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Family Background and Propensity to Engage in Infidelity:

Exploring an Intergenerational Transmission of Infidelity

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by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current dissertation project was to explore whether the experience of a parental infidelity is associated with a greater likelihood of offspring having engaged in infidelity, as well as test a theoretical model grounded in social learning theory to help explain why such intergenerational infidelity patterns may exist. Results revealed that the experience of a parental infidelity is positively associated with a number of infidelity behaviors. Structural equation modeling revealed support for the theoretical model in that the experience of a parental infidelity was related to offspring's reports of having received negative messages about fidelity and faithfulness, and positive messages about infidelity from their family-of-origin. These family communications were then positively associated with more permissive infidelity beliefs, which in turn were associated with higher levels of infidelity behavior. Similar patterns emerged for both males and females, although it appeared that the experience of a father infidelity is also directly related to son's infidelity behavior. To an extent, participants who reported that their parents remained married following an infidelity indicated more favorable infidelity beliefs and higher levels of infidelity behavior. Attachment style and age when offspring first suspected infidelity were unrelated to infidelity behavior. Based on these findings, it is recommended that additional research is undertaken to further explain an intergenerational transmission of infidelity, and that clinicians and relationship educators address family background experiences when attempting to treat and prevent infidelity.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Infidelity is defined as emotional, sexual, or romantic behaviors which violate the commitment norms of an exclusive romantic relationship (Glass, 2002) and may be considered the prototypical relationship transgression because it is a flagrant breach of most individuals' monogamous relationship expectations (Afifi, Falato, & Weiner, 2001). Despite the clear social norms against infidelity a great number of individuals engage in cheating behaviors in the United States. Approximately 75% of male college students and 68% of female college students reported engaging in dating or sexual infidelity behavior (Wiederman & Hurd, 1999) whereas 20-40% of married men and 20-25% of married women reported engaging in infidelity behavior (Whisman & Snyder, 2007). Infidelity is therefore a unique type of behavior in that individuals condemn it, yet simultaneously a high number of individuals engage in the behavior.

This inconsistency between norms and behavior is disheartening because infidelity has a number of consequences for the victim, the transgressor, and their relationship. Victims of infidelity report an array of negative emotions, depression, and increased levels of self-doubt (Allen et al., 2005). Even the transgressor experiences a significant amount of psychological distress as a result of his or her own infidelity (Hall & Fincham, 2009). Infidelity also may damage individuals' physical health by enhancing the possibility of contracting a variety of sexually transmitted diseases, particularly if the infidelity entails unprotected sex. Furthermore, infidelity has been found to be the single most common reason for relationship dissolution in dating relationships and marriages (Amato & Previti, 2003; Betzig, 1989). In a study of family and relationship therapists,

these professionals ranked infidelity as one of the most damaging problems couples may present in therapy (Whisman, Dixon, & Johnson, 1997). Because of the detrimental nature of infidelity, personal relationship researchers are motivated to devise empirically-grounded interventions to reduce and treat infidelity in romantic relationships.

Relationship educators have successfully developed programs which appear to diminish infidelity behavior in both dating relationships and marriages (Braithwaite et al., 2010; Markman, 2005). Markman argued that such programs could be greatly improved if researchers and educators better understood risk factors for engaging in infidelity so individuals with such characteristics may be targeted for intervention. Additionally, information about why some individuals are more likely to cheat will allow educators to better address these factors in their curricula. Furthermore, once infidelity occurs it is one of the most difficult relationship problems to address in therapy and further insight into how to rebuild relationships following infidelity is needed (Peluso & Spina, 2008; Whisman et al., 1997). More complete information about why certain individuals are prone to engage in infidelity may enhance clinicians' ability to treat clients who experienced infidelity in their relationships as well as prevent future infidelities. Therefore, it is vital to understand the characteristics associated with susceptibility to engage in infidelity for both preventative and treatment reasons.

Personal relationship researchers have discovered a variety of factors which predict individuals' propensity to engage in relationship infidelity, including demographics, personality characteristics, and relationship characteristics (Allen et al., 2005; Atkins, Baucom, & Jacobsen, 2001; Blow & Hartnett, 2005). Researchers have

particularly focused a great deal of attention on exploring gender differences in infidelity behavior. It appears that men have lower expectations for relationship exclusivity (Boekhout, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2003), consider sexual infidelity more acceptable compared to women (Feldman, Cauffman, Jensen, & Arnett, 2000), and engage in infidelity more frequently (Blow & Hartnett). Attachment style has also consistently predicted engagement in infidelity with securely attached individuals significantly less likely to cheat on their romantic partners (Allen & Baucom, 2004). Individuals in lower quality and less satisfactory romantic relationships are also more likely to engage in infidelity (Atkins, Dimidjian, & Jacobsen, 2001; Previti & Amato, 2004). Thus, researchers have found a number of meaningful predictors of propensity to engage in infidelity; however, most of these variables are based on personal disposition or solely on the current romantic relationship and virtually no research has explored the role of family-of-origin experiences. This is problematic because researchers have long recognized that family background and experiences deeply impact offspring's own romantic relationships (Bryant & Conger, 2002).

Lacking an understanding of the role family background plays in infidelity behaviors seems to be a glaring gap in the infidelity literature as offspring tend to replicate the behavior patterns of their parents. The intergenerational transmission of divorce is perhaps one of the most well-documented phenomena in personal relationships research; specifically that offspring whose parents divorced are more likely to divorce themselves compared to individuals whose parents remained married (Amato & Booth, 1991a; Amato & Keith, 1991). Offspring also seem to replicate their parents' behavioral

patterns in a number of other domains including parenting and interpersonal conflict (Conger, Belsky, & Capaldi, 2009; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). It is possible that an intergenerational transmission of infidelity also exists with individuals who experienced a parental infidelity more likely to engage in infidelity themselves. Therefore, in order to better understand why some individuals are more likely to engage in infidelity it is vital to explore how parental infidelity may relate to offspring's later romantic relationships and infidelity behaviors.

Some clinicians have noted patterns of infidelity within families, although such findings are based on professional experiences rather than empirical research. Clinicians have found that children are often aware of parental infidelities either because one of their parents disclosed the transgression, the child discovered the infidelity for themselves, or the child at least sensed a disruption in the family system (Duncombe & Marsden, 2004; Reibstein & Richards, 1993). Children are deeply impacted by these events and may feel angry, fearful, and worried upon discovering the parental infidelity (Duncombe & Marsden). According to Pittman (1989), infidelity embeds on children "indelible lessons about what they can expect when they grow up—from men, from women, and from marriage" (p. 267). It is highly likely that as these offspring mature and enter into their own romantic relationships, the experience of parental infidelity colors individuals' relationship beliefs and behaviors. The purpose of this dissertation project is to investigate how parental infidelity relates to individuals' infidelity beliefs and behavior, specifically whether the occurrence of parental infidelity is associated with a higher propensity for offspring to engage in infidelity themselves.

Social learning theory will be applied to examine whether this intergenerational transmission of infidelity occurs. A vast majority of the intergenerational transmission research utilizes social learning theory as it offers a great deal of explanatory power for how family patterns are propagated (Feng, Giarrusso, Bengston, & Frye, 1999). Social learning theory argues individuals learn through personal experience, direct communication, and observational learning (Bandura, 1986). Through interactions with their families, offspring acquire a vast amount of information which forms their own attitudes, beliefs, and expectations; these cognitions then heavily influence individuals' own actions. According to social learning theory, parents directly and indirectly communicate information to offspring about the nature of romantic relationships which in turn influences offspring's cognitions about relationships and ultimately their own relationship behaviors. The consequences of parents' behavior also transmit messages to offspring about the desirability and acceptability of certain behaviors in the context of a romantic relationship. Moreover, social learning theorists argue that it is important to consider offspring's age during this process as learning cannot occur if individuals lack the cognitive development necessary to understand the nature and consequences of a behavior (Bandura, 1986).

Utilizing social learning theory, the current project will empirically examine whether individuals who have knowledge of a parental infidelity have more favorable beliefs about infidelity and are more likely to have committed infidelity themselves. Overall, the project will test a theoretical model to explain how parental infidelity is related to offspring's own infidelity behaviors. Specifically, the study will explore

whether the experience of parental infidelity is related to offspring reports of having received negative messages about fidelity and faithfulness, and positive messages about infidelity from their family-of-origin. Receiving such messages while growing up supports the notion that social learning about infidelity occurred. It is expected that offspring who received such messages will report more favorable beliefs about infidelity, greater willingness to engage in infidelity, and greater willingness to engage in uncommitted sexual relationships. These cognitions will then directly relate to a higher likelihood of offspring having engaged in infidelity behavior. Moreover, gender of offspring and gender of cheating parent will also be considered in this model. Furthermore, the role of attachment style will be considered as it is a variable consistently linked to infidelity behavior. By including attachment style in the theoretical model, it is possible to examine the contribution of family-of-origin variables relative to attachment style for explaining infidelity behavior. The project will also explore whether the outcome of parental infidelity, whether parents remained together or separated, is associated with offspring's infidelity beliefs and behaviors. Finally, the project will also explore whether age when offspring first suspected a parental infidelity is related to offspring's infidelity beliefs and behaviors.

Overview of Dissertation

The current dissertation project will apply social learning theory to observe whether patterns of intergenerational infidelity occur and to generate a theoretically-grounded model which may potentially explain this pattern of infidelity behavior. Chapter 2 presents an introduction to the infidelity research literature as well as an

overview of the intergenerational transmission literature and the tenets of social learning theory. The roles of attachment style, gender, outcomes of parental infidelity, and age when parental infidelity is suspected will also be discussed. Finally, specific research hypotheses will be proposed including a theoretical model of the intergenerational transmission of infidelity.

The research methodology for the project will be discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 will present the results of the dissertation study. Chapter 5 will discuss the findings of the study in detail, and place the results in the broader context of the infidelity and intergenerational transmission literature. Strengths, limitations, suggestions for future research, and implications will also be presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Infidelity

Infidelity is any type of emotional, sexual, or romantic behavior which violates the exclusivity norms of a romantic relationship (Glass, 2002). Many researchers distinguish between different types of infidelity (Blow & Hartnett, 2005; Hall & Fincham, 2006). Individuals may engage in emotional infidelity (deep feelings for and a bond with an extradyadic partner) or sexual infidelity (physical involvement with an extradyadic partner). Additionally, individuals can engage in a combined type infidelity which is characterized by both a deep emotional and physical involvement with an extraneous relationship partner. Individuals may consider extradyadic behaviors such as spending time with another individual, flirting, kissing, sexual intercourse, and other sexually intimate activities as forms of infidelity (Roscoe, Cavanaugh, & Kennedy, 1988). Pittman and Wagers (2005) argued that the hallmark of infidelity is the secrecy and concealment of these behaviors, rather than the specific extradyadic behavior itself.

Personal relationship researchers consider infidelity to be a serious breach of most individuals' relationship expectations (Afifi et al., 2001; Tafoya & Sptizberg, 2007). The vast majority of Americans expect sexual exclusivity from their romantic relationships, regardless of whether they are dating or married (Buss & Shackelford, 1997; Sheppard, Nelson, & Andreoli-Mathie, 1995; Traes & Giesen, 2000). In a small study by Wiederman and Allgeier (1996), the authors found that the majority of married participants had explicitly discussed the importance of monogamy in their relationship and 87% indicated that cheating would never be acceptable in their relationship because

it was a breach of trust, commitment, and the marital contract. Despite the fact that the majority of individuals expect monogamy in their relationships, infidelity is a common occurrence in romantic relationships. Infidelity is so common that researchers have called the proportion of individuals engaging in infidelity behaviors "distressing" (Affifi et al., 2001, p. 291).

Prevalence of Infidelity

Studies vary in the proportion of individuals reporting infidelity with individuals in dating relationships, particularly college students, reporting much higher rates of infidelity compared to married individuals. Feldman and Cauffman (1999a) found that 13% of their large, diverse undergraduate sample reported having cheated, 24% reported a partner had cheated on them, and 21% indicated they had been both the victim and perpetrator of infidelity. In a separate study, Feldman and Cauffman (1999b) found an equally high rate of cheating in college students' relationships with 71% of those who had been cheated on indicating that their partner's infidelity was sexual in nature. Similarly, Wiederman and Hurd (1999) found that 49% of male college students and 31% of female college students had engaged in a sexual infidelity with these numbers going as high as 75% of male and 68% of female college students reporting some form of infidelity. Overall, research indicates that the majority of individuals will experience some form of infidelity at some point in their dating history (e.g. Shackelford, LeBlanc, & Drass, 2000).

In contrast, the number of married individuals who have engaged in infidelity is lower compared to college students, although the frequency of infidelity is still high.

Whisman and Snyder (2007) found that about 20-40% of married men and 20-25% of married women reported engaging in infidelity behaviors. Allen et al. (2005) argued that among studies utilizing large representative samples, approximately 22-25% of men and 11-15% of women in marital relationships engaged in sexual infidelity. When including emotional infidelity, the infidelity rates go even higher. Glass and Wright (1992) found that 44% of married men and 25% of married women had engaged in at least one sexual infidelity, and when the definition of infidelity was expanded to include emotional infidelity as well as sexual, 63% of men and 47% of women reported having engaged in infidelity. One reason married individuals may engage in infidelity at lower rates compared to individuals in dating relationships, is that married individuals weigh the potential consequences of infidelity to a greater degree (Allen & Baucom, 2006). Additionally, higher levels of commitment and relationship investment are associated with a lower likelihood of engaging in infidelity (Emmer-Sommer, Warber, & Halford, 2010; Drigotas, Safstrom, & Gentilia, 1999). Hence, married individuals likely have more to lose and would incur greater costs if an infidelity was discovered and a relationship terminated. These conditions likely explain why married individuals tend to engage in infidelity at lower rates compared to dating individuals.

Most researchers agree that these estimates of infidelity prevalence are on the low end because social desirability factors lead individuals to underreport their infidelity behaviors (Tafoya & Spitzberg, 2007). Allen et al. (2005) also argued infidelity rates are likely to be underestimated because a great deal of research has defined infidelity as sexual intercourse with an extradyadic partner; research which defines infidelity on a

continuum of behaviors likely better captures the actual extent of extradyadic activity.

Additionally, in the study by Feldman and Cauffman (1999b) 42% of those individuals

who reported engaging in infidelity indicated that their partner never found out about the

infidelity and among those whose partners did learn of the infidelity, 83% did so because

the partner admitted the transgression. These numbers suggest that infidelity prevalence

may also be underestimated because a number of individuals never learn of a partner's

infidelity and are thus unable to report this behavior to researchers. The prevalence of

infidelity behavior may also be underestimated because of the methodology employed by

researchers; for example, individuals are less likely to report infidelity in studies which

use face-to-face measures compared to surveys which allow for anonymity (Fincham &

Beach, 2010).

