

Perception and Evaluation of Antisocial Behaviors

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PSYC 4601, 4602

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Abstract

This project aimed to provide a better understanding of how personality traits impact the manner in which people perceive and evaluate antisocial behaviors performed by others. There were two studies completed. The first included 297 responses recorded from students in an introductory psychology course at a university in the Southern US. The second study included 177 responses recorded from Amazon's mTurk. Participants were first asked to read vignettes of various antisocial behaviors, then respond to a series of questions about the individuals who performed these behaviors. The vignettes that were provided to the survey-takers include the topics of romantic cheating, academic cheating, theft, littering, lying, and illegal substance use. The following questions were measuring the Dark Tetrad (Palhus, 2020), HEXACO (Ashton, 2009), and Fundamental Social Motives (Neel, 2016) personality inventories in order to measure personality traits that may be relevant to perception of antisocial behaviors. Several hypotheses regarding the relationships between these variables were tested and exploratory analyses were conducted as well. A number of significant relationships were identified in both samples.

Introduction

Imagine that you are at a party with your coworkers. Two of your coworkers, Betty and Tom, are flirting. You know that Betty is married to another man, David. You also know that Tom is in a long-term relationship with his girlfriend, Janey. You see Betty lean in to kiss Tom, and then they leave the party together hand in hand. What would you think of this situation? Would this influence the way you perceive Betty and Tom? Would this change the way you interact with them from now on? In these situations, it is sometimes hard to answer honestly about what we would do, especially when responding to an authority figure. Most people would likely behave and answer differently depending on who they were talking to. For example, people have been found to interact in a different way with parents, teachers, and bosses than they would with friends (Berschied, 1994). Many people also likely hold their friends to a higher standard and are more likely to seek help from a friend than a stranger (Shapiro, 1980).

The current project aims to provide a better understanding of how personality traits impact the manner in which people perceive and evaluate antisocial behaviors performed by others.

Participants were first asked to read vignettes of various antisocial behaviors and then respond to a series of questions about the individuals who performed these behaviors. The vignettes that were provided to the survey-takers include the topics of romantic cheating, academic cheating, theft, littering, lying, and illegal substance use. The objective of this study was to expand the current knowledge and understanding of how individual differences in personality traits impact the ways in which people interpret antisocial and illegal activities. Actions that violate social

norms involving violent behavior are usually known as antisocial behavior (Tabb, 2018).

Antisocial behaviors can potentially be damaging to relationships, causing individual and social distress (Álvarez-García, 2019). It is important to know how people view antisocial behaviors because this will provide insight into why people choose to befriend or avoid individuals who perform these behaviors. Antisocial actions such as stealing and cheating are typically viewed in a negative light. However, there may be interactions between personality traits and situational factors that lead some antisocial actions to be viewed more positively than others. Research has also shown that Americans are terrified of violent or personal crimes, as if the perceived seriousness of the offense is the only determinant of fear (Warr, 1983). This shows that crime can potentially be an outcome of little to no relationships between members of a community (Warr, 1983). Other studies have been done that provide some insight into the phenomena, but do not provide the answer to the exact question the researchers are asking; therefore, this research was necessary to answer the questions asked.

The research aimed to learn more about how individual differences in personality traits relate to perceptions of individuals who perform antisocial acts as potential friends/allies or as people to be avoided.

It is important to know how people view antisocial behaviors because this will give insight into what is truly perceived as an “unacceptable” behavior among the population being studied.

Certain actions and behaviors could be viewed as more or less acceptable than some people may think. People commit crimes for all sorts of reasons. “According to rational choice theory, offenders engage in criminal acts only when they believe that the potential benefits outweighs expected costs by their criminal behaviors” (Robinson, 2001). For example, if someone

considers the benefits of cheating on an exam to outweigh the potential penalties, they could potentially decide to cheat.

People with certain personality traits will respond more positively or negatively to certain antisocial behaviors. Two online studies were conducted using different population samples to answer the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses

<u>High Level Of</u>	<u>Evaluation of Specific Antisocial Acts</u>	<u>Positive or Negative View</u>
Honesty and Humility	Lying	Negative
Honesty and Humility	Academic Cheating	Negative
Agreeability and Extraversion	Illegal Substance Use	Positive
Mate Retention	Romantic Cheating	Negative
Psychopathy	Lying	Positive
Greed Avoidance	Theft	Negative
Narcissism	Litter	Positive
Sadism	Romantic Cheating	Positive
Sadism and Machiavellianism	Illegal Substance Use	Positive
Forgiveness	Lying	Positive
Anxiety	Theft	Negative
Openness	Illegal Substance Use	Positive
Perfectionism and Diligence	Academic Cheating	Negative

Methodology

Study 1

Participants

For this research, we conducted an online survey of 365 ECU students. Participants were instructed to read the informed consent documentation and ask any questions that they have prior to deciding whether to provide consent. Participants were permitted to quit the study at any time that they choose or opt not to participate after reading the consent form without fear of penalty.

Materials

The data collected about the participants included age, sex, race, ethnicity, relationship status, relationship duration, number of children, sexual orientation, fundamental social motives inventory, self-monitoring scale, short dark tetrad scale, and the response to vignette evaluation questions. The initial questions were measuring the Fundamental Social Motives Inventory (Neel, 2016), Dark Tetrad (Palhus, 2020), and HEXACO (Ashton, 2009) personality inventories in order to measure personality traits that may be relevant to perception of antisocial behaviors. The Dark Tetrad traits include narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and sadism. The HEXACO traits include honesty/humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness; along with subscales such as greed avoidance and conscientiousness. Then, there were various vignettes followed by questions about the vignettes. To begin with, we surveyed students. The student testing was a pilot test – based on the data we modified our vignettes and questionnaires if needed. Students were informed that their performance in the experiment will not have any bearing on their grades in their courses. We also asked for the participant's age, gender, relationship status, and whether participants have

any children as this allowed us to determine how different stages of life view these behaviors. They were also informed of the availability of an alternative way of satisfying course research requirements that does not involve participation in research. All participants were recruited from the PSYC 1000 participant pool. The fact that the researcher does not teach this course should prevent confusion in roles. After we gathered sufficient data from the student surveys, survey takers were hired from Amazon's Mechanical Turk service, which provided a more demographically diverse sample.

Procedure

Participants were provided with a series of fifteen vignettes to read. The vignettes covered the topics of romantic cheating, academic cheating, theft, littering, lying, and illegal substance use. There were multiple vignettes displaying slightly different situations for some categories. Some examples of the vignettes are as follows: "Rob is taking an online general education course at his university. The professor specifies before every test and quiz that no outside resources are allowed. During the tests and quizzes, he looks up the answers on the internet. He is able to find most of the answers online." This vignette was designed to measure how people react to cheating on school assignments. "Luke and his girlfriend Mia have been in an exclusive romantic relationship for several months. A few weeks ago while goofing around with some friends, Luke created a profile for himself on an online dating app. To his surprise, he ended up matching with Izzie, who lives just a few miles away." This vignette was designed to see how people react to romantic cheating on a partner in a relationship. "Tom is a college student at East Carolina University. He shops at Walmart for groceries about once a month. He usually checks out at the self-checkout so he can leave faster. Recently, he has started to intentionally skip scanning a few small items so he could take them without paying for them." This vignette was designed to see

how people react to stealing from a grocery store. “Sarah picked up lunch from a local restaurant one sunny afternoon and took it to a local park to eat. When she was finished, she left her trash on the ground, walked away, and went on with her day.” This vignette was designed to see how people react to a person that litters. The rest of the vignettes follow in a similar fashion, each covering a different topic.

Assessment

The questions asked after the vignettes were the same after each vignette. The order of the questions was randomized, along with four validation questions embedded among the other questions. The validation questions were simple math problems such as “4+4.” These questions were put in place to ensure that the participants were thoroughly reading each question and responding appropriately. The order of the vignettes the survey taker received was also randomized. The questions measured the desirability of the behavior, the amount of interest the survey taker would have in meeting the person, the amount of interest the survey taker has in becoming friends with the person, if they would behave similarly if in the same situation, if they think the person would be likely to perform similar actions in the future, if they think the person is concerned with the consequences of their actions, if the person is honest, trustworthy, reckless or cautious, selfish or generous, kind, caring, and helpful. These questions showed how the participants measure different aspects of the characters in the vignettes and how they regarded the hypothetical characters.

Results

Participants were recruited from an Introductory Psychology course at East Carolina University. There were 297 total participants for the original hypotheses and 307 total participants included

in the additional hypotheses and exploratory analysis. The majority of participants were female. $N = 297$ (72% female) The average participant age was 19.63 with a standard deviation of 5.094 ($M(\text{age}) = 19.63$ years, $SD = 5.094$).

Two hypotheses regarding relationships between traits measured by the HEXACO and perceptions of antisocial behavior were supported. The first supported HEXACO hypothesis was that participants high in honesty had less favorable views of people who performed the antisocial behaviors of lying and academic cheating compared to people who are low in honesty at ($r(275) = -.352$, $p < .001$) ($r(275) = -.354$, $p < .001$) (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). Finally, participants high in anxiety had less favorable views of people who performed theft compared to people who are low in anxiety at ($r(307) = -.194$, $p = .001$).

One hypothesis regarding personality inventory and perceptions of antisocial behavior was supported. Participants high in mate retention had less favorable views of people who performed romantic cheating compared to people who are low in mate retention at ($r(275) = -.330$, $p < .001$) (see Figure 3). (Note: There are fewer participants in this analysis because only participants who were currently in a relationship answered the Mate Retention questions).

