kulibert, D., & Doyle, R. A. (2020). Understanding infidelity

    forgiveness: An application of implicit theories of relationships. *Journal of Relationships

    Research*, *11*. https://doi.org/10.1017/jrr.2019.21

Thompson, A. E., & O'Sullivan, L. F. (2016). I can but you can't: Inconsistencies in judgements

    of and experiences with infidelity. *Journal of Relationships Research*, *7*(E3), 1–13.

    https://doi.org/10.1017/jrr.2016.1

Thompson, A. E., & O'Sullivan, L. F. (2015). Drawing the line: The development of a

    comprehensive assessment of infidelity judgments. *The Journal of Sex Research*, *53*(8),

    910–926. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2015.1062840

Toplu-Demirtaş, E., & Fincham, F. D. (2017). Dating infidelity in turkish couples: The role of

    attitudes and intentions. *The Journal of Sex Research*, *55*(2), 252–262.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2017.1365110

Tov, W., Nai, Z., & Lee, H. (2014). Extraversion and agreeableness: Divergent routes to daily satisfaction with social relationships. *Journal of Personality*, *84*(1), 121–134. https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12146

Tupes, E. (1957). Relationships between behavior trait ratings by peers and later officer performance of USAF Officer Candidate School graduate. *USAF PTRC Technical Note*, *Note No. 57-125*(AD-134 257).

Tupes, E. (1959). Personality traits related to effectiveness of junior and senior Air Force officers. *United States Air Force*, *USAF WADC Tech.*(Note No. 59-198).

Tupes, E. C., & Christal, R. E. (1992). Recurrent personality factors based on trait ratings. *Journal of Personality*, *60*(2), 225–251. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.1992.tb00973.x

Vossler, A. (2016). Internet infidelity 10 years on. *The Family Journal*, *24*(4), 359–366. https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480716663191

Vossler, A., & Moller, N. P. (2014). "The relationship past can't be the future": Couple counsellors' experiences of working with infidelity. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, *29*(4), 424–435. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681994.2014.924619

Vossler, A., & Moller, N. P. (2020). Internet affairs: partners' perceptions and experiences of internet infidelity. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, *46*(1), 67–77. https://doi.org/10.1080/0092623X.2019.1654577

Wadams, M., & Park, T. (2018). Qualitative research in correctional settings: researcher bias, western ideological influences, and social justices. *Journal of Forensic Nursing*, *14*(2), 72–79. https://doi.org/10.1097/JFN.0000000000000199

Weiser, D. A., Lalasz, C. B., Weigel, D. J., & Evans, W. P. (2014). A prototype analysis of

infidelity. *Personal Relationships*, *21*(4), 655–675. https://doi.org/10.1111/pere.12056

Weiser, D. A., & Weigel, D. J. (2017). Exploring intergenerational patterns of infidelity.

Personal Relationships, *24*, 933–952. https://doi.org/10.1111/pere.12222

Weiser, D. A., Weigel, D. J., Lalasz, C. B., & Evans, W. P. (2015). Family background and

propensity to engage in infidelity. *Journal of Family Issues*, *38*(15), 2083–2101.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X15581660

Whisman, M. A., Gordon, K., & Chatav, Y. (2007). Predicting sexual infidelity in a population-

based sample of married individuals. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *21*(2), 320–324.

https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.21.2.320

Wilson, K., Mattingly, B. A., Clark, E. M., & Bequette, A. W. (2011). The gray area: exploring

attitudes toward infidelity and the development of the perceptions of dating infidelity

scale. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, *151*(1), 63–86. https://doi.org/https://web-a-

ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=67d6a6db-

d404-470f-b04e-58c32d6c72ab%40sessionmgr4008

Wimalasena, N. (2016). An analytical study of definitions of the term "marriage". *International

Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, *6*(1), 166–174.

http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_6_No_1_January_2016/21.pdf

Worthington, E. (Ed.). (2006). *Handbook of forgiveness* (1st ed.). Routledge.

https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203955673

Worthington, E. (2021). *Research*. Everett Worthington Commonwealth Professor Emeritus

Virginia Commonwealth University. http://www.evworthington-

forgiveness.com/research

Worthington, E. L., & DiBlasio, F. (1990). Promoting mutual forgiveness within the fractured relationship. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, *27*(2), 219–223. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-3204.27.2.219

Worthington, E. L., Witvliet, C., Pietrini, P., & Miller, A. J. (2007). Forgiveness, health, and well-being: A review of evidence for emotional versus decisional forgiveness, dispositional forgivingness, and reduced unforgiveness. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, *30*(4), 291–302. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10865-007-9105-8

Worthington, E., Rueger, S., Davis, E., & Wortham, J. (2019). "Mere" Christian forgiveness: An ecumenical Christian conceptualization of forgiveness through the lens of stress-and-coping theory. *Religions*, *10*(1), 44. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10010044

Zandbergen, D. L., & Brown, S. G. (2015). Culture and gender differences in romantic jealousy. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *72*, 122–127. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2014.08.035

Zapien, N. (2016). The beginning of an extra-marital affair: a descriptive phenomenological psychological study and clinical implications. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, *47*(2), 134–155. https://doi.org/10.1163/15691624-12341311

Zeng, Y., & Xia, L.-X. (2019). A longitudinal exploration of the relationship between interpersonal openness and anger rumination. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, *47*(11), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.8541

Ziv, I., Lubin, O.-H., & Asher, S. (2017). "I swear i will never betray you": Factors reported by spouses as helping them resist extramarital sex in relation to gender, marriage length, and religiosity. *The Journal of Sex Research*, *55*(2), 236–251. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2017.1347602

Kim H. Y. (2017). Statistical notes for clinical researchers: Chi-squared test and Fisher's exact

    test. *Restorative dentistry & endodontics*, *42*(2), 152–155.

    https://doi.org/10.5395/rde.2017.42.2.152

Goldberg, L. R. (1992). The development of markers for the Big-Five factor structure.

    Psychological Assessment, 4(1), 26–42. https://doi.org/10.1037/1040-3590.4.1.26

Worthington, E. L., Hook, J. N., Utsey, S. O., Williams, J. K., & Neil, R. L. (2007). Decisional

    and emotional forgiveness. Paper presented at the International Positive Psychology

    Summit, Washington, DC.