Consequences and Outcomes following Infidelity

According to Metts and Cupach (2007), infidelity is a unique form of relationship

transgression because it is a blatant violation of most relationship norms and has many

harmful outcomes including negative emotions, decreased personal well-being, and

relationship termination. Becker et al. (2004) found that individuals have intense

emotional reactions to partner infidelity including jealousy, hurt, anger, and disgust. In

particular the researchers found that men and women reported being most hurt by

emotional infidelity whereas sexual infidelity generated greater feelings of disgust and

anger. Women are also more likely to experience feelings of jealousy following an

emotional infidelity whereas men are more likely to feel jealous following a partner's

sexual infidelity (Becker et al.; Buss, Larsen, Westen, & Semmelroth, 1992), although

this difference is not always found (e.g., DeSteno & Salovey, 1996; DeSteno et al., 2002; Sabini & Silver, 2005). Individuals are also likely to feel disappointed, hostile, sad, helpless, repulsed, and humiliated following a partner's infidelity (Buunk, 1995; Shackelford, LeBlanc, & Drass, 2000). Individuals who are highly committed to their relationships and more emotionally dependent on their partners also report more intense feelings after a partner's infidelity (Becker et al.; Buunk).

Infidelity has a number of negative consequences for the individual whose partner committed a transgression. Individuals, particularly women, who experience a partner infidelity experience a reduction in self-esteem and increased feelings of self-doubt and insecurity (Buunk, 1995; Shackelford et al., 2000). The discovery of a partner's infidelity is also associated with a reduction in psychological well-being, including an increased incidence of depression, anxiety, and symptoms affiliated with posttraumatic stress disorder (Allen et al.; Cano & O'Leary, 2000; Sweeney & Horowitz, 2001; Thabes, 1997). Individuals who commit an infidelity also experience psychological distress, particularly elevated levels of depression and lower levels of general well-being compared to individuals who remained faithful to a partner (Hall & Fincham, 2009). Infidelity also has the potential to physically harm relationship partners if an individual contracts a sexually transmitted disease during their indiscretion (Hall & Fincham, 2006).

Not surprisingly, infidelity also negatively impacts romantic relationships as it is a major catalyst for conflict and relationship termination. Shackelford (1998) states "infidelity may have no rival in disrupting a marriage" (p. 135), and such turmoil occurs in dating relationships as well. Infidelity is one of the strongest and most proximal

predictor of relationship dissolution for both dating and married couples (Amato & Previti, 2003; Amato & Rogers, 1997; Hall & Fincham, 2006). Infidelity is considered the most common reason for relationship dissolution in dating relationships and marriages (Afifi et al., 2001; Betzig, 1989) and incidence of infidelity subsequently increases married couples' odds of divorce (Previti & Amato, 2004). In a large-scale national survey, Amato and Previti discovered that infidelity was the most commonly cited reason for divorce. Knox, Gibson, Zusman, and Gallmeir (1997) found that 57% of college students reported their most recent relationship had ended because of the presence of another individual. Additionally, the majority of individuals in dating and marital relationships indicated they would end their relationships, or at least consider ending their relationships, if they discovered their partner had been unfaithful (Feldman & Cauffman, 1999b; Roscoe et al., 1988; Knox, Zusman, Kaluzny, & Studivant, 2000; Shackelford).

It is important to note that the experience of infidelity also has the potential to positively impact romantic relationships. Boekhout, Hendrick, and Hendrick (1999) found that a small minority of participants who experienced a partner's infidelity reported that their relationships eventually improved, or at least were unaffected by the infidelity. The experience of an infidelity may allow relationship partners to address other issues, of which the infidelity is only a symptom. Therefore, infidelity may be considered a catalyst to actually initiate communication and enhance romantic relationships. Additionally, Tafoya and Spitzberg (2007) argue that infidelity can also be highly functional for those individuals who wish to send a message to their partner. Individuals may use infidelity as

a way to get a partner's attention so that they may either begin to improve the relationship or begin a conversation to terminate the relationship.

Due to the prevalence of infidelity and the potential negative consequences associated with the behavior, personal relationships researchers have amassed a substantial literature investigating a variety of factors related to individuals' likelihood of engaging in infidelity. By understanding the variables related to infidelity behavior, educators and clinicians may help prevent future infidelities as well as help individuals cope with infidelities which have already occurred. Allen et al. (2005) argued that to fully understand infidelity it is necessary to be aware of the predisposing factors related to occurrence of infidelity. The following sections present a summary of the major predictors of infidelity behavior including gender, attachment style, demographic and personality variables, and relationship context.

Gender and Infidelity

One of the most consistent findings in the infidelity literature is that men are more likely to engage in infidelity and have more favorable beliefs associated with extradyadic activity (Atkins, Dimidjian, & Jacobson, 2001). In general there is evidence that males and females think about and behave differently in romantic relationships, although many of these statistical differences have small effect sizes (Oliver & Hyde, 1993; Petersen & Hyde, 2010). Overall, males report more permissive sexual attitudes and are more likely to engage in a wider range of sexual behaviors (Oliver & Hyde; Petersen & Hyde). Men indicate they are more willing to engage in uncommitted sexual activities (Brennan &

Shaver, 1995) whereas women are also more likely to associate sex with love (Baldwin &

Baldwin, 1997).

In terms of infidelity, Boekhout, Hendrick, and Hendrick (2003) found that men

had lower expectations for relationship exclusivity and actually indicated a preference for

sexual non-exclusivity compared to women. Although both males and females tend to

view infidelity as unacceptable behavior, men appear to consider infidelity as more

acceptable in both dating and marital relationships than women (Feldman & Cauffman,

1999a; Feldman, Cauffman, Jensen, & Arnett, 2000; Oliver & Hyde, 1993; Petersen &

Hyde, 2010; Sheppard et al., 1995). Men also express greater desire and willingness to

engage in infidelity (Oliver & Hyde; Seal, Agostinelli, & Hannett, 1994). Moreover, men

are more likely to use intense sexual attraction as a justification for infidelity whereas

women are more likely to use emotional intimacy and falling in love as justifications for

infidelity (Glass & Wright, 1992).

In addition to these differing beliefs and attitudes, men also appear to engage in

infidelity at higher rates than women. Overall, research indicates that men engage in

infidelity more frequently and have more extradyadic partners than women (Allen &

Baucom, 2004; Atkins, Baucom, & Jacobson, 2001; Glass & Wright, 1992; Hansen,

1987; Treas & Giesen, 2000; Wiederman, 1997). Research does indicate that the gender

gap is shrinking among younger individuals (Atkins, Baucom, & Jacobson, 2001; Oliver

& Hyde). Thornton and Young-DeMarco (2001) found that by the 1990s, young adult

men and women equally disapproved of marital infidelity. In a study of college students,

Feldman and Cauffman (1999b) found that males and females were equally likely to have

committed infidelity as well as be the victim of a partner infidelity. Additionally, Atkins, Baucom, and Jacobson (2001) found that for individuals less than 45 years of age there were no gender differences in rates of infidelity and Wiederman (1997) found no gender differences for individuals under the age of 40. These gender differences may also depend on how the researchers define infidelity in the study (Blow & Hartnett, 2005). For example, Brand, Markey, Mills, and Hodges (2007) actually found that women were more likely to have cheated in a romantic relationship when infidelity was defined as including a number of behaviors besides just sexual intercourse. However, the researchers did find that men who cheated took part in a greater number of infidelity episodes while women who engaged in infidelity tended to cheat only a few times.

Attachment and Infidelity

Allen and Baucom (2004) argued that attachment theory is also a key theoretical perspective to apply when exploring why some individuals are more likely to engage in infidelity. Individuals develop a system of attachment through interactions with their early childhood environment (Bowlby, 1982). Children store in their memory representations of interactions with their attachment figures and these memories create working models which later influence behavior and future expectations (Bowlby, 1973). One of the major principles of attachment theory is that individuals use their personal experiences to construct working models of "the self" and "others" and these working models influence individuals' interactions with others throughout their lifetimes (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Hazan and Shaver (1987) extended the work of Bowlby and investigated the role of attachment processes in adult romantic relationships. The authors argued that as adults, attachment style will impact individuals' ability to experience high-quality, intimate romantic relationships. According to attachment theory, individuals who experience warm and supportive caregiving develop positive working models of themselves and others, and are considered to be securely attached. Individuals classified as having a secure attachment style are better equipped to develop an adequate sense of trust and autonomy, characteristics which facilitate individual growth and the development of high quality personal relationships (Simpson, 2007). In contrast, avoidant individuals (who have limited experience with adequate caregiving) find it difficult to trust others and are less willing to provide care to their partners. Anxious individuals (who have a history of inconsistent caregiving) are likely to need very high levels of care from their partners but are willing to give extremely high levels of care to others. Overall, securely attached individuals are more likely to be in romantic relationships, and these relationships are happier, more committed, more trusting, and last longer (Brennan & Shaver, 1993; Cohen, 2005; Feeney & Noller, 1990; Hazan & Shaver; Simpson, 1990; Walker & Ehrenberg, 1998).

Attachment style has also been shown to be related to individuals' sexual behaviors, including infidelity. Shaver and Hazan (1988) proposed that individuals with secure attachment styles seek mutually satisfying and intimate sexual relationships whereas avoidant individuals have a sexual style characterized as promiscuous and emotionally distant from partners. Shaver and Hazan also argued that individuals with an

anxious attachment style are more likely to use sex as a way to achieve intimacy and security with their partner. Brennan and Shaver (1995) found that attachment style is related to more permissive sexual attitudes and behaviors (e.g., number of sexual partners, extradyadic activity, enjoyment of casual sex, approval of sexual activity without love). Specifically, individuals high in avoidance report more permissive sexual attitudes and higher levels of sexual activity whereas secure individuals are less likely to endorse permissive sexual attitudes and behaviors (Brennan & Shaver; Stephan & Bachman, 1999). Feldman and Cauffman (1999a) found that secure individuals were less accepting of relationship infidelity compared to avoidant individuals. Numerous other researchers have found that insecure attachment styles are consistently related to higher levels of infidelity (Allen & Baucom, 2004; Amidon, 2008; Bogaert & Sadava, 2002; Buunk & Dijkstra, 2000; Cohen, 2005). Allen and Baucom also discovered that avoidant individuals were more likely to engage in infidelity as a way to gain space, freedom, and autonomy from a relationship partner whereas individuals with an anxious attachment style reported engaging in infidelity as a way to receive intimacy as well as a way to enhance their self-esteem.

Additional Predictors of and Justifications for Infidelity

In addition to gender and attachment styles, a number of personal and relational factors have been found to predict propensity to engage in infidelity behaviors (Buunk & Dijkstra, 2000). Foremost, certain demographic features, besides gender, have been linked with infidelity rates and attitudes. There is some evidence that socioeconomic status is positively related to infidelity as higher levels of education and income are often

linked to infidelity, although this relationship is not always found and may be moderated by other variables, such as ethnicity and gender (Allen et al., 2005; Atkins, Baucom, & Jacobson, 2001; Blow & Hartnett, 2005; Traes & Giesen, 2000). Religiosity is also significantly related to infidelity behavior as individuals who more frequently attend religious services are less likely to engage in infidelity (Atkins et al., Blow & Hartnett; Fincham & Beach, 2010; Hansen, 1987; Whisman, Gordon, & Chatav, 2007). Infidelity rates do not appear to differ for individuals of different religious denominations although those with no religious affiliation report higher levels of infidelity (Allen et al.). There is some support for ethnic differences with African Americans, particularly African American males, more likely to engage in infidelity (Blow & Hartnett). It also appears that African Americans tend to have more positive attitudes towards infidelity compared to Caucasian individuals (Allen et al.; Feldman & Cauffman, 1999a).

Second, a number of personality variables have been linked to infidelity behavior. Buss and Shackelford (1997) found that individuals high in narcissism and psychoticism, and low in conscientiousness were more likely to engage in infidelity. These findings led the authors to conclude that a personality type characterized as highly impulsive and undependable is associated with more frequent sexual activity as well as infidelity. Whisman et al. (2007) also discovered that infidelity was positively related to neuroticism. Self-esteem is also related to infidelity behavior with high self-esteem individuals less likely to engage in infidelity (Sheppard et al., 1995; Traeen, Holmen, & Stigum, 2007; Whisman et al., 2007).

Third, research indicates that individuals' attitudes and beliefs about sexuality and infidelity are significant predictors of subsequent infidelity behaviors. Individuals' with more liberal and accepting beliefs about infidelity engage in infidelity at higher rates (Blow & Hartnett, 2005; Feldman & Cauffman, 1999a). More liberal sex attitudes in general and more favorable attitudes towards infidelity are positively associated with incidence of infidelity behavior (Hansen, 1987; Traes & Giesen, 2000). Seal et al. (1994) found that individuals with an unrestricted sociosexual orientation (greater willingness to engage in uncommitted sexual relations) were more willing to engage in infidelity. Other researchers have found that individuals with an unrestricted sociosexual orientation were more likely to engage in a sexual relationship outside the primary partnership than individuals with a more restricted sociosexual orientation (Havlicek, Husarova, Rezacova, & Klapilova, 2011; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). Havlicek et al. (2011) also discovered that individuals who reported a greater willingness to engage in infidelity were in fact more likely to have engaged in infidelity. Individuals who believe sex should occur during earlier stages of romantic relationships indicate a greater willingness to engage in infidelity (Emmers-Sommer et al., 2010) whereas individuals with a higher number of sexual partners are more likely to engage in infidelity (Traes & Giesen). Furthermore, individuals who have previously engaged in infidelity report more positive and accepting attitudes towards infidelity (Glass & Wright, 1992; Feldman & Cauffman; Wiederman, 1997). Therefore, once individuals engage in infidelity, they tend to view the behavior more favorably which may then be related to individuals' continued engagement in infidelity behaviors.

Finally, infidelity occurs in the context of a romantic relationship and specific features of the relationship influence whether individuals engage in infidelity. The major relationship factors that researchers have linked to likelihood of infidelity are relationship satisfaction and quality (Atkins, Dimidjian, & Jacobsen, 2001). Previti and Amato (2004) found that individuals with lower levels of relationship quality are more likely to engage in infidelity. Interestingly, many researchers report that marital satisfaction and religiosity interact so that highly religious individuals are unlikely to cheat regardless of satisfaction level but that satisfaction level is negatively related to infidelity among less religious individuals (Blow & Hartnett, 2005; Whisman et al., 2007). Commitment level is also associated with infidelity as individuals who are less committed to their relationship partner are also more likely to engage in infidelity (Drigotas, et al., 1990).