A couple of hypotheses regarding relationships between traits measured by the Dark Tetrad and perceptions of antisocial behavior were supported. First, participants high in psychopathy had more favorable views of people who performed lying compared to people who are low in psychopathy at ($r(275) = .285$, $p < .001$) (see Figure 4). The second relationship found was that participants high in sadism and Machiavellianism had more favorable views of people who performed the antisocial behavior of illegal substance use compared to people who are low in sadism and Machiavellianism at ($r(307) = .254$, $p < .001$), ($r(307) = .148$, $p = .009$).

There were six hypotheses involving scales from HEXACO that were not supported. The initial HEXACO hypothesis that was not supported was that participants high in agreeability and extraversion found that there was no correlation between views of illegal substance use at ($r(275) = -.115, p = .057$), ($r(275) = .014, p = .813$). Next it was found that participants high in perfectionism had no correlation with people who performed academic cheating compared to people who are low in perfectionism at ($r(307) = .001, p = .990$). Another was that participants high in openness did not have more favorable views of people who performed illegal substance use compared to people who are low in openness at ($r(307) = .076, p = .185$). Also, participants high in diligence did not have less favorable views of people who performed academic cheating compared to people who are low in diligence at ($r(307) = -.145, p = .011$). Next, participants high in greed avoidance found that there was no correlation between views of theft at ($r(275) = .051, p = .401$). The final unsupported HEXACO hypothesis was that participants high in forgiveness found that there was no correlation between views of lying at ($r(307) = -.055, p = .337$).

There were two hypotheses involving scales from the Dark Tetrad that were not supported. These included that participants high in narcissism found that there was no correlation between views of litter at ($r(275) = .041, p = .496$), and participants high in sadism found that there was no correlation between views of people who perform romantic cheating at ($r(275) = .066, p = .272$).

Exploratory Analyses

After collecting the data, there were more correlations and information found. A few of the most relevant relationships are listed here:

The overall most favorably viewed behavior group was lying, followed by illegal substance use, academic cheating, littering, theft, and romantic cheating as the least favorably viewed (see Figure 5).

In the romantic cheating category, male participants viewed cheating in the male victim vignettes slightly less favorable than cheating in the female victim vignettes, while female participants viewed cheating in the female victim vignettes less favorable than cheating in the male victim vignettes. Males high in mate retention viewed romantic cheat favorability as ($r(32) = -.229, p = .207$). Females high in mate retention viewed romantic cheat favorability as ($r(95) = -.527, p = .000$). Both males and females high in mate retention viewed romantic cheating as unfavorable, but females viewed romantic cheating slightly less favorably than males (see Figure 15).

There was a correlation found between participants high in self-protection and viewing romantic cheating in same sex versus opposite sex relationships. Participants high in self-protection viewed female romantic cheating in same sex relationships negatively at ($r(85) = -.234, p = .031$). Participants high in self-protection viewed male romantic cheating in same sex relationships slightly more favorable at ($r(85) = -.135, p = .216$). Participants high in self-protection viewed female romantic cheating in opposite sex relationships less favorable at ($r(85) = -.245, p = .024$). Participants high in self-protection viewed male romantic cheating in opposite sex relationships the most favorably out of all four cheating scenarios at ($r(85) = -.067, p = .543$). Participants high in mate seeking viewed theft favorably at ($r(222) = .206, p = .002$).

Discussion

These results from study 1 help to reflect upon why people may prefer to associate themselves with certain individuals versus others having or acting out antisocial behaviors. Although there

are other factors that can be at play, such as closeness or previous encounters with an individual, these results help show how people perceive individuals they may not know or be acquainted with.

Accordant with the expectations of the hypotheses, participants high in honesty had less favorable views of people who lied and cheated academically due to their high levels of honesty. Honesty and lying are typically viewed as antonyms, therefore people high in honesty may view cheating as a form of lying. Academic cheating could also be perceived as an action that is not honest since the actor would need to hide the truth from their teacher. Due to the participants high levels of honesty in the HEXACO traits, they likely disapprove of these behaviors due to their morals and ideologies. (Levine, 2022)

Another supported hypothesis was that participants high in mate retention had less favorable views of people who cheated romantically. These participants may have been empathetic to the situation. In many relationships cheating on a partner could potentially cause a breakup, so people motivated to retain their mate would most likely prefer to avoid this scenario (Pham, 2015). This could explain why these participants viewed this scenario more negatively.

There was a relationship found between participants high in psychopathy and favorable views of people who performed the action of lying. This could be explained by the fact that people with psychopathic traits may tend to lie more often than people without psychopathic traits.

Pathological lying tends to be a key feature in psychopathology (Hare, 1989). These participants may have been a bit more understanding of lying since they may engage in lying themselves.

Also consistent with the expected results, participants high in sadism and Machiavellianism had more favorable views of people who used illegal substances. These participants may use illegal

substances themselves as the Dark Tetrad traits have been linked to illegal substance use (Chabrol, 2017). One of the vignettes included a story about a person that drove home drunk. People high in sadism may have found this vignette more favorable since they may enjoy inflicting pain on others; driving drunk could potentially hurt other people since every day about 28 people in the United States die from drunk driving (“Drunk Driving,” n.d.). People high in Machiavellianism may have found these vignettes more favorable since they sometimes lack morality, which could explain why they would not care as much about potential harm they could cause to others (Seabright, 2002).

Next, a correlation was found between participants high in anxiety and a less favorable view of theft, potentially because this behavior could cause anxiety. Research has shown that stress and anxiety have been linked together, which could have caused these participants to be weary of these vignettes (McEwen, 2011). Both situations regarding theft could cause stress in the sense that the participants could potentially be harmed or get into trouble if associated with theft.

Another correlation was found between participants high in openness and more favorable views of people who used illegal substances. An explanation for this could be because these people may be more open to new experiences and may have more of a mindset that people should be allowed to do what they want. Research has shown that higher levels of openness are associated with cannabis use (Rash, 2018). If the participants have used illegal substances in the past, they may have been more favorable to the usage of the actor in the vignettes.

It was also found that participants high in agreeability and extraversion did not have a favorable view of people that used illegal substances. There is not a certain explanation as to why there was no correlation found here; other than the fact that perhaps these people are more inclined to

follow the law, want to socialize without being under the influence of illegal substances, or want to keep everyone safe and healthy.

There was no relationship found between participants high in perfectionism and diligence and less favorable views of people that cheated academically, most likely because they are highly motivated to do well in school. These people may be more likely to push themselves to do their best, so they may not be concerned with how other people do. People high in perfectionism may prefer to abstain from cheating academically since they prefer to master the subject themselves, but this does not necessarily mean that they would have a negative view of people that resort to cheating (Baran, 2018).

Next, participants high in greed avoidance did not have a less favorable view of people who performed theft. These results are possibly due to participants not associating people that commit theft with being greedy. They could have potentially sympathized with the person in the vignette and been understanding of their situation or may have just not cared at all.

Participants high in narcissism were found to not have a favorable view of people who littered, possibly due to the fact that they may not have associated littering with themselves. Perhaps if they had imagined themselves littering, they may have been more sympathetic to the situation, since narcissists tend to have an inflated sense of self (Jordan, 2014). They could have also viewed the actor in the vignette lower than themselves, explaining their more negative view.

There was also not a favorable relationship between participants high in sadism and people who cheated romantically. The reason for this is unclear, since people high in sadism tend to enjoy inflicting pain on others (Buckels, 2012). It could perhaps be because people high in sadism may

not want to inflict pain on those closest to them, or they may do so in a more secretly manipulative way than outright cheating.

Last but certainly not least, the results showed that participants high in forgiveness did not have a favorable view of people who lied. Even though these participants may forgive the people that lied, it does not necessarily mean that they will approve of their actions or want to befriend them. In fact, these participants could prefer to keep these types of people more distant due to the fact that they know they will be likely to forgive the actor of the vignette if they were close to them. They could want to prevent themselves and their forgiveness from being manipulated and taken advantage of.

Overall, lying was the most favorably viewed action. The second most favorable was illegal substance use, possibly due to the continuously growing acceptance and legalization of using substances such as marijuana and underage drinking. Many people will also not care if their friend or associate uses alcohol or marijuana, as it does not affect them directly. The third most favorable was academic cheating. Since many classes went online, academic cheating became very common. Many students felt as if they were not acquiring as much knowledge as they would have if they were in person, so they may have had to resort to cheating if they did not comprehend the material. With the advancement of technology today, cheating is more prevalent than ever. The fourth most favorable was littering, since littering is unfortunately quite common. People may not consider the impact littering has on the environment, or they may not think of it as a big deal since it does not directly affect them. The broken windows theory, which states that if crime is visible in an area, this promotes even more crime, could also impact littering (Wilson, 1982). If an area is filled with trash and litter, this could encourage people to litter as it is apparent that other people litter in that particular area, so it does not matter as much. The fifth

most favorable act was theft. Participants may view theft negatively since it tends to be a more serious crime with harsher sentences. They could feel as if the actor may end up stealing from them and may want to keep the actor at a distance to protect themselves and their own belongings. They could also want to distance themselves to not fall into a pattern of being at risk of getting in trouble, blamed, or caught alongside the person if said thief were to get caught. The least favorably viewed was romantic cheating. Participants could have empathized with the victim in these scenarios – perhaps because they have been in a similar situation themselves or have known people to be in similar situations. They could know that romantic cheating can cause pain and trauma, which could be what caused participants to view these situations more negatively.

Overall, male participants viewed romantic cheating on the female victim slightly more favorably than romantic cheating on the male victim, while female participants viewed romantic cheating on the male victim quite a bit more favorably than cheating on the female victim. The participants could have been able to empathize more with their own gender, maybe because they could picture themselves in similar situations. Male participants also had a slightly more favorable view of romantic cheating than female participants. Society could have had an impact on this view, as it is typically patriarchally accepted for men to cheat than women. Participants high in self-protection also viewed cheating on females slightly more acceptable than cheating on males, which could also be due to society's view on being more accepting of men cheating, since this is sometimes considered the "norm." Participants high in self-protection viewed male romantic cheating in opposite sex relationships the most favorably out of all four cheating scenarios, since this particular scenario could be viewed or thought of as the most common cheating scenario in the public.

Participants high in mate seeking viewed theft favorably. The reason for this is not clear, but this finding could be due to these participants willingness to overlook “red flags” in potential partners.

Study 2

This study had an identical methodology as Study 1 with the following two exceptions: there were four additional romantic cheating vignettes that were slightly altered, and the participants were recruited from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk. The added romantic cheating vignettes included more mild forms of flirting, such as “Noah and his boyfriend Ben have been a monogamous couple for the past few years. Noah recently joined an online community related to one of his hobbies, where he occasionally comments heart eye emojis and other flirty messages under another user named Oliver's posts.” These additional cheating vignettes were included due to the little variation received in the responses from Study 1. In total, there were the four original romantic cheating vignettes and four additional flirting vignettes.

Participants

For this research, we conducted an online survey of approximately 171 people. All sessions were completed online. The data were collected from 171 participants from Mechanical Turk.

Participants were instructed to read the informed consent documentation and ask any questions that they have prior to deciding whether to provide consent. Participants were permitted to quit the study at any time that they choose or opt not to participate after reading the consent form without fear of penalty.

Results

Participants were recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk. There were 177 total participants. The majority of participants were male ($N = 177$, 61.7% male, 37.7% female, 0.6% non-binary). The age range was from 22-70; the average participant age was 36.2 with a standard deviation of 10.927 ($M(\text{age}) = 36.2$ years, $SD = 10.927$).

A couple of hypotheses regarding relationships between traits measured by HEXACO and perceptions of antisocial behavior were supported. First it was found that participants high in honesty had less favorable views of people who performed the antisocial behaviors of lying and academic cheating compared to people who are low in honesty at ($r(177) = -.480$, $p < .001$) ($r(177) = -.552$, $p < .001$) (see Figure 6). The last HEXACO supported hypothesis included that participants high in forgiveness had more favorable views of people who performed the antisocial behavior of lying compared to people low in forgiveness at ($r(177) = .345$, $p < .001$) (see Figure 7).

One hypothesis regarding the relationship between fundamental social motives and perceptions of antisocial behavior was supported. This hypothesis was that participants high in general mate retention motives had less favorable views of people who performed romantic cheating compared to participants who were low in mate retention at ($r(127) = -.784$, $p < .001$) (see Figure 8). (Note: There are fewer participants in this analysis because only participants who were currently in a relationship answered the Mate Retention questions).

Several hypotheses regarding relationships between traits measured by the Dark Tetrad and perceptions of antisocial behavior were supported. The first hypothesis found that participants high in psychopathy had more favorable views of people who performed lying compared to participants low in psychopathy at ($r(177) = .644$, $p < .001$) (see Figure 9). Next, participants

high in narcissism had more favorable views of people who littered compared to participants who were low in narcissism at ($r(177) = .702, p < .001$) (see Figure 10). Another hypothesis found was that participants high in sadism had more favorable views of people who performed the antisocial behavior of romantic cheating compared to people low in sadism at ($r(177) = .666, p < .001$) (see Figure 11). The final Dark Tetrad hypothesis found was participants high in sadism and Machiavellianism had more favorable views of people who used illegal substance use compared to participants low in sadism and Machiavellianism at ($r(177) = .560, p < .001$), ($r(177) = .411, p < .001$) (see Figure 12 and Figure 13).

Five hypotheses involving scales from HEXACO were not supported. The first was that participants high in greed avoidance did not have less favorable views of people who performed the antisocial behavior of theft compared to participants who were low in greed avoidance at ($r(177) = -.062, p = .410$). The second was that participants high in anxiety did not have less favorable views of people who performed the antisocial behavior of theft compared to participants low in anxiety at ($r(177) = -.045, p = .551$). The third was participants high in openness did not have more favorable views of people who used illegal substances compared to participants low in openness at ($r(177) = -.219, p = .003$). It was also found that participants high in agreeability and extraversion did not have more favorable views of people who performed the antisocial behaviors of illegal substance use at ($r(177) = -.011, p = .884$) ($r(177) = .017, p = .826$). Finally, participants high in perfectionism and diligence did not have less favorable views of people who cheated academically compared to participants low in perfectionism and diligence at ($r(177) = -.074, p = .325$) ($r(177) = -.344, p < .001$).

Exploratory Analyses

The overall most favorably viewed behavior group was lying, followed by illegal substance use, littering, flirting, academic cheating, theft, and romantic cheating as the least favorably viewed (see Figure 14).

There was a relationship found between the Dark Tetrad traits and the flirting vignettes. It was found that participants high in psychopathy viewed flirting favorable at ($r(177) = .727, p < .001$). A positive correlation was also found between participants high in narcissism and flirting at ($r(177) = .634, p < .001$). The Dark Tetrad trait of Machiavellianism also had a positive relationship with flirting at ($r(177) = .460, p < .001$). The final Dark Tetrad trait of sadism also had a positive correlation with flirting at ($r(177) = .648, p < .001$).

Participants high in honesty had a negative view of the flirting vignettes at ($r(177) = -.517, p < .001$). It was also found that participants high in conscientiousness had a negative view of flirting as well at ($r(177) = -.594, p < .001$).

Finally, a multiple regression analysis was used to predict participants' desire to meet and befriend the actors in the romantic cheating vignettes based on their narcissism and psychopathy levels. A significant relationship was found ($F(176) = 73.268, p < .000$), with an R^2 of .630. Participants' predicted likelihood to meet and befriend is equal to $-.568 + .324$ (narcissism) + $.791$ (psychopathy). The higher in narcissism and psychopathy a participant was, the greater the likelihood that they would want to meet and befriend the individuals from the romantic cheating vignettes. Both narcissism and psychopathy were significant predictors of likelihood to meet and befriend the romantic cheating actors.

Discussion

The results of study 2 help reflect upon why people might socialize or associate themselves with specific people rather than other people who perform various antisocial behaviors. In contrast with study 1, there was a much greater age range among the participants. Consequentially, the sample of participants in study 2 should be more representative of the adult U.S. population.

Consistent with expectations, participants high in honesty had less favorable views of people who lied and cheated academically; possibly because they consider both of these behaviors to be dishonest and against their morals (Levine, 2022). These participants may prefer to not associate with dishonesty since they consider honesty to be important. They also may consider academic cheating as a form of dishonesty, which is why they viewed this action negatively.

There was a positive relationship between participants high in forgiveness and favorable views of people who performed the antisocial behavior of lying. These people may be more inclined to forgive antisocial behaviors such as lying since they are high in the forgiveness trait. They also may have regarded the lies as “white lies” that were insignificant (Zaibert, 2009).

It was also found that participants high in mate retention had less favorable views of romantic cheating due to their motivation to retain their mate. These participants may have strong morals against cheating romantically since it goes against their beliefs of mate retention (Pham, 2015). Since cheating romantically can put a relationship at risk, they disprove of these antisocial actions.

The next supported hypothesis regarded participants high in psychopathy and their favorable views of people who lied. This was a particularly strong positive correlation found. Since deception is a key feature of psychopathy, these participants likely did not mind if someone tells a lie, especially if the lie is to another person (Hare, 1989). The participants may have also

regarded the lie being told as insignificant and could have possibly even encouraged the lie if they were friends with the vignette actor.

Another relationship was found between participants high in narcissism and favorable views of people who littered. People with narcissistic traits do not care as much about other people as they do themselves, so since the littering committed would not be directly impacting them, they probably did not mind that it was done (Jordan, 2014). They may have also been empathetic to the situation if they have littered before, which people tend to do if they do not care or if it is too much of an inconvenience to find a proper place to dispose of trash (Blouin, 2016).

There was also a relationship between participants high in sadism and favorable views of people who cheated romantically. This could be due to the fact that people high in sadism usually enjoy inflicting pain on others, so they may like to watch others suffer emotionally from a romantic cheating situation (Buckels, 2012). The Dark Triad traits have been linked to infidelity, so the participants may have been unempathetic to the situation if they have cheated romantically; they also could have potentially justified the situation to themselves for their own enjoyment (Brewer, 2015).

A link was found between participants high in sadism and Machiavellianism and favorable views of people who used illegal substances. This could possibly be because they may not see the use of illegal substances as an issue, or the harm it could cause to both the user and the people around them. People high in Dark Triad traits have also been connected with use illegal substances, so the participants may have been empathetic to the situation if they have used illegal substances themselves (Chabrol, 2017).

There were not less favorable views of people that performed the antisocial behavior of theft compared to participants high in greed avoidance. These participants may not have associated the theft with greed, and instead may have justified why the person committed theft in the particular vignettes. Participants high in anxiety also did not have less favorable views of people who performed the antisocial behavior of theft, possibly for similar aforementioned reasons. They may have been empathetic towards the situation of the thief and attempted to justify why the thief was stealing.

Next, it was found that participants high in openness did not have favorable views of people who used illegal substances. Although these participants may be open to new experiences, this does not necessarily mean they are okay with illegal substances. They may prefer to be open to legal activities and may not want to be associated with anything that may potentially get them into trouble. They could have also considered the drunk driving vignette to be against their morals.

Participants high in agreeability and extraversion did not have favorable views of people who used illegal substances. Although research has shown that facets of agreeability and extraversion can be associated with high levels of alcohol consumption, this does not directly correlate with the participant's perception of other people using illegal substances (Rash, 2018). They may not want to start an argument or disagreement over anything due to their outgoing and agreeable nature, so they may want to abstain from associating with people that use illegal substances in order to avoid conflict with law enforcement (Wood, 2008).

Finally, participants high in perfectionism and diligence did not have less favorable views of people who cheated academically. Since these people are high in perfectionism, maybe they feel

cheating is necessary to achieve the highest level of perfection possible. People high in diligence may not mind if other people cheat academically, since it would not directly affect them.