Furthermore, relationship dissatisfaction is one of the main justifications offered by individuals for their own infidelity behavior (Emmers-Sommer et al., 2010; Glass & Wright, 1992; Roscoe, et al., 1988). In a study of college students, being in a bad relationship and magnetic attraction to another individual were considered the most acceptable reasons for cheating (Feldman & Cauffman, 1999). Wiederman and Allgeier (1996) found that married participants believed the most likely reason a partner would cheat would be because of marital dissatisfaction. Additional justifications for infidelity behavior include being strongly attracted to the extradyadic partner, perceiving good alternatives, being bored in the current relationship, and being made to feel attractive by the extradyadic partner (Brand et al., 2007; Emmers-Sommer et al., 2010; Feldman & Cauffman, 1999a; Roscoe et al.). In a study of married individuals, sexual desire (sexual

excitement, enjoyment), emotional intimacy (companionship, understanding), extrinsic motivations (career advancement, revenge), and love (falling in love, receiving affection) were all found to be justifications for infidelity (Glass & Wright, 1992).

The findings currently presented are only a fraction of the substantial and informative literature which helps to explain why certain individuals may be more likely to engage in infidelity. However, further research is still warranted and deemed necessary in order to fully understand infidelity behavior. In particular, some researchers have argued that the lack of investigations examining how familial experiences may influence individuals' tendencies to engage in infidelity is a glaring gap in the literature (e.g. Allen et al., 2005; Blow & Hartnett, 2005). It is vital to examine how family-of-origin variables relate to infidelity behavior because familial experiences are consistently related to a wide variety of relationship-relevant behaviors. The current dissertation project heeds this call by studying how the experience of a parental infidelity relates to offspring's own infidelity behaviors.

Overview of Intergenerational Transmission Patterns

Researchers have long recognized that family-of-origin experiences significantly impact offspring attitudes, behaviors, and well-being into adulthood (Agnew, Loving, & Drigotas, 2001; Crittenden, 1997). In general, offspring tend to replicate the patterns of behavior observed in their family-of-origin (Constantine, 1986). Research strongly demonstrates that experiences within the family provide offspring with indelible lessons about how romantic relationships function and these beliefs have real consequences on offspring's behavior and relationship outcomes. Although there is evidence that personal

relationship histories also influence offspring relationship attitudes and outcomes, family-of-origin experiences continue to impact romantic relationship outcomes in adulthood (Doucet & Asteline, 2003; Tallman, Gray, Kullberg, & Henderson, 1999).

Family Patterns and Romantic Relationships

Intergenerational patterns have been observed in parenting styles and beliefs, as well as the occurrence of child abuse (Conger, Belsky, & Capaldi, 2009; Putallaz, Costanzo, Grimes, & Sherman, 1998; Serbin & Karp, 2004; Simons, Beaman, Conger, & Chao, 1992). Patterns of relationship violence and aggression (Hare, Miga, & Allen, 2009; Kwong, Bartholomew, Henderson, & Trinke, 2003; Rosen, Bartle-Haring, & Stith, 2001; Simons, Wu, Johnson, & Conger, 1995), and communication and conflict resolution styles also appear to be replicated across generations (Dadds, Atkinson, Turner, Blums, & Lendich, 1999; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Whitton, Waldinger, et al., 2008). Furthermore, parental conflict is consistently linked to offspring relationship outcomes, with individuals who report higher levels of parental conflict indicating a higher level of conflict, and lower levels of relationship quality and satisfaction, in their own relationships (Cui & Fincham, 2010; Doucet & Asteline, 2003; Kirk, 2002).

Personal relationships researchers have particularly focused on how parental divorce impacts offspring's romantic relationships. The experience of parental divorce is consistently linked to more negative relationship outcomes for offspring. Foremost, Segrin, Taylor, and Altman (2005) found that offspring of divorce are less likely to be in close, intimate relationships. Parental divorce is also related to a wide variety of offspring relationship characteristics including earlier sexual debut (Pearson, Muller, & Frisco,

2006), higher conflict (Amato & Booth, 1991a; Booth & Edwards, 1990), poorer

communication with their relationship partner (Herzog & Cooney, 2002; Sanders,

Halford, & Behrens, 1999), and lower relationship commitment (Whitton, Rhoades,

Stanley, & Markman, 2008). Given this tendency to have lower quality relationships and

more conflict, it is not surprising that individuals from divorced families are more likely

to be divorced themselves, a phenomenon known as the intergenerational transmission of

divorce (Amato & Booth, 1991a; Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Feng et al., 1999; Segrin et al.,

2005). The intergenerational transmission of divorce is perhaps one of the most well-

documented and researched phenomenon in the study of intergenerational patterns.

　　　　Thus, it is evident that parental relationships have far-reaching consequences for

offspring romantic relationships. Countless studies have documented this effect on a

number of relationship relevant behaviors. These studies clearly demonstrate that in order

to predict the likelihood of certain behaviors in romantic relationships it is vital to

understand individuals' family-of-origin experiences. Therefore, researchers must begin

to understand whether infidelity is another behavior which is replicated across

generations.

Patterns of Infidelity

　　　　There is some evidence that the experience of a parental infidelity impacts

offspring's future relationships, although most of this support comes from clinicians'

experiences rather than empirical research (e.g., Brown, 2001; Reibstein & Richards,

1993). Pittman (1989) argued that the most common effect of a parental infidelity is that

offspring are more likely to engage in infidelity themselves. Children are often made

aware of parental infidelities and experience significant distress, anger, and worry as a result (Duncombe & Marsden, 2004; Reibstein & Richards). Children may be pulled into their parents' conflict and the quality of parent-child relationships may suffer as a result of parental infidelity (Brown, 1999; Pittman). Offspring who discover a parental infidelity may lose respect for and have difficulty trusting their parent (Duncombe & Marsden; Reibstein & Richards). As these offspring mature and enter into their own romantic relationships, the experience of parental infidelity likely colors individuals' expectations and behaviors. It appears that a parental affair discovered in childhood continues to influence individuals into adulthood, including in their own romantic relationships (Brown, 2001). Some clinicians have observed that offspring who experienced a parental infidelity have difficulty maintaining high-quality romantic relationships, are more sexually promiscuous, and their own relationships tend to be wrought with infidelity (Brown, 1999; Lusterman, 2005; Reibstein & Richards).

Only a handful of studies have empirically examined whether family-of-origin experiences are related to individuals' propensity to engage in infidelity, and parental behavior does appear to be linked to offspring behavior later in life. Using a large national survey, Amato and Rogers (1997) found that parental divorce was associated with a higher likelihood of reporting problems with infidelity in offspring's own marriages. Greene (2006) found that individuals with knowledge of a father's infidelity were more likely to have a current romantic partner at the time of the study whereas knowledge of a mother's infidelity was related to lower levels of commitment in offspring's relationship. These studies suggest that family-of-origin experiences are

related to infidelity behaviors, but only two empirical studies have specifically explored

an intergenerational transmission of infidelity. In a small study of undergraduate students,

Platt, Nalbone, Casanova, and Wetchler (2008) found that sons whose fathers had

cheated were more likely to engage in infidelity themselves. A study of couples in the

Czech Republic also found this same pattern; men who had knowledge of a father's

infidelity were significantly more likely to have cheated in a romantic relationship

(Havlicek et al., 2011). In neither study did researchers find that mothers' infidelity

related to offspring's infidelity behavior. This collection of studies, as well as reports

from clinicians, suggest that family-of-origin experiences are important variables to

evaluate in order to more fully comprehend why some individuals are more likely to

engage in infidelity. However, none of this previous work has been theoretically

grounded, or attempted to explain how the experience of a parental infidelity may be

indirectly associated with offspring's own likelihood of engaging in infidelity as well.

Research is needed which further builds on these limited findings to more clearly

demonstrate that an intergenerational transmission of infidelity does indeed exist. Beyond

the empirical evidence, theory must also explain how such a pattern of behavior might

occur.

<div align="center">**Social Learning Theory**</div>

The current project will utilize social learning theory as a possible theoretical

explanation for the intergenerational transmission of infidelity. Social learning theory is

one of the theoretical perspectives most often applied to explain how behavior is

replicated across generations (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Feng et al., 1999; Hare et al.,

2009; Putallaz et al., 1998; Riggio & Fite, 2006; Whitton, Waldinger, et al., 2008). The application of social learning theory to the current project is therefore an improvement over previous reports and studies because it will empirically examine whether the intergenerational transmission of infidelity does indeed exist as well as test a theoretical model for explaining how such a transmission might occur. The project will explore how the experience of parental infidelity is directly related to offspring's propensity to engage in infidelity, as well as focusing on how offspring's beliefs may mediate this relationship, as consistent with social learning theory.

Introduction of theory

Social learning theory offers significant explanatory power about the mechanisms underlying an intergenerational transmission of relationship beliefs and behaviors. Social learning theory argues individuals learn through personal experience, direct communication, and vicarious learning (also known as observational learning and modeling) (Bandura, 1977, 1986). Individuals encode information about how to successfully conduct themselves and whether such behavior is desirable based on their own experiences, observations of others, and direct tuition from significant others. Individuals are thus able to construct courses of behavior based on information processed and retained from their interactions with their social environment (Bandura, 1991). According to Bandura (1986), social learning occurs in four stages: 1) paying attention to the behavior, including verbal communications, enacted by others, 2) the individual acquires and retains this information, 3) the individual must develop the skills necessary

to enact a behavior, and 4) the individual will decide whether such action is desirable based on the perceived consequences for the enacted behavior.

Social learning theory places a great deal of emphasis on the role observational learning, or modeling, plays in the transmission of behaviors. Modeling is a powerful way to communicate values, attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors to individuals and Bandura (1986) particularly stresses that "virtually all learning phenomena…can occur vicariously by observing other people's behavior and its consequences for them" (p. 19). However, direct communication also is vital to the social learning process. In fact, Kunkel, Hummert, and Dennis (2006) argue that "communication is implicitly understood to be part of the social learning process" (p. 263).

Another major principle of social learning theory is that individuals actively construct their belief systems, rather than mindlessly complying with messages received from the environment (Bandura, 2001; Kunkel et al., 2006). Individuals create their working models (e.g. attitudes, beliefs) of the world through their social interactions and develop subsequent courses of action through their own judgments and anticipatory beliefs. As such, individuals perform, or refrain from performing, behaviors as a result of social sanctions as well as self-reflective expectations (Bandura, 2001). Bandura (1991) argues that individuals have forethought and are subsequently able to plan their course of action and behave in a purposeful manner. It is via personal experience, modeling, and direct tuition that individuals are able to construct these personal standards, attitudes, and beliefs which then directly relate to behavior.

Thus, social learning theorists argue that an intergenerational transmission process occurs because parents communicate (directly and indirectly, verbally and nonverbally) valuable information and memorable messages about romantic relationships to their children (Kunkel et al., 2006). By observing their parents' relationship and receiving direct messages from their family-of-origin, offspring encode a great deal of information about the nature of romantic relationships (Kahn & Kline, 1980).

Messages from Family

Throughout their lifetimes, individuals construct complex schemas about romantic relationships, and much of the information contained within these cognitive structures are learned from the family-of-origin (Bryant & Conger, 2002; Fletcher & Thomas, 1996). These attitudes, beliefs, scripts, and narratives influence specific aspects of relationship functioning and how relationships are experienced (Fletcher & Thomas; Fletcher & Kininmonth, 1991). Social learning theory assumes that cognitions, such as attitudes and beliefs, play an important role in the transfer of relationship behaviors across generations and most researchers have argued that intergenerational transmission of behaviors occur via a transmission of relationship beliefs and commitment norms (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Riggio & Fite, 2006; Segrin et al., 2005; Thornton, 1991). The first and most prominent romantic relationship that individuals observe is the relationship between their parents; as such children learn how to develop and maintain relationships based on information accumulated from their parents' relationship (Bandura, 1986; Hare et al., 2009). In fact, parents may be considered the primary socializing agents for

offspring to learn attitudes, values, and behaviors about sex and relationships (Davis & Friel, 2001; Greenblat, 1980; Jaccard & Dittus, 1991).

Parents provide their children with a number of memorable messages about romantic relationships both through modeling and direct instruction. Memorable messages may be direct, intentional communications which are meant to provide rules and lessons for the recipient of the message (Knapp, Stohl, & Reardon, 1980). Parents directly articulate a number of messages to their offspring about the nature of fulfilling romantic relationships, warnings about relationships, information about sexual practices, and values regarding romantic relationships (Jaccard & Dittus, 1991; Kellas, 2010; Raffaelli & Green, 2003). These messages then are associated with offspring beliefs and subsequent behaviors. Offspring also learn through observing their parents' behaviors and tend to adopt these patterns of behavior themselves through modeling (Jaccard & Dittus). Social learning theorists assume that both parent behaviors and direct instruction communicate information to offspring which are then used to construct relationship attitudes and influence subsequent behaviors.

Social learning theory has frequently been applied to successfully explain the intergenerational transmission of divorce. According to social learning, the experience of parental divorce provides offspring with messages about the nature of romantic relationships; this information then significantly shapes offspring's beliefs about romantic relationships and subsequent behaviors. In a study in which university students ranked how likely they were to receive certain messages about romantic relationships from their family-of-origin, individuals whose parents divorced were more likely to

report receiving the messages "relationships are beset by lack of trust and fidelity",

"relationships are not permanent" and "one needs to approach relationships with caution"

compared to individuals whose parents did not divorce (Weigel, 2007). Hence, the

experience of parental divorce is related to messages received from the family-of-origin

and this information significantly relates to offspring's own relationship beliefs and

behaviors.

Children of divorce are more likely to be apprehensive about marriage, more

cynical about their own relationships, have more negative attitudes towards marriage, be

less optimistic about experiencing a life-long marriage, and be less confident about

having a happy marriage (Amato & Booth, 1991b; Dostal & Langhinrichsen-Rohling,

1997; Riggio & Weiser, 2008; Tasker & Richards, 1994; Yu & Adler-Baeder, 2007).

Importantly, the experience of parental divorce is also consistently related to more

positive attitudes towards divorce and beliefs that relationships are not permanent

(Amato, 1996; Cunningham & Thornton, 2005; Kapinus, 2004; Weigel, Bennett, &

Ballard-Reisch, 2003).

Cunningham and Thornton (2005) argued that parental divorce is related to more

positive attitudes towards divorce and more negative attitudes about relationships because

offspring of divorce gained messages that divorce can be beneficial for one's well-being

and happiness, as well as the knowledge that relationships are permeable. In contrast,

offspring whose parents remain married, even despite high levels of conflict, receive a

message that divorce is a thing to be avoided and offspring may have particularly

negative attitudes towards divorce (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Coleman & Ganong, 1984).