There were strong positive correlations found between the Dark Tetrad traits and the flirting vignettes. Participants high in the Dark Tetrad traits may have found flirting to be more acceptable than the romantic cheating vignettes since flirting may be considered to be a milder form of cheating. Even though flirting with another person while in a relationship can be considered immoral, the participants high in traits such as psychopathy viewed flirting particularly favorable. Flirting may also be considered a form of deception if the aggressor hides this from their partner. This may explain why participants high in psychopathy viewed flirting so favorably, since psychopathy can be an indicator of deception (Hare, 1989).

General Discussion

There are a number of possible applications of the results of this research across a range of professions. These can include, but are not limited to jury selection, since a juror's personality traits may impact the way they perceive the alleged crime. Another potential application is in law enforcement investigations and interviews, since a witness's statements may be influenced by their traits and how they perceive the crime. Teachers can also utilize these findings because this information may help teachers better understand why students may commit certain antisocial actions. Counselors and therapists can consider that knowing what personality traits can potentially impact views of antisocial behaviors may help them better understand and assist their clients. This information may assist any customer service-oriented job, since this may aid in comprehension of how to best deal, interact with, and assist certain customers. Finally, it may help the general population because this information can help people understand why a certain

person may choose to interact with or avoid other types of people based on their personality traits and views. Overall, this information can be applied in a wide variety of situations and assist in the understanding of how people perceive others.

It should be noted that there are obvious limitations with this study, being that this is the only study of its kind in existence as of now and it has yet to be replicated. There were also only certain personality traits tested, being those that are under the HEXACO, Dark Tetrad, and Personality Inventory scales. There could be many more factors involved explaining why a certain person may have viewed a certain antisocial action favorably or unfavorably, some of which include life/personal experience, moral views, religion, etc. Another limitation was that this study was completed virtually, so the participants could have been in a distracting environment or in any state of mind while completing the survey. The participants from both studies were also generally a bit younger in age, with the median age from study 1 being 19.63 and from study 2 being 36.2. In the future, more research should be done on this subject including more personality traits to gain more understanding of this issue. In both studies, participants high in honesty had less favorable views of people who lied and cheated academically. Both antisocial behaviors go against honesty in that they both require lying, which is the opposite of honesty. Participants high in honesty may disprove of others being dishonest since they are honest themselves and may not want to associate themselves with people who are not honest. Being dishonest may also go against the moral judgement of the participants, since dishonesty could go against their ideologies (Levine, 2022). These participants may also view academic cheating as dishonest since this would not display any integrity.

In study 1 and study 2 the participants high in agreeability and extraversion did not have favorable views of people that used illegal substances. Since one of the vignettes included

driving home while intoxicated, the participants may have rated this situation extremely negatively. In many schools the dangers of driving while under the influence are regularly taught, so the participants may have this engrained in their minds (Elder, 2005). The other two illegal substance vignettes included drinking underage and smoking marijuana in an area in which it is prohibited. These participants may want to avoid an encounter with law enforcement, so they might not have thought the risks of drinking underage and smoking marijuana was worth the potential relationship. This could explain why people high in agreeability and extraversion may be more likely to avoid illegal substance users, since they do not want to put themselves at risk.

In study 1, participants high in forgiveness did not have a favorable view of people who lied, but in study 2 participants high in forgiveness did have a favorable view of people who lied. One of the lying vignettes was about a mother taking her kid to eat at a buffet and passing the kid off as younger than he was to get the reduced kids meal price. The older study 2 participants could have perceived this as insignificant, especially since they may have kids of their own or may know people that have kids. The study 2 participants may have been more willing to overlook these lies since they did not directly impact the participants. They also may have viewed the lies as insignificant “white lies” that did not directly cause any harm (Zaibert, 2009). The study 1 participants may have viewed lying unfavorably since they may not want to befriend or associate with anyone who may lie. If they are aware that they are forgiving, they may not want to put themselves at risk to be taken advantage of.

Participants high in mate retention had less favorable views of romantic cheating in both study 1 and study 2. Since these participants are motivated to retain their mate, they would likely not want to associate themselves with anything that may put their relationship at risk. It is likely

against their ethics to cheat romantically because they would prefer to do whatever it takes to retain their mate and keep their relationship (Pham, 2015). They may not want to associate with people that cheat romantically so that they will not end up in a situation that may make them appear guilty in any sort of romantic cheating scenario.

In both studies, participants high in psychopathy had favorable views of people who lied. The participants high in psychopathy may have viewed this favorably due to their potential fondness for deception. Since deception is a key trait of psychopathy, these participants may not feel as guilty about lying compared to participants low in psychopathy (Hare, 1989). These participants may not consider lying to be against their morals, since people with psychopathic traits are likely to engage in lying (Hare, 1989). Especially considering that the lie was to another person and that it would not harm the participant in any way, they may have approved of the actor that was lying in the vignette.

Study 1 participants high in narcissism did not have a favorable view of people who littered, however, study 2 participants high in narcissism did have a favorable view of people who littered. The difference in outcomes could be explained by the difference of life views. It could also be attributed to littering and becoming “green” being a relatively new phenomenon (NERC, 2019). The nationwide anti-litter campaign began in the 1950s (Plumer, 2006). People were also more accepting in the 1960s of throwing waste in public spaces (Blouin, 2016). Since the ideologies of protecting the environment are relatively new, the younger study 1 participants could have more motivation to protect the environment compared to the older study 2 participants, who might not have been exposed to being “green” as much. The study 2 participants could have favorable views of littering since they may be empathetic to the situation.

These study 2 participants may have littered themselves and been more empathetic to the situation or may not care since the litter would not be directly impacting them.

Participants in study 1 high in sadism did not have favorable views of people who cheated romantically, but participants in study 2 high in sadism did have favorable views of people who cheated romantically. This difference could be attributed to how the participants interpreted the situation. Study 2 participants high in sadism may have been more empathetic to the perpetrators in the vignette. Since the study 2 participants are older, they may have had more experience with romantic cheating. However, just because the study 1 participants are high in sadism does not mean that they would enjoy inflicting pain on those closest to them. Even though people high in sadism enjoy inflicting pain on others, the study 1 participants could have been more empathetic to the victims in the vignettes (Buckels, 2012). This empathy could derive from their other personality traits as well, such as their kin protection.

Both participant groups high in sadism and Machiavellianism had favorable views of people who used illegal substances. These participants may associate themselves with people who use illegal substances or could use substances themselves, since substance use has been linked to the Dark Triad traits (Chabrol, 2017). The illegal substance vignettes included someone driving home drunk, someone smoking marijuana even though it is illegal in their area, and someone drinking underage. Participants high in sadism may not be considerate of driving drunk and how this can endanger other people's lives. On the other hand, some participants may have considered this, and may have enjoyed the potential endangerment of others. They may have viewed smoking marijuana and drinking underage favorably, since this may also have put the vignette actors in danger if they were caught by law enforcement.

Participants high in greed avoidance did not have less favorable views of people that performed the antisocial behavior of theft in both studies. These participants likely did not associate the theft committed with greed, or they could have sympathized with the vignette actor. One of the theft vignettes was about a college student stealing groceries from Walmart, and the other was about a person stealing items from someone's lawn. The participants may have felt sympathy for the college student and could have thought about how expensive college is. The participants may have also considered that the actor was stealing from Walmart, which is a wealthy company (Dennison, 2022). If the store had been a local family-owned grocery store, the outcome may have been a bit more negative. The participants may have justified the vignette about stealing from the lawn since they may not have considered the things stolen to be of importance. Since it was specified in the vignette that the things stolen included signs and artwork, the participants may have thought of these items as fairly insignificant to the owner.

In study 1, participants high in anxiety had a less favorable view of theft, but study 2 participants high in anxiety did not have a less favorable view of theft. Study 1 participants could have been anxious about the theft vignettes. This anxiety could have been caused by the participants considering that they could get in trouble themselves if they are associated with any form of theft. They could also be potentially harmed, especially if trespassing on another person's property. In study 2, these participants may have been empathetic to the thief. They may have considered the risks of the situation insignificant, which could have prevented anxiety from forming.

Study 1 participants high in openness did have more favorable views of people who used illegal substances; study 2 participants high in openness did not. Study 1 participants could have been more accepting of the use since they are open to new experiences. They could have a mindset of

being open, accepting, and allowing others to do what they want. Research has also shown that people with this trait, particularly among young people, may also have a positive relationship with addictive behaviors (Rash, 2018). However, just because someone is open to new experiences does not necessarily mean they are okay with illegal substances as seen in study 2. These participants may not have wanted to associate themselves with anything that could potentially endanger them. Associating with people that use illegal substances may be riskier than the study 2 participants were willing to accept.

Participants high in perfectionism and diligence did not have less favorable views of academic cheating. These participants may not care about academic cheating as much since it would not be as likely to affect them. Since they are high in perfectionism, they may prefer to master the subject themselves (Baran, 2018). On the other hand, they could have felt pressure to cheat academically in the past to achieve the highest grade possible. Other personality traits could come into play when considering these scenarios.

The overall most favorably viewed behavior group in study 2 was lying, followed by illegal substance use, littering, flirting, academic cheating, theft, and romantic cheating as the least favorably viewed (see Figure 14). The overall most favorably viewed behavior group in study 1 was lying, followed by illegal substance use, academic cheating, littering, theft, and romantic cheating as the least favorably viewed (see Figure 5 and Figure 14). There was slight variation between the two groups in order of favorability of littering and academic cheating, but for the most part the order of most favorable to least favorable action was similar.

Conclusion

The current research project sought to bring together the study of personality with the study of antisocial behaviors. There are significant implications that can be brought about in various fields including law, education, and interpersonal relationships from the information discussed in this paper. This paper illustrates that there are links between personality traits and views of antisocial behaviors, such that the personality trait of psychopathy can be a strong indicator of approval for antisocial behaviors such as lying. Future research could examine the extent to which antisocial behaviors are perceived in various situations.

Personality traits can significantly impact views of antisocial behaviors as shown in this study. So, the next time you are in a situation where you have the chance to observe an antisocial behavior, keep in mind that your personality traits may impact the way you react, even if that situation is similar to seeing two coworkers such as Betty and Tom cheating on their partners.

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[driving#:~:text=Every%20day%2C%20about%2028%20people,These%20deaths%20were%20all%20preventable.](https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving#:~:text=Every%20day%2C%20about%2028%20people,These%20deaths%20were%20all%20preventable.)

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Appendix

Study 1

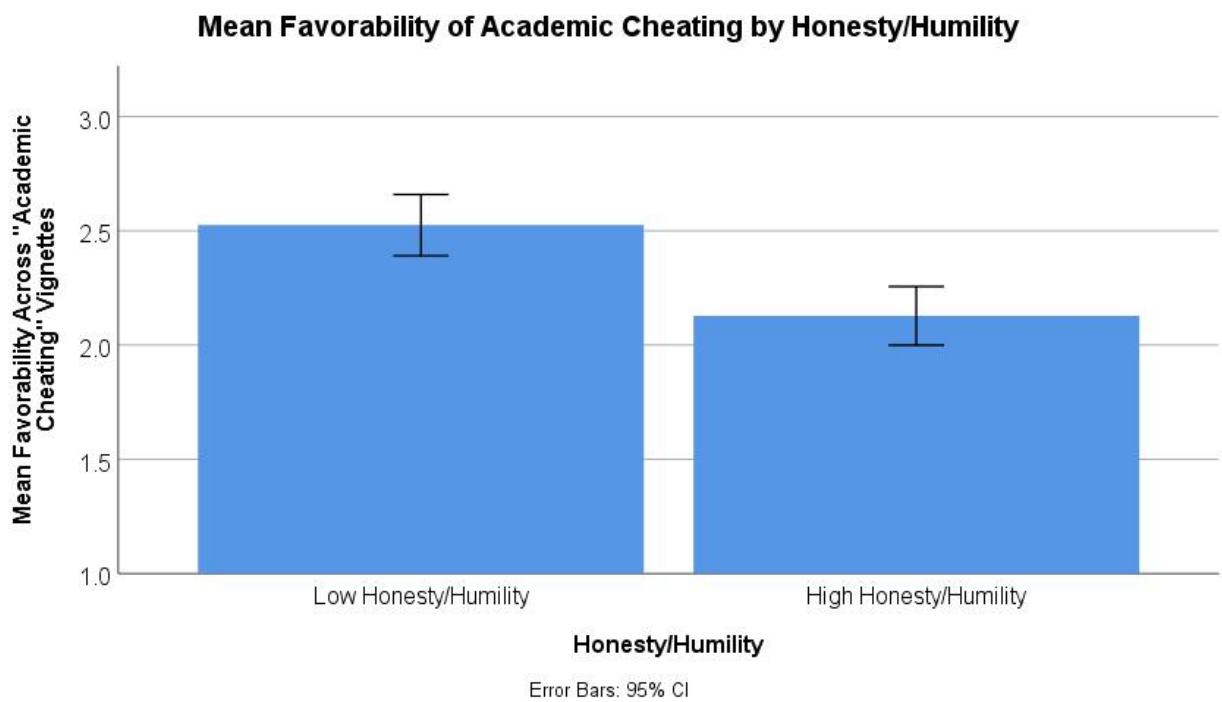


Figure 1. Mean favorability of academic cheating by honesty/humility in study 1.

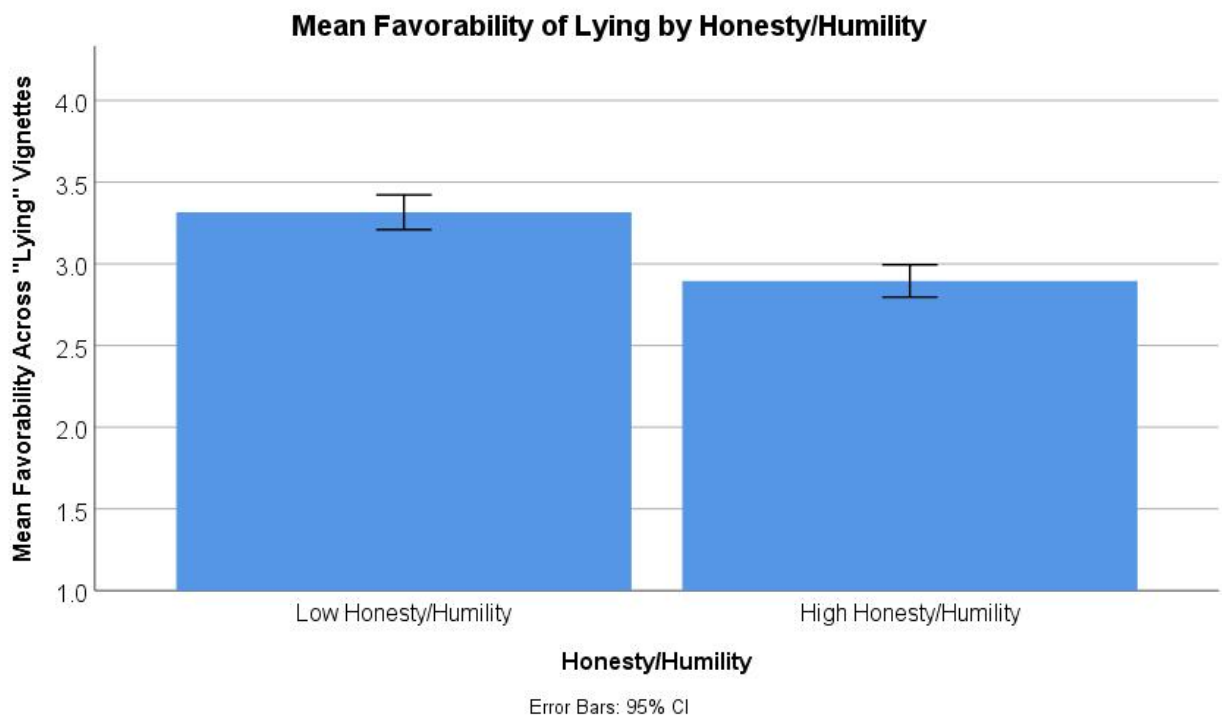


Figure 2. Mean favorability of lying by honesty/humility from study 1.

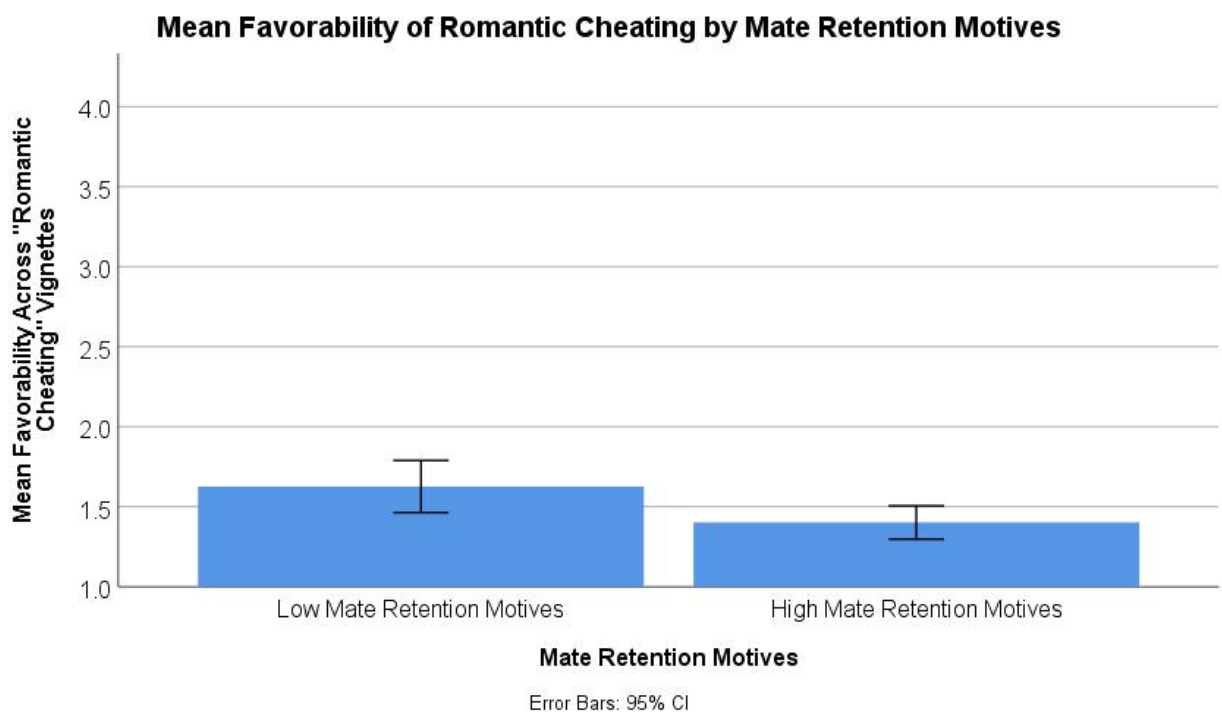


Figure 3. Mean favorability of romantic cheating by mate retention motives in study 1.