Webster, Orbuch, and House (1995) found that for individuals in less than happy marriages, individuals whose parents divorced were more likely to divorce compared to those offspring whose parents remained married. Consequently, it appears that children of divorce have a lower tolerance for conflict in their own romantic relationships and display more overall willingness to get divorced.

These relationship attitudes and beliefs are then directly related to offspring's romantic relationship outcomes and explain many of the intergenerational processes previously discussed. More favorable attitudes towards divorce are negatively related to relationship quality, commitment, satisfaction, and enhance the likelihood of divorce (Amato & Rogers, 1999; Riggio & Fite, 2006; Riggio & Weiser, 2008). Furthermore, Riggio and Weiser found that stronger negative attitudes towards marriage were associated with lower satisfaction and commitment, and higher levels of relationship conflict. Thus, negative relationship attitudes have real consequences for offspring romantic relationships. Most recently, Cui and Fincham (2010) found that the relationship between parental divorce and offspring relationship quality was mediated by less positive relationship attitudes and subsequently weaker commitment to their current romantic relationships.

Social Learning and the Intergenerational Transmission of Infidelity

Social learning theory also provides a likely explanation for the process underlying the intergenerational transmission of infidelity. Hogben and Byrne (1998) argued social learning theory is particularly suited to explain how individuals acquire information specifically regarding sexuality and the acceptability of sexual behaviors.

Although infidelity is not solely defined by the presence of sexual intercourse, sexuality is central to messages gained about romantic relationships from their family-of-origin. From an early age, individuals are able to observe and infer societal and familial norms regarding sexual behaviors and relationships (Greenblat, 1980). As individuals learn these norms from their familial environment, they begin to internalize these beliefs and regulate their own relationship and sexual behaviors according to the standards they have adopted (Bandura, 1992). Clinicians have noted that offspring who experience a parental infidelity tend to model the same behavior as their parents and are more likely to engage in infidelity (Brown, 2001; Pittman, 1989).

Social learning theorists would then argue that the intergenerational transmission of infidelity would occur via a process similar to the intergenerational transmission of divorce. The experience of parental infidelity sends certain messages about the nature of romantic relationships and the appropriateness of infidelity. These messages are then assimilated into offspring's beliefs about romantic relationships including attitudes towards infidelity, willingness to engage in infidelity, and general willingness to engage in sexual relationships outside the context of a committed romantic relationship. These beliefs are then directly related to individuals' likelihood of having ever engaged in infidelity as well as the number of infidelity episodes committed and number of infidelity partners.

Parents who commit infidelities do indeed convey important messages about relationship exclusivity to their children and such messages may be internalized and influence offspring behavior. According to Pittman (1989), infidelity embeds on children

lessons about what they may expect from relationship partners and in their relationships. Reibstein and Richards (1993) argued that parents may send negative messages about monogamy and fidelity towards their children by engaging in infidelity. Brown (2001) noted that individuals whose parents committed an infidelity may also gain the message that an affair is an appropriate response to relationship problems. The experience of parental infidelity also sends vital information about the trustworthiness of relationship partners, as parental infidelity disrupts offspring's sense of trust and offspring may feel the parent violated an understood value system (Sori, 2007; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1996). Parental infidelity appears to send messages to children that significant others, including parents, cannot be trusted (Brown, 1999; Duncombe & Marsden, 2004; Pittman, 1989). In sum, the experience of parental infidelity appears to send offspring the message that infidelity can be appropriate, relationship monogamy is not essential, and that significant others (even parents) may not be fully trusted.

These messages then shape individuals' beliefs about romantic relationships and the appropriateness of infidelity. Sori (2007) argued one of the main ways children are affected by a parental affair is that infidelity challenges offspring's beliefs about their parents and romantic relationships. As previously discussed, individuals' beliefs about infidelity and sexuality in general are related to incidence of infidelity behavior (Hansen, 1987; Seal et al., 1994; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991; Traes & Giesen, 2000). The experience of a parental infidelity alters individuals' working models of marriage and relationships (Reibstein & Richards, 1993), and these beliefs are then directly related to offspring infidelity behavior. Therefore, individuals who gained messages from their

family-of-origin that infidelity is acceptable likely have more liberal beliefs about sexual behavior and infidelity. These beliefs may then be linked to subsequent infidelity behavior including incidence of infidelity, number of episodes, and number of partners. The current project will explore whether messages from family-of-origin relate to offspring's infidelity and sexuality beliefs, as well as whether these beliefs are then directly associated with offspring's infidelity behavior.

The role of attachment style will also be considered as individuals' general working models of relationships will likely be related individuals' infidelity behaviors. Previous research has found that attachment style is related to sexual attitudes, willingness to engage in certain types of sex, infidelity attitudes, and infidelity behavior (Allen & Baucom, 2004; Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Feldman & Cauffman, 1999a; Shaver & Hazan, 1988; Stephan & Bachman, 1999). As attachment style has been linked to infidelity beliefs and behavior, it is important to consider the construct as it fits into an intergenerational transmission of infidelity. Attachment theory and social learning theory may be considered complementary theories, as both stress the role that family environment plays in the development of relationship attitudes and beliefs, and how these cognitions then inform behavior. For the current study, the predictive power of attachment style will be assessed while also taking into account information about the family-of-origin.

Social Learning and Gender

The current dissertation project will also explore whether parental infidelity is associated with infidelity beliefs and behaviors in the same manner for males and

females. As previously discussed, males in general appear to have more favorable attitudes towards extradyadic behavior, are more willing to engage in infidelity, and typically engage in infidelity at higher rates (Atkins, Baucom, & Jacobson, 2001; Oliver & Hyde, 1993). To complement this research tradition, gender differences in infidelity beliefs and behaviors will be explored in the current project. Specifically, the dissertation project will explore whether males and females gain the same messages about monogamy, faithfulness, and infidelity from their families-of-origin and whether these messages are similarly associated with infidelity beliefs and behaviors.

Social learning theory is a theoretical perspective often used to explain gender role development and subsequent gender difference (Crawford & Unger, 2004). Social learning theory emphasizes that gender is a learned process, not only a biological characteristic, and to explain gender role development the significant amount of learning that occurs throughout a human's lifetime must be accounted for (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Children learn gender roles through observational learning, personal experiences, and direct communication about what behaviors are appropriate for them to enact, just like any other behavior (Bussey & Bandura, 2004). Subsequently, children adopt gender roles because they experience and observe favorable reactions from their social environment when they act in a gender consistent manner, and may perceive potential reprimand if they behave in a gender inconsistent manner (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Kunkel et al., 2006).

Parents are one of the primary socializing agents for gender role development (Crawford & Unger, 2004; Kunkel et al., 2006; Werrbach, Grotevant, & Cooper, 1992).

Parents socialize their children from early on to behave in manners consistent with their biological sex, although there is great variety in specific parenting behaviors. One way in which parents are able to transfer their own relationship attitudes and patterns of behavior is via gender role development. According to Roberts (1980), individuals' attitudes about love, sexuality, and relationships are greatly informed by gender schemas and beliefs. Young girls are socialized to place greater value on social cohesion and relationships whereas boys are encouraged to be more autonomous (Crawford & Unger). The gender role beliefs that individuals gain greatly influence individuals' subsequent sexual behaviors including number of partners and safe sex practices (Carpenter, 2010; Leech, 2010; Schmookler & Bursik, 2007). In general, males are socialized to be more sexually unrestricted, hold more permissive sexual attitudes, and seek a variety of sexual partners (Baldwin & Baldwin, 1997; Bolton & MacEachron, 1988; Feldman et al., 2000; Schmookler & Bursik). This socialization process helps to explain why males in general tend to have more positive attitudes towards infidelity and engage in infidelity more frequently.

It is possible that males and females experience a parental infidelity differently. As males are already socialized to be more sexually promiscuous, receiving favorable messages about infidelity is likely to be more consistent with messages about sexuality that they have already received from their parents. Parental infidelity may actually reinforce the acceptability of sexual activities outside of the context of a committed romantic relationship, making males whose parents engaged in infidelity particularly likely to have positive attitudes towards uncommitted sex and infidelity. These males

likely then engage in infidelity at particularly high rates. In contrast, because females are traditionally socialized to be more sexually restricted, the experience of parental infidelity may have a lesser impact on their belief systems. Females have already been socialized to adhere to one set of gender-specific sex roles and favorable messages about infidelity are counter to the belief systems most females already possess. Conversely, it is also possible that females may be more impacted by parental infidelity, and more likely to later engage in infidelity, as such an experience may be a severe blow to their belief systems and prior sexuality norms may be abandoned.

The current dissertation project will also examine how gender of the cheating parent relates to offspring's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. In general, children tend to model their behavior based on same-sex models (Bussey & Bandura, 1984; Perry & Bussey, 1979) and as such are more likely to copy the behaviors of the same-sex parent (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). The gender of the unfaithful parent will likely influence how individuals understand and learn from their parent's infidelity. Pittman (1989) argued "the long-term outcome of the family drama for next generation will depend upon whether each child chooses the infidel, the cuckold, or the affairee as a role model" (p. 267). Individuals are particularly likely to identify with and model the behaviors of others who are similar to them along a variety of dimensions, including gender (Bandura, 1977, 1986). Clinicians have argued that children tend to model the sexual behaviors, including infidelity, of the same-sex parent (Pittman, 1989; Reibstein and Richards, 1993).

There is some research which supports the idea that the same-sex parent may be more influential in replicating family patterns across generations. Dadds et al. (1999)

found that sons were more likely to model the conflict resolution style of their fathers whereas daughters were more likely to model their mothers. Schrodt et al. (2009) also discovered that sons were most influenced by their father's communication style. However, both authors did caution that mothers and fathers each influenced offspring behavior and that evidence for same-sex modeling was somewhat weak. Other researchers have found no evidence that offspring are more likely to model the behaviors of the same-sex parent (Kwong et al., 2003; Simons et al., 1992). It is likely that this relationship depends on the dimension that researchers are studying and the relationship quality with each parent. Overall, parental infidelity does seem to predict a higher likelihood for offspring to have committed an infidelity in their own relationships when a same-sex parent committed the infidelity, as Platt et al. (2008) found that adult male children who were aware that their father had committed an infidelity were more likely to engage in infidelity themselves. Therefore, it is important to the current dissertation project to examine whether the gender of the cheating parent is related to offspring's infidelity beliefs and behaviors.

Outcome of Parental Infidelity

Families may deal with the experience of a parental infidelity in a variety of ways. Some individuals may remain with their partner and have a successful relationship following an infidelity whereas others may dissolve the relationship upon discovering a partner's infidelity. Dunscombe and Marsden (2004) argued that offspring are influenced by the degree to which parental infidelity disrupts the family. How a parental infidelity is resolved likely transmits important messages about the act of infidelity. Offspring whose

parents separated following an infidelity likely experience greater disruptions, and as such these individuals will hold more negative beliefs about infidelity. In contrast, offspring whose parents stayed together following an infidelity may view infidelity less negatively since their parents were able to successfully navigate the indiscretion. Reibstein and Richards (1993) suggested that the experience of parental infidelity may actually give offspring permission to engage in their own infidelities, particularly if the parents were able to have a successful relationship following the infidelity. These parents model to their offspring that infidelity can have positive outcomes for relationships, or at least fewer negative outcomes compared to parents whose relationship dissolves.

According to Bandura (1977), observing others engage in seemingly prohibited activities with little adverse consequences reduces previous inhibitions for the observers. Thus, the outcome of parental infidelity, in addition to the act of infidelity itself, likely influences offspring's beliefs and behaviors. Therefore, offspring whose parents remained together despite an infidelity likely possess more favorable views of infidelity and may be less likely to engage in infidelity themselves. In contrast, offspring whose parents' relationship dissolved will likely posses more negative beliefs about infidelity and be more likely to engage in infidelity themselves.

Social Learning, Age, and Developmental Stage

The age of an individual when a parental infidelity occurred also may influence the process of the intergenerational transmission of infidelity. The learning process depends on the ability of individuals to fully comprehend the nature of a specific behavior as well as the outcomes. According to Bandura (1977, 1986), social learning

cannot occur if individuals lack the cognitive development necessary to link behavior to specific outcomes. As a result, younger children who do not fully understand the nature of infidelity may not gain the same messages about the infidelity behavior as their older counterparts. Young individuals will likely understand that a parent behaved badly and know that cheating is wrong (although it is unlikely that they will understand the sexual nature of this behavior). Clinicians argue that younger children would be most impacted by general tension and conflict in the family (Brown, 1999; Duncombe & Marsden, 2004; Lusterman, 2005; Reibstein & Richards, 1993).

In contrast, older offspring, particularly adolescents, may be more aware of their parent's sexual relationships and the sexual nature of an infidelity (Reibstein & Richards, 1993). Therefore, adolescents may be particularly impacted by the discovery of a parental infidelity because they more fully understand the meaning of their parents' transgression (Sori, 2007). Additionally, adolescents are struggling with their own sexual development during this period (Erikson, 1963) and may be particularly in tune to the sexually-relevant messages their parents are transmitting (Brown, 1999; 2001; Reibstein & Richards). Older offspring and adolescents are thus more cognitively equipped to receive messages about infidelity compared to younger offspring. These messages are then more likely to be assimilated in their belief systems and influence subsequent behavior. Younger children who do not fully understand the nature of infidelity may be less likely to receive memorable messages about infidelity, monogamy, and trust; as such their belief systems and behaviors may be more similar to individuals who did not experience a parental infidelity.

The Current Project

Utilizing social learning theory, the proposed dissertation project will empirically examine whether individuals who have knowledge of a parental infidelity are more likely to have committed infidelity themselves compared to individuals with no knowledge of parent infidelity. It is proposed that individuals who experienced a parental infidelity will be less likely to have received positive messages about fidelity and faithfulness and more likely to have received messages that infidelity is acceptable from their families-of-origin, as well as witnessed greater parent conflict about infidelity. Having received these messages, individuals will report more positive beliefs about infidelity, more positive beliefs about engaging in uncommitted sexual behaviors (an unrestricted sociosexual orientation), and greater willingness to engage in infidelity. These more positive beliefs will then be directly linked to individuals' infidelity behavior. The project will also explore how gender of offspring, gender of the cheating parent, outcomes of parental infidelity, and age when offspring first suspected infidelity in their parent's relationship relate to individuals' infidelity and sexuality beliefs, as well as infidelity behavior. It is also proposed that individuals' attachment style will be associated with infidelity beliefs and behavior. Please see Figure 1 for a depiction of the proposed theoretical model.

Overview of Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on the literature cited above, the following hypotheses and research questions are proposed for the dissertation project. To view each specific hypothesis and research question, and accompanying statistical analyses, please see Appendix A.

Hypothesis 1: Offspring with a parent who committed an infidelity will be

more likely to have ever engaged in infidelity, to have engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years, and to report a greater number of sexual infidelity episodes and partners.