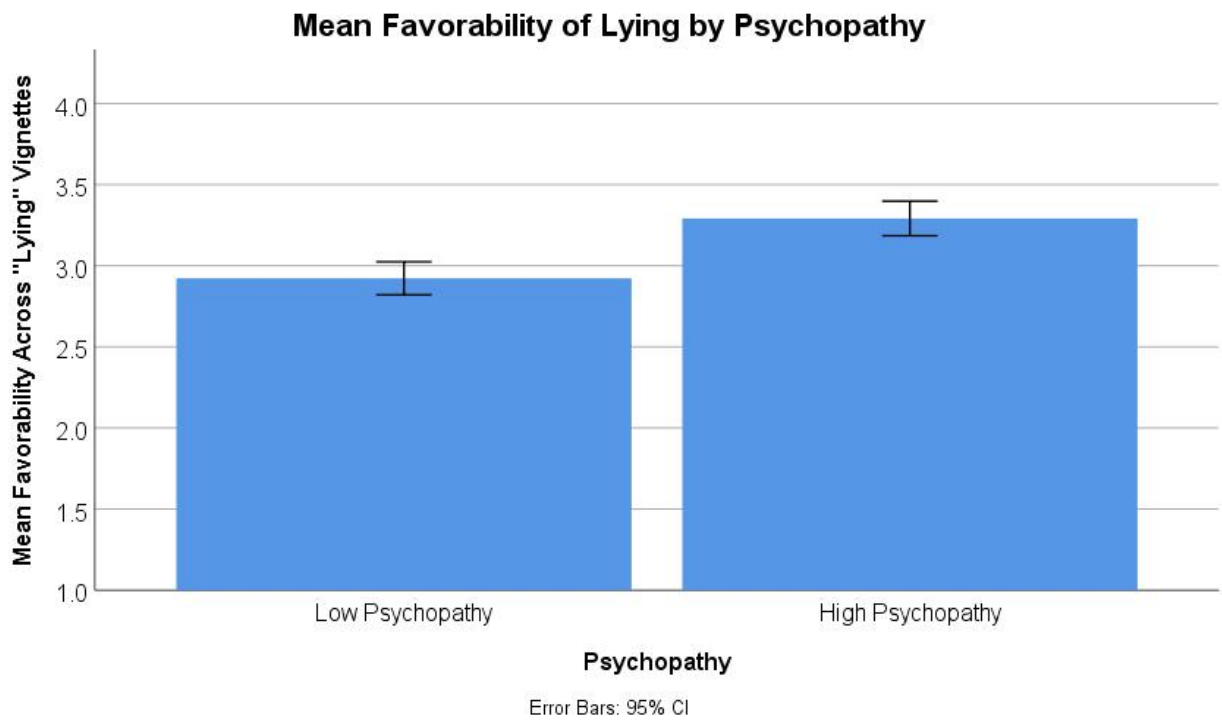


Figure 4. Mean favorability of lying by psychopathy in study 1.

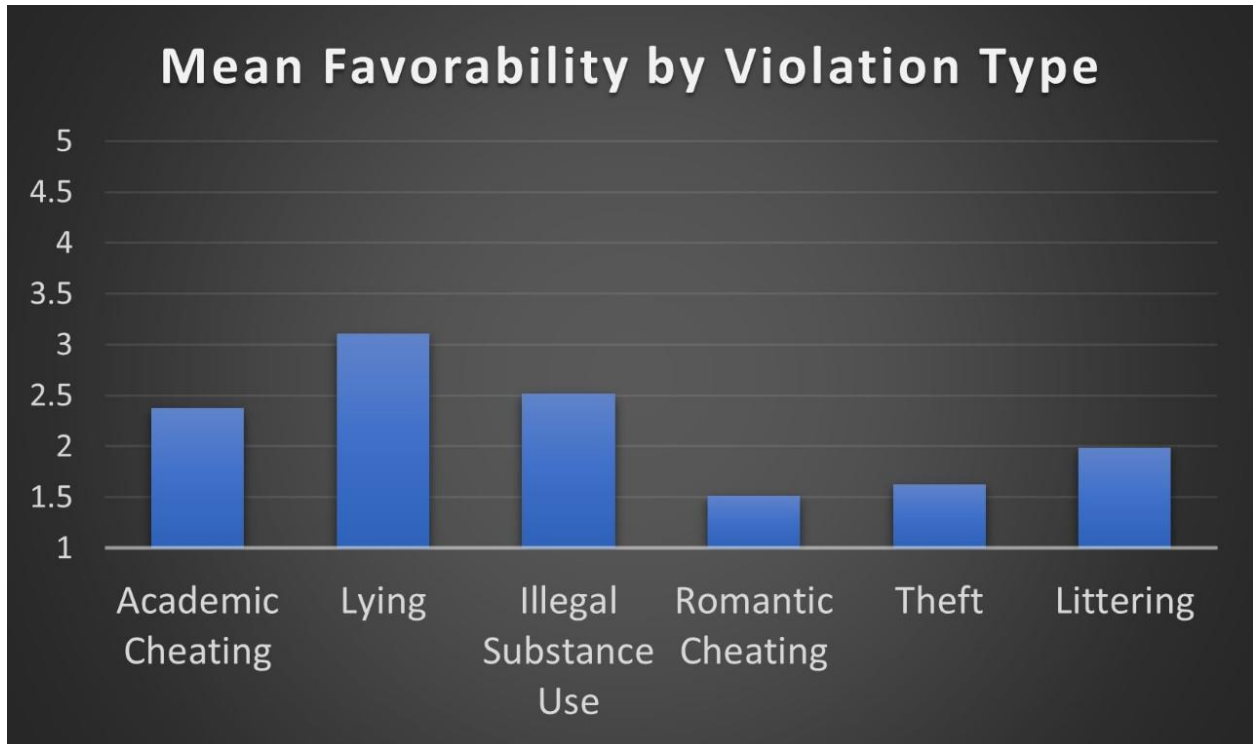


Figure 5. Mean favorability by violation type in study 1.

Study 2

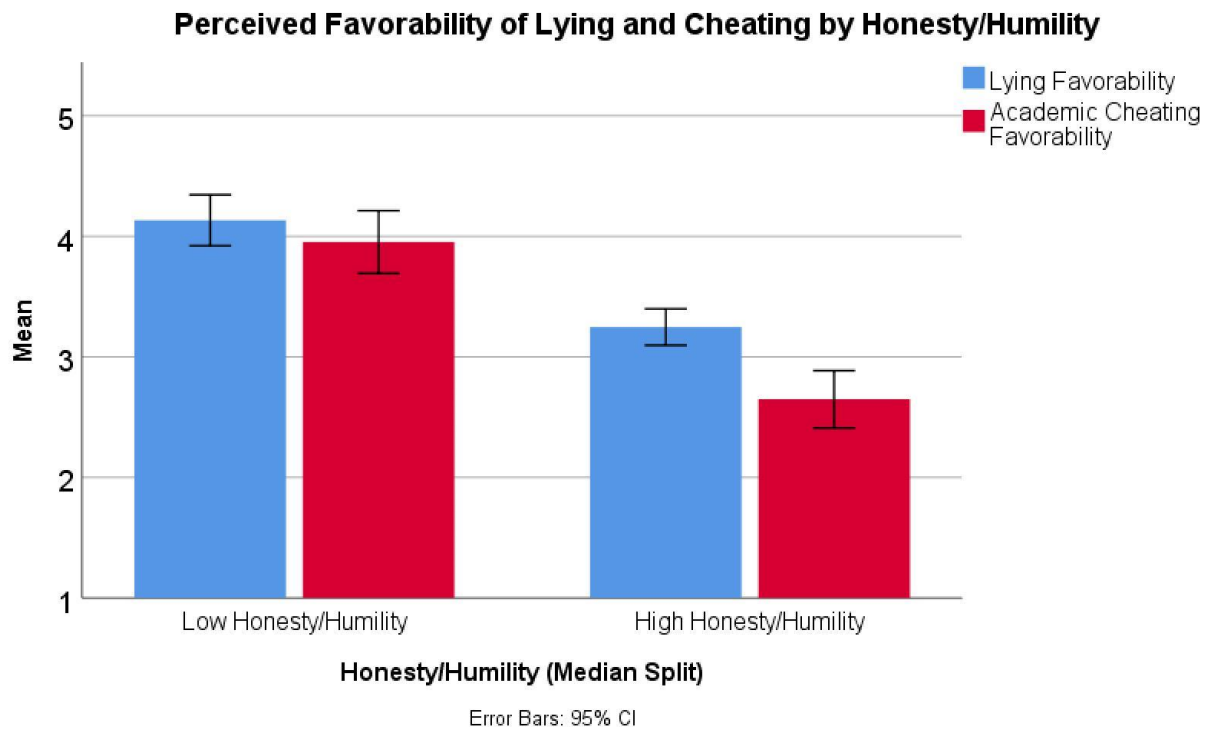


Figure 6. Perceived favorability of lying and cheating by honesty/humility in study 2.