Hypothesis 2: Offspring with a parent who committed an infidelity will be less likely to have gained positive messages about fidelity and faithfulness from their family-of-origin, to have gained messages about infidelity as an acceptable behavior, and to have witnessed greater levels of parental conflict about infidelity.

Hypothesis 3: Offspring with a parent who committed an infidelity will report greater beliefs about the acceptability of infidelity, endorse more positive and less negative outcomes following infidelity, greater willingness to engage in infidelity, and a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation.

Hypothesis 4: Individuals who report higher levels of family messages about fidelity and faithfulness, lower levels of family messages about infidelity as an acceptable, and witnessed great levels of parental conflict about infidelity will report lower beliefs about the acceptability of infidelity, endorse less positive and more negative outcomes following infidelity, lower willingness to engage in infidelity, and a more restricted sociosexual orientation.

Hypothesis 5: Individuals who have ever cheated, engaged in sexual infidelity, and report a greater number of sexual infidelity episodes and partners will report greater beliefs about the acceptability of infidelity, endorse more positive and less negative outcomes following infidelity, greater willingness to engage

in infidelity, and a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation.

Hypothesis 6: Individuals who have ever cheated, engaged in sexual infidelity, and report a greater number of sexual infidelity episodes and partners will report higher levels of Avoidance and Anxiety.

Hypothesis 7: Males will be more likely to have ever engaged in infidelity, will be more likely to have engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years, and report a greater number of sexual infidelity episodes and partners.

Hypothesis 8: Males will report greater beliefs about the acceptability of infidelity, endorse more positive and less negative outcomes following infidelity, greater willingness to engage in infidelity, and a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation.

Hypothesis 9: Offspring whose parents are still together following a parental infidelity will be more likely to have ever engaged in infidelity, to have engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years, and to report a greater number of sexual infidelity episodes and partners.

Hypothesis 10: Offspring whose parents are still together following a parental infidelity will report greater beliefs about the acceptability of infidelity, endorse more positive and less negative outcomes following infidelity, greater willingness to engage in infidelity, and a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation.

Hypothesis 11: Offspring who first suspected parental infidelity at an older age will be more likely to have ever engaged in infidelity, to have engaged in sexual

infidelity in the last two years, and to report a greater number of sexual

infidelity episodes and partners.

Hypothesis 12: Offspring who first suspected parental infidelity at an older age

will report greater beliefs about the acceptability of infidelity, endorse more

positive and less negative outcomes following infidelity, greater willingness to

engage in infidelity, and a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation.

Research Question 1: Does the model outlined in Figure 1 adequately fit the

data; that is does the proposed model grounded in social learning explain the

intergenerational transmission of infidelity?

Research Question 2: Is the model different for males and females?

Research Question 3: Is the model different for males and females if the same-

sex parent committed the infidelity?

Chapter 3: Method

The current chapter presents information about the participants, materials, and procedures involved in the study. Multiple recruitment techniques were utilized in order to explore patterns of infidelity among individuals of varying ages, instead of relying only on information from college students. Atkins, Dimidjian, and Jacobsen (2001) argued that infidelity studies which only utilize a college student population are limited in generalizability because such individuals may never have been in highly committed romantic relationships. Additionally, previous research indicates that the impact of parental relationships and attitudes on offspring differs as individuals mature and gain more experience in their own romantic relationships (Kapinus, 2004; Seiffge-Krenke, et al., 2001). Specifically, parents appear to be most influential on offspring relationship beliefs and behaviors during the later teenage years.

For these reasons, multiple recruitment methods were undertaken in order to understand the intergenerational transmission of infidelity in individuals of varying ages. Age was entered as a variable in all statistical tests so any differences may be accounted for in the analyses. The generalizability of the current dissertation project will hence be significantly enhanced because the findings will be applicable to a wider array of individuals in various types of relationships and different age groups.

Preliminary Findings

Earlier research by the researcher indicates that family background, and parental infidelity in particular, does indeed relate to offspring's infidelity behavior (Weiser, Lalasz, Weigel, & Evans, in progress). This preliminary study was conducted by the

researcher for three primary reasons: 1) to pilot test a measure of infidelity beliefs, 2) to demonstrate that offspring are knowledgeable of parental infidelities and are willing to report such behaviors, and 3) to assess whether a variety of family background features are related to offspring infidelity. In a study of 298 college students (113 males, 185 female, *M* age = 22.88 years), 42 individuals suspected or were confident that their mother committed an infidelity and 68 individuals suspected or were confident that their father committed an infidelity. Of the participants who suspected or knew of an infidelity, 27 individuals first suspected a parental infidelity at 10 years of age or younger, 17 individuals first suspected a parental infidelity between 11-13 years of age, 35 individuals first suspected a parental infidelity between 14-17 years of age, and 21 individuals first suspected a parental infidelity at 18 years or older. Additionally, 131 individuals (44.3%) indicated they had been cheated on in a romantic relationship and 87 individuals (29.2%) indicated that they themselves had engaged in infidelity. These numbers once again indicate the prevalence of infidelity in romantic relationships.

Logistic regression analyses revealed that mother and father infidelity were related to offspring's own infidelity behavior. Individuals who suspected or knew of a mother infidelity were significantly more likely to have cheated themselves [Wald= 7.89, *B* = .97, *SE* =.35, Exp(B)= 2.63, *p* = .005] and individuals who suspected or knew of a father infidelity were more likely to have cheated themselves [Wald= 8.74, *B* = .87, *SE* =.29, Exp(B)= 2.38, *p* = .003]. Additionally, individuals whose parents were divorced were also more likely to have ever engaged in infidelity in a romantic relationship [Wald= 13.54, *B* = .96, *SE* =.26, Exp(B)=2.62, *p* < .001].

A series of t-tests were also conducted to explore how family background and infidelity beliefs differed between individuals who had engaged in infidelity and those who had not. Individuals who had cheated in a romantic relationship reported more favorable beliefs about infidelity [3.03 vs. 2.76, $t(292) = 2.53$, $p = .012$] and higher levels of parental conflict [3.02 vs. 2.67, $t(288) = 2.08$, $p = .039$]. These individuals also perceived their parents' relationships as less happy [2.71 vs. 3.44, $t(290) = -4.37$, $p < .001$] and less satisfying [2.68 vs. 3.51, $t(291) = -4.89$, $p < .001$]. The same series of t-tests were also run to explore differences between those individuals who had been cheated on in a romantic relationship and those who had not experienced a partner infidelity. Interestingly, those individuals who reported having ever been cheated on in a romantic relationship also perceived their parents' relationships as less happy [3.03 vs. 3.40, $t(289) = -2.33$, $p = .020$] and satisfying [3.02 vs. 3.47, $t(290) = -2.81$, $p = .005$], and more riddled with conflict [2.98 vs. 2.60, $t(287) = 2.42$, $p = .016$].

These preliminary findings suggest that family background and parental infidelity are related to offspring's own infidelity behavior. Most importantly, these findings demonstrate that individuals do have knowledge of parental infidelities and are willing and able to provide information about these parental infidelities. Information about the Infidelity Beliefs Questionnaire developed from this pilot study will be presented in the following section. The current dissertation project more specifically examined the intergenerational transmission of infidelity, and the mechanism powering this phenomenon.

Dissertation Study

Participants

Participants were recruited via three methods for the current study. First, undergraduate students at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) were recruited through the Social Psychology subject pool. Second, undergraduate students enrolled in a social science course at the University of South Florida (USF) were recruited to take part in the study. All students at UNR and USF received course credit for participating in the current study.

Finally, participants were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) application. MTurk is an open, online marketplace suitable for the recruitment of participants in online, social science research (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Mason & Suri, 2010). The website works by "requesters" (i.e. the researcher) posting an invitation to participate in a multitude of online tasks, including surveys, perception tasks, experiments, etc. "Workers" (i.e. the participants), receive small amounts of monetary compensation for their participation. Compensation typically ranges from five cents to two dollars, depending on the length of the task. Buhrmester et al. (2011) found that most individuals participated in MTurk tasks because of personal enjoyment, rather than financial gain. This helps to explain why individuals are motivated to participate in tasks for such small monetary awards. Researchers have found that MTurk provides high-quality data that meets acceptable psychometric standards and provides similar results as studies using more traditional subject pools (Buhrmester et al.; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010). Furthermore, MTurk participants appear to provide truthful and accurate

data that is fairly consistent across studies (Rand, 2012). For the current project, MTurk workers received 50 cents for participating in the research study.

These three recruitment techniques resulted in a sample of 718 individuals, with 278 individuals from UNR, 121 individuals from USF, and 319 individuals from MTurk. Included in the sample were 276 males and 440 females (M age = 26.9 years). Participants were predominantly Caucasian (n = 547), although African Americans (n = 43), Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders (n = 46), Latinos (n = 48), and multiethnic individuals (n = 30) were also included in the sample. Among participants, 216 were not currently involved in a romantic relationship (30.1%), 36 were dating multiple people (5.0%), 204 were dating one person exclusively (28.4%), 96 were cohabitating with a partner (13.4%), 32 were engaged (4.5%), and 134 were married (18.7%). The average length of these relationships was 59.2 months. Among participants, 226 individuals indicated that they had cheated at some point in a romantic relationship (31.5%).

Materials and Procedure

Upon recruitment, all participants were directed to the survey which was housed online on the Survey Monkey website. All participants, regardless of university or recruitment technique, completed the self-report survey online.

Measures. All variables of interest were assessed using the following measures (see Appendix B). The measures are presented here in reference to how each variable is located within the model and are not in the order participants viewed these materials. Participants first completed information about their attachment style, infidelity and sexuality beliefs, and own infidelity behaviors. Participants then answered questions

about relationship messages they received while growing up, family communication, and parent infidelity history. Lastly, participants completed demographic information. See Tables 1 and 2 to review all pertinent means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages for the variables of interest.

Parent relationship history. Information about participants' parental romantic relationship was assessed with the Parent Relationship Questionnaire. The first two items assessed offspring's parental marital status. The remaining items assessed whether a parental infidelity occurred and information about the infidelity such as the outcome of the parental infidelity, age of offspring when the infidelity occurred, age when offspring first suspected a parent infidelity, and how offspring discovered the parental infidelity. These parental infidelity items were adapted from the measure utilized by Greene (2006). A total of 418 participants indicated that their parents were currently married (58.2%), 220 individuals reported that their parents were divorced (30.6%), 43 individuals indicated that their parents never married (5.9%), and 38 individuals reported that a parent had passed away (5.3%). A total of 246 participants indicated knowledge of a parental infidelity (34.3%), with 98 individuals reporting a maternal infidelity (13.6%) and 189 individuals reporting a paternal infidelity (26.3%), including 41 individuals who indicated both a mother and father infidelity.

Messages gained from family-of-origin. Participants rated how similar five messages about infidelity, fidelity, and faithfulness are to information they gained from their family-of-origin. These five items were constructed by the researcher for the current dissertation project to assess broad messages gained from the family-of-origin. Sample

items included "Relationship partners should always be faithful" and "In order to have a successful relationship, individuals should only be involved with their relationship partner" (refer to Appendix B for all items). All items were reviewed by 28 individuals in a small pilot study to ensure that instructions and item language were clear and appropriate. Feedback was taken into account, and items and instructions were revised accordingly. In the current study, participants rated each item using a seven-point Likert scale where 1 = not at all similar and 7 = very similar. Principal components analysis with varimax rotation was conducted and revealed a one factor solution. All items loaded highly on this one factor and explained 56.08% of the variance. The factor was named "Messages from Family about Fidelity" (MFF Fidelity). Items were averaged and higher scores are indicative of having gained more positive messages about fidelity and faithfulness, and more negative messages about infidelity from their family-of-origin (M = 5.69, SD = 1.22, Cronbach's α = .79). In structural equation modeling, one latent variable (MFF Fidelity) will be estimated from all five items. Latent variables are the underlying constructs that researchers want to measure, but are unable to directly measure (Holbert & Stephenson, 2002). In structural equation models, latent variables are estimated based on multiple indicators of the proposed construct while taking measurement error into account (Mark & Reichardt, 2004) whereas observed variables are measures which are directly entered into the model, rather than estimated.

Family communication questionnaire. Participants indicated how often they observed their parents communicate and argue about infidelity, monogamy, and commitment as well as how often their parents communicated with offspring directly

about relationship exclusivity and infidelity. The measure was designed by the researcher for the current project to assess specific communication about infidelity from the family-of-origin. Once again, items were reviewed by the same 28 individuals in a pilot study in order to ensure that all instructions and items were understandable. The questionnaire is composed of 17 items and participants respond using a seven-point Likert scale where 1 = never and 7 = very often. Sample items include "My parents discussed their commitment to monogamy", "My parents argued about other men or women" and "My parents told me that infidelity is acceptable in romantic relationships" (please see Appendix B for all items). Principal components analysis with varimax rotation resulted in a three factor solution. All items loaded highly and uniquely on their respective factors and together explained 72.33% of the variance. Items for each factor were averaged and higher scores indicate more frequent communication about faithfulness in the family, more frequent observation of parents fighting about infidelity, and more frequent direct communication about infidelity being acceptable. The three factors were labeled "Family Communication about being Faithful" (FC Faithful, $M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.74$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .92$), "Parent Conflict about Infidelity" (FC Argue, $M = 2.32$, $SD = 1.58$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$), and "Family Communication about Infidelity Acceptability" (FC Acceptable, $M = 1.55$, $SD = 1.07$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$). Three latent variables will therefore be estimated during structural equation modeling.

Infidelity beliefs. Infidelity beliefs were measured with a questionnaire constructed by the researcher. The Infidelity Beliefs Questionnaire is a 17-item measure used to assess how acceptable individuals believe infidelity is in romantic relationships

and the outcomes of infidelity. Participants responded using a seven-point Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. Sample items include "Infidelity is acceptable in romantic relationships", "Infidelity can have positive outcomes for a relationship", and "It is ok to have sex with an individual who is not your romantic partner". As previously indicated, the measure was pilot tested in the preliminary study. Three factors emerged from factor analysis and were labeled "Infidelity Beliefs-Negative Outcomes" ($\alpha = .78$), "Infidelity Beliefs-Positive Outcomes" ($\alpha = .71$), and "Infidelity Beliefs-Acceptability" ($\alpha = .73$). Results from that preliminary study also indicated that individuals who had previously cheated in a romantic relationship held more favorable infidelity beliefs, providing some evidence of predictive validity.

Seven items were amended or added for the version of the questionnaire used in the current project. Items were changed or deleted from the previous version of the questionnaire if the items failed to significantly load on a factor or participants indicated confusion over the item. For example, the item "It is ok to be emotionally involved with an individual who is not your romantic partner" was changed to "It is ok to have romantic feelings for an individual who is not your romantic partner" and "Infidelity is common in romantic relationships" was changed to "Infidelity is normal in romantic relationships" for the current project. Additionally, the item "Infidelity is not socially acceptable" was changed to "Infidelity is acceptable in romantic relationships" in the current questionnaire manifestation. Items "As long as your partner doesn't find out, there is nothing wrong with cheating", "Infidelity is rewarding for the individual who cheats", "It is never ok to cheat", and "As long as you don't get caught, it is fine to cheat" were

added to the current version of the questionnaire. These items were added to further

capture individuals' perceptions of the acceptability of infidelity in general (please see

Appendix B to view this measure).

Principal components analysis with varimax rotation was conducted on the

current iteration of the Infidelity Beliefs Questionnaire. Three factors once more emerged

which explained 62.80% of the variance. Two items "It is ok to flirt with an individual

who is not your romantic partner" and "It is never ok to cheat" were dropped because

neither item loaded highly nor uniquely, resulting in a final scale of 15 items. Items for

the respective factors were averaged and the factors were again labeled "Infidelity

Beliefs-Negative Outcomes" (IB Negative, $M = 5.74$, $SD = 1.20$, $\alpha = .81$), "Infidelity

Beliefs-Positive Outcomes" (IB Positive, $M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.58$, $\alpha = .82$), and "Infidelity

Beliefs-Acceptability" (IB Acceptable, $M = 2.13$, $SD = 1.10$, $\alpha = .88$). Higher scores

indicate greater endorsement of the positive and negative outcomes following infidelity

as well as greater acceptance of infidelity behaviors.

In structural equation modeling only two latent variables will be estimated (IB

Negative and IB Acceptable) as Hair et al. (2006) argues that at least 3 indicators, or

items, are necessary to construct a latent variable. The factor IB Positive is comprised of

only 2 items and therefore no latent variable will be estimated. Instead, in all structural

equation models IB Positive will be entered as an observed variable (the average of the

two items).

Willingness to engage in infidelity. Individuals reported their willingness to

engage in infidelity with the Extradyadic Behavioral Intentions Scale (adapted from

Buunk, 1998). Buunk developed the scale based on the theory of planned behavior in which intentions to engage in a behavior is one of the most proximal predictors of actually enacting the specific behavior. Participants' rated how likely they are to engage in a variety of behaviors (e.g. kissing, sexual intercourse) with an individual other than their primary relationship partner. Items were updated for the current study to reflect more contemporary language (i.e. eliminating the term light petting). Participants responded using a seven-point scale which ranged from 1 = certainly not to 7 = certainly yes. Higher scores on the measure indicate a greater willingness to engage in infidelity behaviors (Willingness, $M = 2.17$, $SD = 1.29$, $\alpha = .92$). In structural equation modeling, one latent variable will be estimated for willingness to engage in infidelity.

Uncommitted sexual willingness. Individuals' general willingness to engage in uncommitted sexual relations was assessed with the Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). The SOI is comprised of 4 items assessing individuals' sexual behaviors and 3 items assessing individuals' attitudes towards uncommitted sexual relationships. A sample behavior item is "With how many different partners have you had sex on one and only one occasion?" and a sample attitudinal item is "I can imagine myself being comfortable enjoying 'casual' sex with different partners." Following the suggestion of Simpson and Gangestad, responses for the three behavioral items reflecting sexual partners were recoded so that 30 sexual partners would be the maximum. Items were weighted and aggregated so that higher scores are indicative of an unrestricted sociosexual orientation and lower scores are indicative of a restricted sociosexual orientation (SOI, $M = 57.09$, $SD = 42.38$, $\alpha = .75$). Individuals with a

restricted sociosexual orientation prefer sexual relationships in the context of close, committed relationships whereas unrestricted individuals are comfortable having sexual relationships without commitment and closeness. One latent variable will be estimated in structural equation modeling for the SOI.

Offspring Infidelity Behavior. The Extradyadic Experiences Questionnaire (EEQ; Allen, 2004) was completed by participants to assess patterns of infidelity behavior. These items are used to objectively examine the extent of participants' extradyadic involvement over the past two years. Participants were asked to indicate whether they have engaged in certain behaviors (e.g., passionate kissing, sexual hugging and caressing) with someone other than their primary partner. These questions objectively measure infidelity, as individuals may or may not have considered these behaviors to be unfaithful. An individual was objectively considered to have engaged in infidelity if he or she endorsed any of these behaviors. Participants are also asked to report the number of infidelity episodes and the number of infidelity partners for each type of behavior. The EEQ has been used successfully by other infidelity researchers (e.g. Allen & Baucom, 2004; Hall & Fincham, 2009) to assess infidelity behavior.

For the current project, the decision was made to focus on whether participants indicated they had engaged in sexual infidelity, the number of sexual infidelity episodes, and the number of sexual infidelity partners in the last two years. These items were selected as the majority of existing infidelity research focuses on the prevalence of sexual infidelity and infidelity involving sexual behavior is typically deemed the most serious form of infidelity. Participants were also asked two yes/no questions added by the

researcher about whether they have *ever* cheated in a romantic relationship and whether they *ever* had a partner cheat on them. In sum, the four items which will be used to assess offspring infidelity are whether the individual has ever cheated in a romantic relationship, whether the individual has engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years, the number of sexual infidelity episodes in the last two years, and the number of sexual infidelity partners in the last two years. These four items will provide information about offspring's total infidelity history as well as their recent sexual history and the magnitude of this infidelity.

    Attachment style. Attachment style was assessed with the Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ; Simpson, Rholes, & Phillips, 1996). The AAQ is a 17-item scale that measures adult attachment style in terms of two underlying dimensions of avoidance and anxiety. Participants respond to items using a seven-point Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. A sample item for the avoidance dimension is "I don't like people getting too close to me" whereas "I often worry that my partner(s) don't really love me" is an item example for the anxiety dimension. Individuals low in both dimensions are considered to be securely attached whereas individuals high on the anxiety dimensions are classified as anxious and individuals high on the avoidance dimension are classified as avoidant. Items for each dimension are averaged and scores calculated for Avoidance ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 1.05$, $\alpha = .82$) and Anxiety ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.06$, $\alpha = .81$). Two latent variables, Avoidance and Anxiety, will be estimated in the structural equation models.

Demographics. Participants provided information about their age, gender, and ethnicity. Participants were also asked to indicate if they are currently in a romantic relationship, the length of this relationship, whether the relationship is sexually open or not, and whether they have ever been involved in a romantic relationship.

Data Assumptions

Before beginning any analyses, all data were checked for univariate normality. Although Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics were significant, items overall exhibited normal distributions as skewness and kurtosis values for each item were typically less than twice their standard errors, within the appropriate range statistics, and observed data values on the normal Q-Q plots appeared consistent with the expected values line. Moreover, multivariate normality was assessed among the items. Specifically, the predictor items overall exhibited normality, linearity, and homoscedascisity as scatterplots depicting standardized residual versus standardized predicted values were generally rectangular in shape and clustered around the value of zero.

There were some slight departures from normality in a few of the items, particularly in the willingness to engage in infidelity items, number of sexual infidelity episodes, and number of sexual infidelity partners. These items were transformed and no differences were found in analyses using transformed and non-transformed values. Therefore, all analyses subsequently reported utilize the non-transformed values.

Chapter 4: Results

Initially, data were compared across all locations to test for meaningful differences between recruitment methods on the variables of interest. Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, frequencies, percentages) and correlations were also conducted for all variables of interest. Next, a series of MANOVAs, logistic regressions, and multiple regressions were executed to test Hypotheses 1-12. Finally, structural equation modeling was conducted to test Research Questions 1-3.

Comparing Participants across Locations and Age

First, a series of analyses were run to ascertain whether there were any meaningful differences on the variables of interest as a function of location. It was expected that the MTurk participants would on average be older than the participants from either university, as the average age of MTurk participants is typically 32 years of age (Mason & Suri, 2010). This expectation was supported as the average age of UNR participants was 23.3 years of age, the average age of USF participants was 20.6 years of age, and the average age of MTurk participants was 32.4 years of age. A one-way ANOVA was conducted and indicated that age differed significantly as a function of location [$F(2,715) = 102.06$, $p < .001$]. Post hoc comparisons indicated that MTurk participants significantly differed from the UNR and USF participants ($p < .001$) and that UNR and USF participants significantly differed from one another ($p = .027$). Thus, the multiple recruitment techniques did result in a sample of varying ages. As a result, age will be included in all statistical analyses to control for and model its effects. A summary

of age effects in the structural equation model will be discussed towards the end of the results section.

A series of ANOVAs were run on all continuous variables of interest (see Table 1 for all means, standard deviations, and ANOVA results). Location served as the between-groups factor and age was entered as a covariate. Two significant differences emerged for FC Faithful [$F(2,714) = 9.32$, $p < .001$] and Avoidance [$F(2,715) = 4.49$, $p = .012$]. Post hoc comparisons revealed that for FC Faithful, MTurk participants reported significantly lower mean scores than UNR participants (2.80 vs. 3.63, $p < .001$) and USF participants (2.80 vs. 3.87, $p < .001$). With regards to Avoidance, post hoc comparisons revealed only a significant difference between MTurk and UNR participants (3.72 vs. 3.41, $p = .003$). A series of hierarchical logistic regressions were then run for all categorical variables of interest (see Table 2 for frequencies, percentages, and logistic regression results). Age was entered in the first block, followed by location in the second block for all analyses. No significant differences were revealed for any of the categorical variables of interest. Based on these findings, it was decided that it was appropriate to combine data from all locations for further analyses. Although a couple of differences were observed, overall participants appeared highly similar and the combination of data is warranted.

Multivariate Analyses

A number of multivariate analyses were first run to test Hypotheses 1-12. These preliminary analyses give insight into how variables relate to one another and provide further support for the proposed model to be tested with structural equation modeling. Foremost, correlations among the family communication variables, infidelity beliefs,

sexuality beliefs, and attachment style were explored (please see Table 3). As a whole, it appears that receiving more favorable messages about fidelity was associated with less positive beliefs about infidelity, a more restricted sociosexual orientation, less willingness to engage in infidelity, and lower avoidance and anxiety. An opposite pattern emerged for those whose parents argued about infidelity and communicated to their children that infidelity was acceptable. Furthermore, it appears that the majority of infidelity beliefs, sexuality beliefs, and attachment dimensions are significantly associated with one another in that individuals who reported more positive beliefs about infidelity also reported less restricted sexuality beliefs, greater willingness to engage in infidelity, and higher levels of avoidance and anxiety. These correlations indicate that the major variables of interest are associated as expected, providing further support for the validity of the measures as well as further analysis.

Parent Infidelity and Offspring Infidelity

To test Hypothesis 1, analyses examined whether parental infidelity was related to the various types of infidelity behavior. Two hierarchical logistic regressions were conducted to explore whether parental infidelity related to individuals having ever engaged in infidelity and individuals having engaged in a sexual infidelity in the last two years. Age was entered in the first block followed by parental infidelity. Parental infidelity was positively associated with having ever engaged in infidelity (Wald = 29.92, $B = .92$, $SE = .17$, Exp(B) = 2.51, $p < .001$) as well as having engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years (Wald = 5.32, $B = .52$, $SE = .22$, Exp(B) = 1.67, $p = .021$). Frequencies revealed that for those who reported a parental infidelity, 45.1% of

participants had engaged in an infidelity at some point in a romantic relationship compared to 24.4% of participants who did not report a parental infidelity (see Figure 2). Additionally, 17.5% of participants who reported a parental infidelity had engaged in a sexual infidelity themselves in the last two years compared to 12.3% of participants who did not report a parental infidelity. A MANOVA was then run to test differences between the number of sexual infidelity episodes in the last two years and the number of sexual infidelity partners in the last two years as a function of parent infidelity, with age entered as a covariate. The multivariate test was found to be marginally significant [Wilks' $\lambda =$ .99, $F(2,712) = 2.62$, $p = .074$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$]. Univariate test results revealed that individuals whose parents had cheated reported a higher mean number of sexual infidelity episodes compared to individuals whose parents had not cheated [.92 vs. .58, $F(1,713) =$ 4.90, $p = .027$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$] whereas no significant difference was found for number of sexual infidelity partners [.41 vs. .32, $F(1,713) = 1.18$, $p = .278$, partial $\eta^2 = .00$].

Hierarchical logistic regression was again utilized to investigate the association between maternal infidelity and offspring infidelity, with age entered in the first block. Maternal infidelity was positively associated with having ever engaged in infidelity (Wald = 8.03, $B = .82$, $SE = .29$, Exp(B) = 2.27, $p = .005$). However, maternal infidelity was not significantly associated with having engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years (Wald = .76, $B = .26$, $SE = .30$, Exp(B) = 1.30, $p = .383$). A MANOVA was again run to test differences between the number of sexual infidelity episodes in the last two years and the number of sexual infidelity partners in the last two years as a function of mother infidelity, with age entered as a covariate. The multivariate test was not

statistically significant [Wilks' λ = .99, $F(2,712)$ = 1.88, p = .154, partial η^2 = .01], and

univariate tests revealed no significant differences for number of sexual infidelity

episodes [$F(1,713)$ = 1.11, p = .293, partial η^2 = .00] or for number of sexual infidelity

partners [$F(1,713)$ = .21, p = .644, partial η^2 = .00] as a function of maternal infidelity.

These analyses were once more repeated to explore the link between paternal

infidelity and offspring infidelity. Paternal infidelity was again positively associated with

having ever cheated (Wald = 24.00, B = .87, SE = .18, Exp(B) = 2.39, p < .001) and

having engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years (Wald = 9.59, B = .72, SE = .23,

Exp(B) = 2.06, p = .002). MANOVA results revealed a significant multivariate test

[Wilks' λ = .98, $F(2,712)$ = 5.44, p = .005, partial η^2 = .02]. Individuals who indicated

their father had engaged in infidelity reported a higher mean number of sexual infidelity

episodes compared to individuals whose father had not cheated [.55 vs. 1.10, $F(1,713)$ =

10.85, p = .001, partial η^2 = .02] and a higher mean number of sexual infidelity partners

[.30 vs. .49, $F(1,713)$ = 4.28, p = .039, partial η^2 = .01]. These findings indicate overall

support for Hypothesis 1 as participants who reported a parental infidelity were more

likely to have engaged in infidelity themselves. In particular, it appears that father

infidelity is associated with infidelity behavior as participants who reported their father

cheated were more likely to have ever cheated themselves, were more likely to have

engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years, and reported higher levels of sexual

infidelity episodes and partners, compared to individuals who reported no father

infidelity.