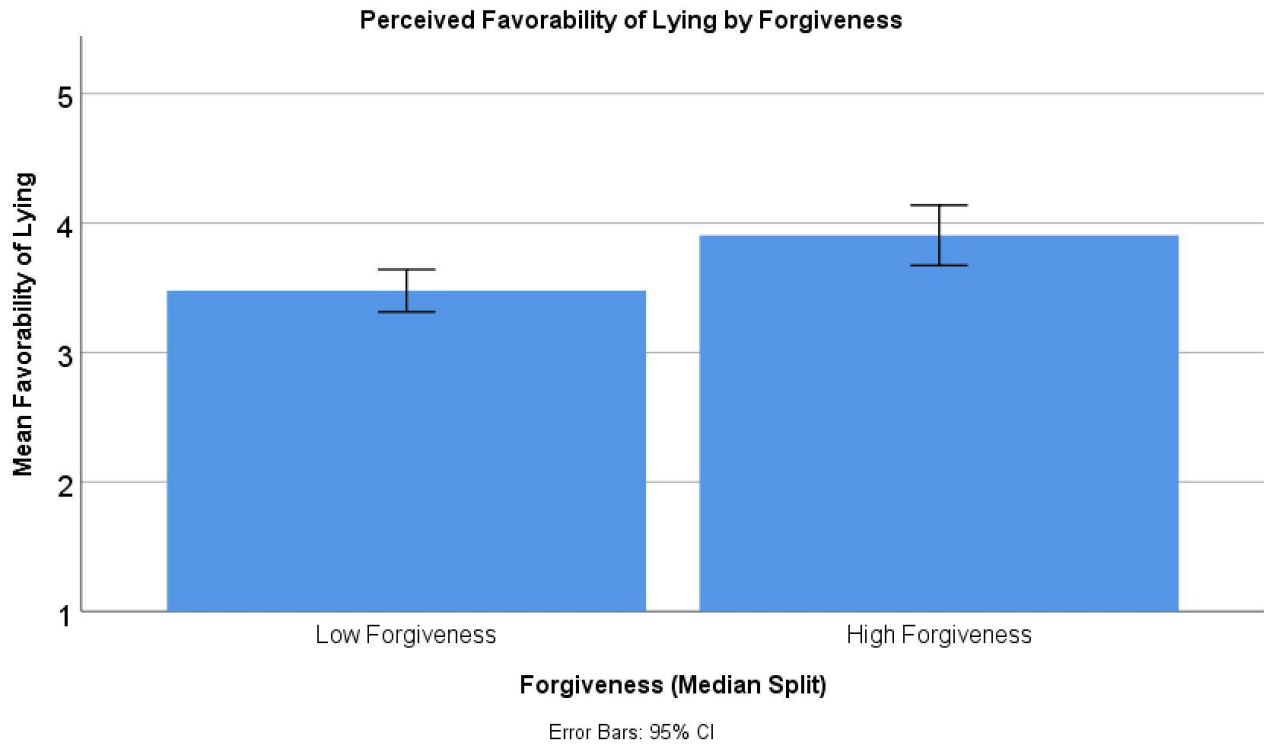


Figure 7. Perceived favorability of lying by forgiveness in study 2.

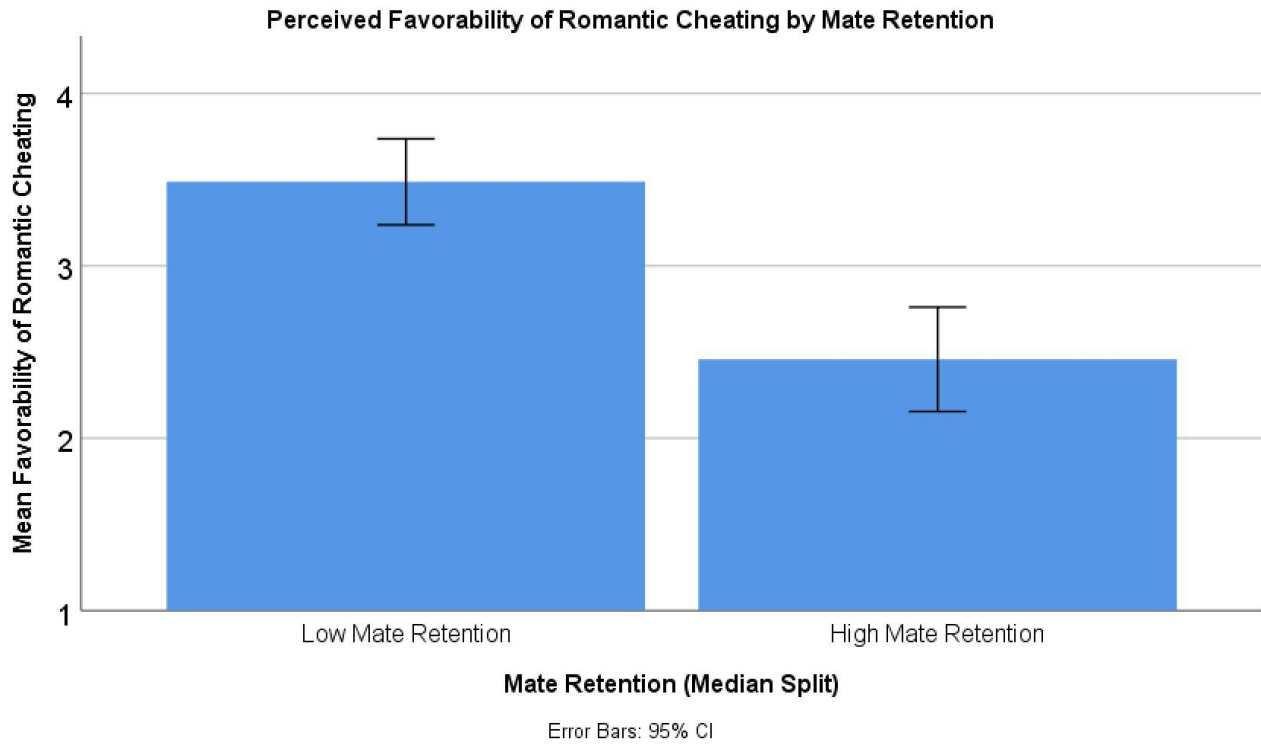


Figure 8. Perceived favorability of romantic cheating by mate retention in study 2.

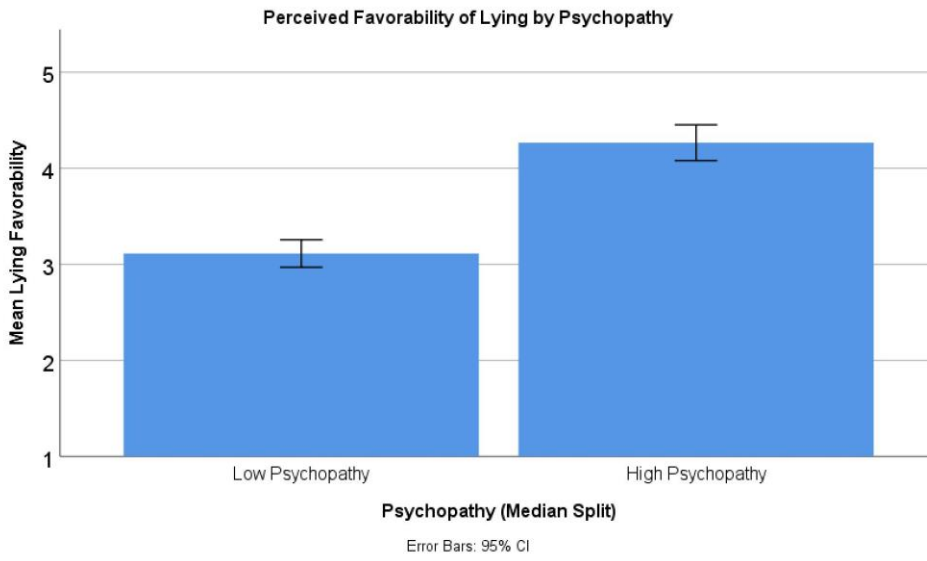


Figure 9. Perceived favorability of lying by psychopathy in study 2.

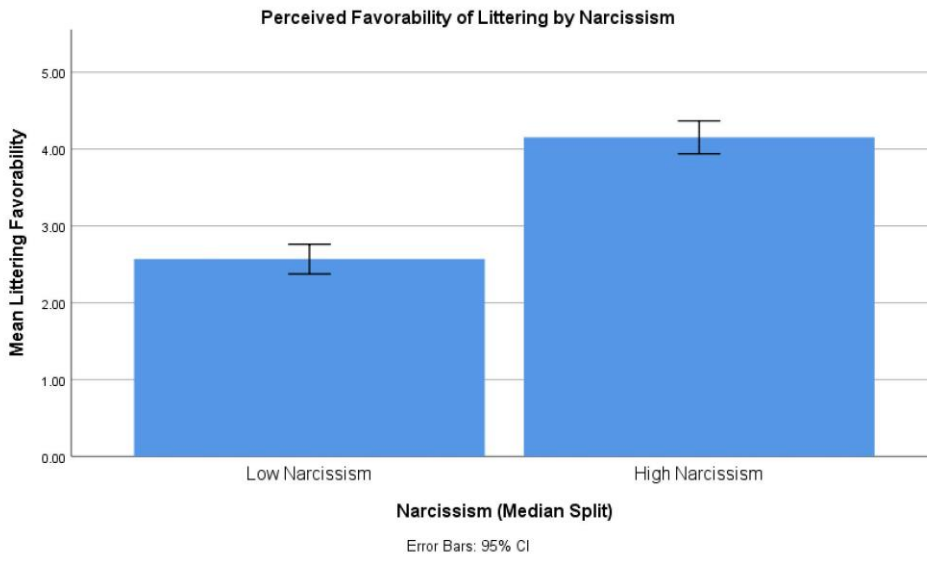


Figure 10. Perceived favorability of littering by narcissism in study 2.

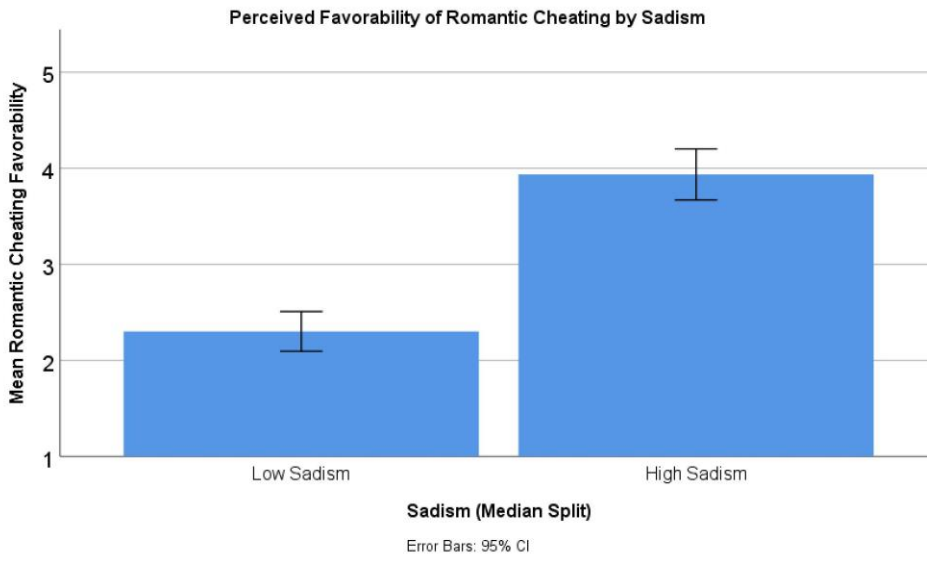


Figure 11. Perceived favorability of romantic cheating by sadism in study 2.