Messages from Family and Family Communication as a Function of Parental

Infidelity

To test Hypothesis 2, a MANOVA was run to explore differences for the

Messages from Family about Fidelity and Family Communication variables as a function

of parent infidelity, with age entered as a covariate. The overall multivariate test was

significant [Wilks' λ = .68, $F(4.711)$ = 83.10, p < .001, partial η^2 = .32], please see Table

4 for all results. Univariate results revealed significant differences for MFF Fidelity

[$F(1,714)$ = 98.45, p < .001, partial η^2 = .12], FC Faithful [$F(1,714)$ = 15.27, p < .001,

partial η^2 = .02], FC Argue [$F(1,714)$ = 228.77, p < .001, partial η^2 = .24], and FC

Acceptable [$F(1,714)$ = 8.85, p = .003, partial η^2 = .01].

An additional MANOVA was run to explore these differences as a function of

mother infidelity, as well (see Table 5). The multivariate test was again significant,

[Wilks' λ = .88, $F(4.711)$ = 24.26, p < .001, partial η^2 = .12], and univariate results

revealed significant differences for MFF Fidelity [$F(1,714)$ = 31.90, p < .001, partial η^2 =

.04], FC Faithful [$F(1,714)$ = 4.42, p = .036, partial η^2 = .01], FC Argue [$F(1,714)$ =

82.45, p < .001, partial η^2 = .10], and FC Acceptable [$F(1,714)$ = 13.35, p = .003, partial

η^2 = .02].

A final MANOVA was run to explore these differences specifically as a function

of father infidelity (see Table 6). This multivariate test was significant once more [Wilks'

λ = .76, $F(4.711)$ = 57.40, p < .001, partial η^2 = .24]. Again, all univariate tests were

significant for MFF Fidelity [$F(1,714)$ = 97.48, p < .001, partial η^2 = .12], FC Faithful

[$F(1,714)$ = 12.16, p = .001, partial η^2 = .02], FC Argue [$F(1,714)$ = 141.60, p < .001,

partial $\eta^2 = .17$], and FC Acceptable [$F(1,714) = 4.84$, $p = .028$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$]. These findings consistently suggest that participants who indicated that one of their parents had engaged in infidelity reported fewer positive messages about fidelity and less communication about the importance of faithfulness, and higher levels of arguing about infidelity and communication about the acceptability of infidelity. Thus, support was found for Hypothesis 2 as participants whose parents had engaged in infidelity were less likely to report having gained positive messages about fidelity and faithfulness from their family-of-origin. Participants whose parents had engaged in infidelity also reported higher levels of parental conflict about infidelity and were more likely to have gained messages about infidelity as acceptable behavior.

Infidelity and Sexuality Beliefs as a Function of Parental Infidelity

To test Hypothesis 3, a series of MANOVAs were performed to assess differences in infidelity and sexuality beliefs as a function of parental infidelity. First, a MANOVA was conducted with parental infidelity as the between-groups factor and IB Acceptable, IB Positive, IB Negative, SOI, and Willingness as the outcome variables (again see Table 4). The multivariate test was marginally significant [Wilks' $\lambda = .99$, $F(5,711) = 2.02$, $p = .073$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$] and a significant difference only emerged for Willingness [$F(1,715) = 1.90$, $p = .021$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$]. A second MANOVA was conducted with maternal infidelity as the between-groups and the multivariate test was not statistically significant [Wilks' $\lambda = .99$, $F(5,711) = 1.05$, $p = .389$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$]. Additionally, none of the univariate tests emerged as significant (again see Table 5). A third MANOVA was then conducted with paternal infidelity as the between-groups factor (see Table 6). The

multivariate test was again not significant [Wilks' $\lambda = .98$, $F(5,711) = 1.75$, $p = .122$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$] although univariate differences were found for IB Positive [$F(1,715) = 4.51$, $p = .034$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$] and Willingness [$F(1,715) = 6.05$, $p = .014$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$]. Although a few significant differences emerged, as a whole, these results provide no support for Hypothesis 3 and suggest that the experience of a parental infidelity is not directly related to offspring's infidelity and sexuality beliefs.

Messages from Family, Family Communication, and Infidelity and Sexuality Beliefs

To test Hypothesis 4, a series of hierarchical multiple regressions were run to explore how the Messages from Family and Family Communication variables relate to the various infidelity and sexuality belief variables (see Table 7). Age was entered in the first block followed by MFF Fidelity, FC Faithful, FC Argue, and FC Acceptable in the second block to predict each of the infidelity and sexuality beliefs. Results revealed that overall the family communication variables were significantly associated with IB Acceptable [$R = .47$, $R^2 = .22$, $F(5,711) = 41.10$, $p < .001$], with IB Acceptable negatively related to MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and positively related to FC Acceptable. The family communication variables were also significantly associated with IB Positive [$R = .24$, $R^2 = .06$, $F(5,711) = 9.04$, $p < .001$], with IB Positive negatively related to MFF Fidelity, and positively related to FC Acceptable. IB Negative was also significantly associated with the family communication variables [$R = .41$, $R^2 = .17$, $F(5,711) = 28.87$, $p < .001$], with IB Negative positively related to MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and negatively related to FC Acceptable. Additionally, the SOI was predicted by the family variables [$R = .21$, $R^2 = .05$, $F(5,711) = 6.65$, $p < .001$], with SOI scores negatively

associated with MFF Fidelity, and positively associated with FC Acceptable. Finally, Willingness was associated with the family variables overall [$R = .40$, $R^2 = .16$, $F(5,711) = 27.42$, $p < .001$], with Willingness negatively related to MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and positively related to FC Acceptable.

Thus, overall support was found for Hypothesis 4 as messages from family about fidelity, parental conflict about infidelity, and family communication about infidelity as acceptable were associated with infidelity and sexuality beliefs. Specifically, more positive messages about fidelity from the family-of-origin was negatively associated with believing infidelity is acceptable, believing there are positive outcomes associated with infidelity, an unrestricted sociosexual orientation, and greater willingness to engage in infidelity, as well as positively associated with believing that there are negative outcomes associated with infidelity. Furthermore, greater parent conflict about infidelity was negatively associated with believing infidelity is acceptable and greater willingness to engage in infidelity, and positively associated with believing that infidelity has negative consequences. In contrast, more frequent family communication about the acceptability of infidelity was positively associated with believing infidelity is acceptable, believing there are positive outcomes associated with infidelity, an unrestricted sociosexual orientation, and greater willingness to engage in infidelity, and was negatively associated with believing that there are negative outcomes associated with infidelity. However, more frequent direct communication about faithfulness, monogamy, and commitment (FC Faithful) was not significantly associated with any of the infidelity and sexuality beliefs, although there was a negative, marginal relationship with the SOI ($\beta = -.08$, $p = .061$). In

sum, communication about fidelity, the acceptability of infidelity, and parent conflict about infidelity are significantly associated with offspring's own beliefs about infidelity and sexuality.

Offspring Infidelity, Beliefs, and Attachment Style

Next, to test Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6 a series of MANOVA and regression analyses were conducted to explore whether offspring's infidelity behavior was associated with their infidelity and sexuality beliefs, as well as attachment style. A MANOVA was first conducted to explore how infidelity and sexuality beliefs differ for those who have previously engaged in infidelity compared to those who have never engaged in infidelity (see Table 8). Age was entered as a covariate and the multivariate test was statistically significant [Wilks' $\lambda = .83$, $F(5,711) = 29.07$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .17$]. Individuals who had previously cheated in a relationship were significantly more likely to believe infidelity is acceptable [$F(1,715) = 12.63$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$] and has positive outcomes [$F(1,715) = 4.42$, $p = .036$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$], have an unrestricted sociosexual orientation [$F(1,715) = 104.77$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$], and were more willing to engage in infidelity [$F(1,715) = 63.85$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$]. Participants who had previously cheated were less likely to believe that infidelity has negative outcomes [$F(1,715) = 24.04$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$]. A separate MANOVA was conducted with the attachment dimensions as the outcome variables. Age was again entered as a covariate and the multivariate test was significant [Wilks' $\lambda = .99$, $F(2,706) = 3.71$, $p = .025$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$]. Participants who had engaged in infidelity reported

significantly higher levels of Avoidance [$F(1,707) = 4.47$, $p = .035$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$] and

Anxiety [$F(1,707) = 4.84$, $p = .028$ partial $\eta^2 = .01$].

A MANOVA was then conducted to explore how infidelity and sexuality beliefs

differ for those who have engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years compared to

those who have not engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years (see Table 9). Again,

the multivariate test was statistically significant [Wilks' $\lambda = .79$, $F(5,710) = 37.72$, $p <$

.001, partial $\eta^2 = .21$] and age was included as a covariate. Individuals who had engaged

in sexual infidelity were significantly more likely to believe infidelity is acceptable

[$F(1,715) = 65.42$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$] and has positive outcomes [$F(1,715) =$

22.37, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$], have an unrestricted sociosexual orientation [$F(1,715) =$

93.56, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .12$], and were more willing to engage in infidelity [$F(1,715)$

$= 151.35$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .18$]. Participants who had engaged in sexual infidelity

were also less likely to believe that infidelity has negative outcomes [$F(1,715) = 32.62$, p

$< .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$]. Another MANOVA was conducted with the attachment

dimensions as the outcome variables and sexual infidelity as the between-groups variable.

Age was entered as a covariate and the multivariate test was not significant [Wilks' $\lambda =$

.99, $F(2,705) = .36$, $p = .701$, partial $\eta^2 = .00$]. Individuals who had engaged in sexual

infidelity did not statistically differ from those who had not engaged in sexual infidelity

in the last two years on the dimensions of Avoidance [$F(1,707) = .11$, $p = .742$, partial η^2

$= .00$] and Anxiety [$F(1,707) = .70$, $p = .404$ partial $\eta^2 = .00$].

Subsequently, a series of hierarchical multiple regressions were undertaken to

explore how infidelity and sexuality beliefs, as well as attachment style, relate to number

of sexual infidelity episodes and number of sexual infidelity partners (see Table 10). Age was entered as a control variable in all regression analyses. First, the infidelity and sexuality beliefs were regressed on number of sexual infidelity episodes and the overall regression test was statistically significant [$R = .43$, $R^2 = .19$, $F(6,709) = 27.10$, $p < .001$]. Only SOI ($\beta = .23$, $p < .001$) and Willingness to Engage in Infidelity ($\beta = .25$, $p < .001$) emerged as unique predictors of number of sexual infidelity episodes. Next, the beliefs were regressed on number of sexual infidelity partners and the overall model was again significant [$R = .47$, $R^2 = .23$, $F(6,709) = 34.28$, $p < .001$]. Again, only SOI ($\beta = .32$, $p < .001$) and Willingness to Engage in Infidelity ($\beta = .21$, $p < .001$) emerged as unique predictors. Finally, the attachment dimensions were then regressed on number of sexual infidelity episodes [$R = .12$, $R^2 = .01$, $F(3,704) = 3.14$, $p = .025$] and number of sexual infidelity partners [$R = .11$, $R^2 = .01$, $F(3,704) = 2.78$, $p = .040$]. However, neither Avoidance nor Anxiety emerged as significant predictors of number of sexual infidelity episodes ($\beta = .02$, $p = .533$ and $\beta = .04$, $p = .326$) and number of sexual infidelity partners ($\beta = .02$, $p = .542$ and $\beta = .05$, $p = .250$), indicating that age was the only variable significantly associated with the number of sexual infidelity episodes and the number of sexual infidelity partners.

As a whole, these findings support Hypothesis 5, as individuals who had engaged in infidelity reported greater acceptance of infidelity, more positive outcome beliefs about infidelity, less support for the negative outcomes associated with infidelity, an unrestricted sociosexual orientation, and greater willingness to engage in infidelity. In particular, an unrestricted sociosexual orientation and greater willingness to engage in

infidelity were significantly associated with higher levels of all four forms of infidelity. In contrast, little support was found for Hypothesis 6, as the attachment dimensions were only weakly associated with having ever engaged in infidelity and were unrelated to any of the other infidelity behaviors.

Gender Differences

Gender differences for infidelity beliefs, sexuality beliefs, and infidelity behaviors were examined to test Hypothesis 7 and Hypothesis 8. Two hierarchical logistic regressions were conducted to explore whether gender was related to whether individuals had ever engaged in infidelity and whether individuals had engaged in a sexual infidelity in the last two years. Age was entered in the first block followed by gender. No gender differences were observed with having ever engaged in infidelity (Wald = .44, B = .11, SE = .17, Exp(B) = 1.12, p = .506). However, males were more likely to have engaged in sexual infidelity during the last two years (Wald = 24.78, B = 1.12, SE = .23, Exp(B) = 3.07, p < .001). A MANOVA was then conducted to explore any gender differences for number of sexual episodes and number of sexual partners, with age entered as a covariate (see Table 11). The multivariate test was significant [Wilks' λ = .98, $F(2,710)$ = 7.71, p < .001, partial η^2 = .02] and significant differences were found for sexual episodes [$F(1,711)$ = 9.01, p = .003, partial η^2 = .01] and sexual partners [$F(1,711)$ = 15.22, p < .001, partial η^2 = .02]. These results suggest that males are more likely to have engaged in infidelity and engaged in infidelity at a higher rate compared to females, in support of Hypothesis 7.

A MANOVA was also conducted with gender as between-groups factor and the infidelity and sexuality beliefs as the outcome variables, and age entered as a covariate. The multivariate test was statistically significant [Wilks' λ = .89, $F(5,709)$ = 18.06, $p <$ .001, partial η^2 = .11] and univariate results revealed significant differences for all variables, including Infidelity Beliefs-Acceptable [$F(1,713)$ = 48.13, $p <$ .001, partial η^2 = .06], Infidelity Beliefs-Positive Outcomes [$F(1,713)$ = 6.98, p = .008, partial η^2 = .01], Infidelity Beliefs-Negative Outcomes [$F(1,713)$ = 5.73, p =.017, partial η^2 = .01], SOI [$F(1,713)$ = 56.57, $p <$ .001, partial η^2 = .07], and Willingness [$F(1,713)$ = 50.92, $p <$ .001, partial η^2 = .07]. As a whole these results provide support for Hypothesis 8 and indicate that males view infidelity as more acceptable, consider infidelity to have more positive outcomes and less negative outcomes, are more willing to engage in uncommitted sexual activity, and are more willing to engage in infidelity.