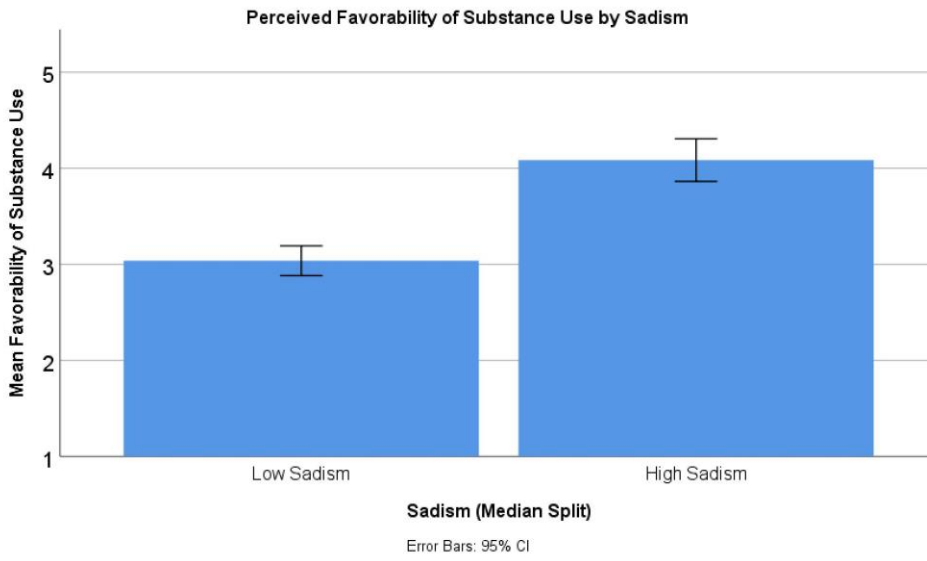


Figure 12. Perceived favorability of substance use by sadism in study 2.

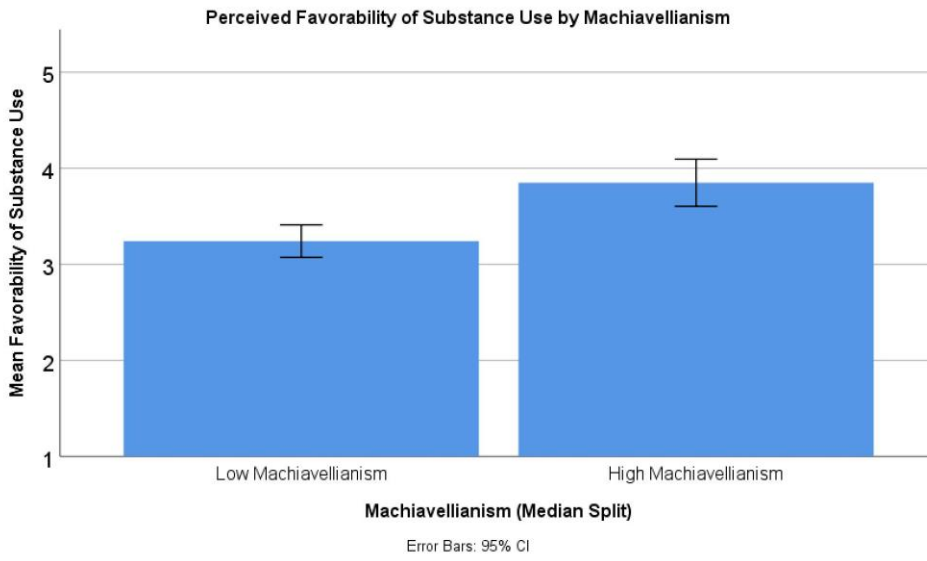


Figure 13. Perceived favorability of substance use by Machiavellianism in study 2.

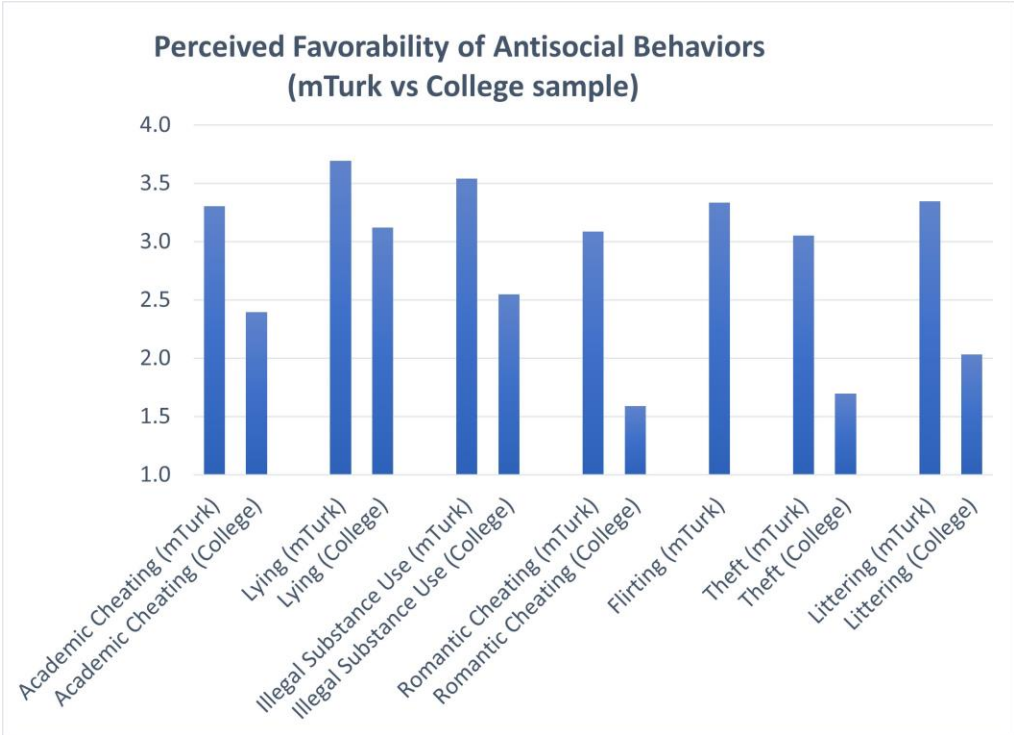


Figure 14. Perceived favorability of antisocial behaviors in both study 1 and study 2.

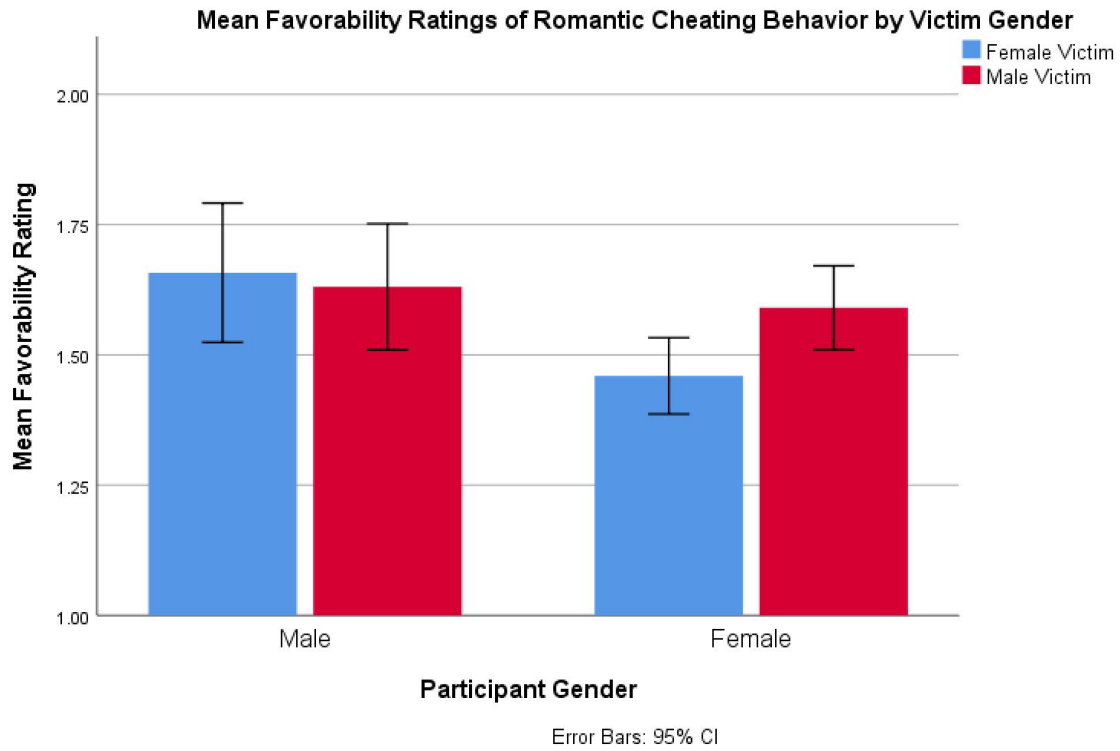


Figure 15. Mean favorability ratings of romantic cheating behavior by victim gender.