Infidelity Outcome and Age Suspected Infidelity

Finally, analyses were conducted to explore how certain characteristics of the parental infidelity relate to offspring's beliefs and behaviors among participants who reported a parental infidelity. Specifically, the outcome of the parental infidelity (whether parents separated or stayed together) and the age when offspring first suspected infidelity in their parents' relationship were examined. Hierarchical logistic regression, with age entered in the first block, was used to test whether parent infidelity outcome related to having ever cheated and sexual infidelity in the last two years. Results revealed no significant relationship between parent infidelity outcome and having ever cheated (Wald = .04, B = .06, SE = .32, Exp(B) = 1.07, p = .839) but a significant relationship was found

for sexuality infidelity in the last two years (Wald = 5.03, *B* = -.90, *SE* = .40, Exp(B) =

.41, *p* = .025), indicating that participants whose parents stayed together were more likely

to have engaged in a sexual infidelity in the last two years. A MANOVA was then run to

test differences between the number of sexual infidelity episodes in the last two years and

the number of sexual infidelity partners in the last two years as a function of parent

infidelity outcome. Age was entered as a covariate and infidelity outcome served as the

between-groups factor. The multivariate test was significant [Wilks' λ = .97, $F(2,226)$ =

4.11, *p* = .018, partial η^2 = .04] and univariate tests revealed that participants reported a

higher mean number of infidelity partners among those whose parents stayed together

[.70 vs. .27, $F(1,227)$ = 6.56, *p* = .011, partial η^2 = .03]. No significant difference was

found for number of infidelity episodes for those whose parents stayed together compared

to those whose parents separated [1.06 vs. .72, $F(1,227)$ = 1.07, *p* = .302, partial η^2 = .01].

Thus, some support was found for Hypothesis 9 as participants whose parents were still

together were more likely to have engaged in sexual infidelity and had a higher mean

number of sexual infidelity partners.

Next, a MANOVA was conducted to explore potential differences for infidelity

beliefs and sexual beliefs as a function of parent infidelity outcome (see Table 12), with

age entered as a covariate. The overall multivariate test was significant [Wilks' λ = .92,

$F(5,223)$ = 3.69, *p* = .003, partial η^2 = .08] and participants whose parents remained

together reported significantly greater beliefs about the positive outcomes associated with

infidelity [$F(1,227)$ = 5.52, *p* = .020, partial η^2 = .02] and greater willingness to engage in

infidelity [$F(1,227)$ = 9.26, *p* = .003, partial η^2 = .04]. Additionally, a series of logistic

and multiple regression analyses were conducted to explore how parent infidelity

outcome relates to offspring infidelity behavior relative to the infidelity and sexuality

beliefs. Results revealed that parent infidelity outcome never emerged as significant

predictor of having ever cheated (B = -.32, p = .384), sexual infidelity in the last two

years (B = .47, p = .351), number of sexual infidelity episodes (β = -.01, p = .816), and

number of sexual infidelity partners (β = .10, p = .104) when the infidelity and sexuality

beliefs were also included as predictor variables. Thus, although a couple of significant

differences emerged when examined together, parent infidelity outcome was unrelated to

offspring infidelity behavior when offspring's beliefs were also taken into account. These

findings provide some support for Hypothesis 10 as offspring whose parents remained

together reported more positive beliefs about infidelity, were more willing to engage in

infidelity, were more likely to have engaged in sexual infidelity, and had a greater

number of sexual infidelity partners. However, these relationships are somewhat weaker

compared to other associations and once offspring's beliefs were included in the

regression models, parent infidelity outcome had no significant associations.

Hierarchical logistic regressions were used to test Hypothesis 11, whether age

when offspring first suspected parental infidelity related to infidelity behavior, with

participants' current age entered in the first block. Results revealed that age when first

suspected parental infidelity was unrelated to having ever cheated (Wald = .51, B = -.02,

SE = .02, Exp(B) = .98, p = .477) as well as sexual infidelity in the last two years (Wald =

.44, B = -.02, SE = .03, Exp(B) = .98, p = .507). A series of hierarchical regressions were

then run to further test Hypothesis 11 and Hypothesis 12, whether age when offspring

first suspected parental infidelity was related to number of sexual infidelity episodes, number of sexual infidelity partners, as well as infidelity and sexuality beliefs (please see Table 13). Participants' current age was once again entered in the first block. Results revealed no support for Hypothesis 11 and Hypothesis 12 as no regression analyses were statistically significant, further indicating that age when offspring first suspected an infidelity in their parent's relationship is unrelated to any infidelity beliefs, sexuality beliefs, and infidelity behavior.

Summary

These multivariate analyses provide preliminary support for the majority of hypotheses proposed for the dissertation project. Foremost, individuals who experienced a parental infidelity indicated higher levels of infidelity themselves compared to those individuals whose parents did not engage in infidelity. Additionally, the experience of parental infidelity was associated with less positive messages about fidelity and faithfulness, and greater conflict, and more positive messages about the acceptability of infidelity, and these family communication variables were then related to a variety of infidelity and sexuality beliefs. Specifically, offspring who received less positive messages about fidelity and faithfulness, and more positive messages about the acceptability of infidelity also reported more accepting beliefs about infidelity, greater willingness to engage in infidelity, and a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation. Furthermore, individuals who had engaged in infidelity reported more accepting infidelity beliefs, greater willingness to engage in infidelity, and a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation. Males also reported engaging in infidelity behavior at higher

rates and reported more accepting infidelity beliefs, greater willingness to engage in infidelity, and a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation compared to females.

Counter to expectations, attachment style was overall unrelated to offspring infidelity behavior. The only significant finding was that offspring who had ever cheated in a relationship reported higher levels of Avoidance and Anxiety. Results also revealed that offspring whose parents remained together were more likely to have engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years and during that time had a higher mean number of sexual infidelity partners. Finally, age when offspring first suspected a parental infidelity was unrelated to any infidelity beliefs or behaviors. Based on these findings, structural equation modeling was undertaken to answer Research Questions 1-3.

Measurement Models

Structural equation modeling is considered a two-step process in which first measurement models and then a structural model are tested (Hair et al., 2006). Exploratory factor analysis (specifically principal components analysis) was first conducted to determine the number of latent variables, or factors, for each measure. As discussed in Chapter 3, exploratory factor analysis was conducted on all measures developed by the researcher for the current project. Measurement models are subsequently tested by confirmatory factor analysis to ensure that the set of observed items used to create a latent variable are a good fit. In the present study, confirmatory factor analysis was run on all measures which will be used as latent variables in the structural model, including measures designed by the researcher as well as established measures. The MPlus software program was used for confirmatory factor analysis and

structural equation modeling as SPSS, the statistical package used for all previously

discussed analyses, is unable to perform these statistical tests.

A variety of goodness-of-fit measures were utilized to assess the proposed

measurement models. Absolute fit indices, such as the chi-square goodness of fit statistic

and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), were used to determine

whether the data was consistent with the proposed measurement model. A non-significant

chi-square value is indicative of good fit, however, as the chi-square value naturally

increases as sample size rises the statistical test is less meaningful in studies with larger

samples (Hair et al., 2006). Therefore, in large samples (about 500 participants or more)

a significant chi-square value is not necessarily indicative of a poor fitting model but

rather signifies the importance of looking at multiple fit indices such as the RMSEA and

CFI. The RMSEA is an absolute fit statistic which takes both model complexity and

sample size into account computationally. A RMSEA value equal to or less than .08

indicates an adequate-fitting model (Hair et al.), with RMSEA values equal to or less than

.06 preferred (Holbert & Stephenson, 2002; Hu & Bentler, 1999). The comparative fix

index (CFI), a type of incremental fit index was also used to assess the measurement

models. Incremental fit indices compare how well the model fits relative to an alternative

model, typically a null model. Higher CFI values are indicative of a better fit and values

above 0.90 indicate a good-fitting model (Hair et al).

Before assessing the measurement models, the decision was made to construct

item parcels for the latent variables to be estimated by a higher number of individual

items. The construction of item parcels is carried out by averaging items which seemingly

measure the same construct (West et al., 1995). These parcels are then used to estimate the latent variables in all modeling. The use of parcels significantly reduces the number of parameters to be estimated in structural equation modeling which is associated with more stable estimates, particularly in smaller samples. One additional advantage of using item parcels is that the distributions of parcels are likely to more closely resemble a normal distribution and may be considered a technique for correcting slight departures of normality (West et al.). Parcels were constructed from the attachment style, infidelity beliefs, and family communication items. To construct the parcels, correlations were examined among individual items and those items most highly correlated were then averaged to create the respective parcels. Three parcels were generated for each latent variable as three is considered the minimum number of indicators necessary for a latent variable in structural equation modeling (Hair et al., 2006). Individual items were used to construct latent variables for the sociosexual orientation inventory, willingness to engage in infidelity, and messages from family questionnaires as only one latent variable comprised of seven items or less were to be estimated for each of these measures.

Confirmatory factor analysis was then conducted to assess the measurement models for the variables of interest. Results revealed an adequate fit for Messages from Family (MFF Fidelity) [$\chi^2(5) = 17.69$, $p = .003$, RMSEA = 0.06; CFI = 0.99], Family Communication (FC Faithful, FC Argue, FC Acceptable) [$\chi^2(24) = 91.71$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.06; CFI = 0.98], and attachment style (Avoidance and Anxious) [$\chi^2(8) = 29.85$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.06; CFI = 0.98]. Infidelity beliefs (IB Negative Outcomes and IB Acceptable) was also found to be adequately measured [$\chi^2(8) = 37.20$, $p < .001$,

RMSEA = 0.07; CFI = 0.99]. As previously noted, a latent variable was not estimated for IB Positive Outcomes as only two items comprise that factor and as such will be entered as an observed variable in the structural model. Additionally, confirmatory factor analyses of the measurement models for the Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI) [$\chi^2(14) = 269.31$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.16; CFI = 0.83] and Willingness to Engage in Infidelity [$\chi^2(14) = 423.23$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.20; CFI = 0.92] revealed a poor fit. Therefore, the decision was made to also enter these constructs as observed variables in the structural models. Finally, at the suggestion of Dr. Linda Muthén (personal communication, February 22, 2012), in the structural models SOI scores were divided by a constant in order to restrict the variance of the measure, allowing the models to more quickly converge.

Structural Equation Models

Finally, Research Questions 1, 2 and 3 were tested via structural equation modeling. A robust weighted least squares (WLSMV) estimator was used in all models as categorical outcome variables were utilized in all models and as such is the default estimator in MPlus. To fully explore the effects of both participant gender and gender of the cheating parent, models were run four times. The model was initially run with parental infidelity as the main exogenous variable and then again with maternal infidelity and paternal infidelity entered as separate exogenous variables. These models were then re-run with gender as a grouping factor so separate coefficients for males and females would be generated for each model. By entering gender as a grouping factor, it is possible to view all relationships separately for males and females.

Parent Infidelity as Exogenous Variable

The theoretical model depicted in Figure 1 was first tested with age entered as a control variable for all paths. This initial model for parent infidelity was found to be a poor fit [χ^2(478) = 1530.95, p < .001, RMSEA = 0.06; CFI = 0.81] and as such was amended. Three main changes were made to the model based on the output and modification indices. First, parental infidelity was allowed to directly predict offspring infidelity behavior. This change is justifiable and suggests that the relationship between parent and offspring infidelity behavior is not fully mediated by offspring's infidelity and sexuality beliefs. Second, the item "People cheat on their partners" from MFF Fidelity was allowed to crossload on the latent variable for FC Argue and one of the parcels for FC Faithful was allowed to crossload on the latent variable for MFF Fidelity. This model alteration is justified as the items in the first instance deal with family communication about the occurrence of infidelity and in the second instance the items deal with the importance of fidelity and faithfulness in relationships. Thirdly, the decision was made to remove the attachment dimensions from the model as only Avoidance positively predicted cheating behavior (B = .18, p = .041) and otherwise the attachment variables were not significantly related to any other items. These changes resulted in a model which demonstrated a good fit [χ^2(300) = 645.76, p < .001, RMSEA = 0.04; CFI = 0.93]. Please see Table 14 to view all coefficients and significance values as well as Figure 3 for a graphical depiction of the model; standardized beta coefficients are presented for all continuous outcomes and unstandardized coefficients are presented for categorical outcome variables.

Model results revealed that parental infidelity was significantly negatively related to MFF Fidelity and FC Faithful, and positively related to FC Argue and FC Acceptable. In turn, IB Acceptable was negatively associated with MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and positively associated with FC Acceptable. IB Positive was negatively related to MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and positively related to FC Acceptable. IB Negative was positively associated with MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and negatively associated with FC Acceptable. SOI was negatively related to MFF Fidelity, and positively related to FC Acceptable. Furthermore, Willingness was also negatively associated with MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and positively associated with FC Acceptable. Finally, having ever cheated in a romantic relationship was positively related to parental infidelity, SOI, and Willingness, and negatively related to IB Acceptable and IB Negative. Sexual infidelity in the last two years was positively associated with SOI and Willingness. Number of sexual infidelity episodes was positively associated with IB Positive, SOI, and Willingness whereas number of sexual infidelity partners was also positively associated with SOI and Willingness.

These results overall support Research Question 1 as the experience of parental infidelity was associated with fewer positive messages about fidelity and faithfulness, higher levels of parental conflict about infidelity, and greater communication about the acceptability of infidelity. These communications then generally relate to a variety of infidelity and sexuality beliefs, with more positive messages about fidelity and higher levels of parental conflict related to more negative views of infidelity, whereas more communication about the acceptability of infidelity is associated with more positive

beliefs about infidelity and more permissive sexuality. More favorable infidelity and sexuality beliefs are then positively associated with a variety of infidelity behaviors. The one exception to this pattern is that higher levels of Infidelity Beliefs-Acceptable were negatively related to having engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years. This unexpected finding will be discussed further in the section on additional analyses. Thus, overall support was found for the proposed theoretical model.

Gender Differences. Gender was then included as a grouping factor so separate coefficients for males and females may be viewed, and the model was still found to have a good fit [$\chi^2(630) = 948.53$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.04; CFI = 0.92] with males contributing 368.01 and females contributing 580.52 to the chi-square value. Please see Figure 4 for male results and Figure 5 for female results. For males, parental infidelity was negatively associated with MFF Fidelity and positively associated with FC Argue, whereas for females parental infidelity was negatively associated with MFF Fidelity and FC Faithful, and positively associated with FC Argue.

For males, IB Acceptable was negatively related to MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and positively related to FC Acceptable but for females IB Acceptable was only positively associated with FC Acceptable. IB Positive was negatively associated with MFF Fidelity for males, and positively related to FC Acceptable for females. IB Negative was positively related to MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and negatively related to FC Faithful and FC Acceptable for males. For females, IB Negative was positively related to MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and negatively related to FC Acceptable. SOI scores were not associated with any of the family communication variables for males and were only

negatively associated with FC Faithful for females. Willingness scores for males were negatively associated with MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and positively associated with FC Acceptable, and for females Willingness was negatively associated with MFF Fidelity and positively associated with FC Acceptable.

Having ever cheated in a romantic relationship was positively related to SOI and parental infidelity for males. For females, having ever cheated in a relationship was negatively related to IB Acceptable and IB Negative, and positively related to SOI, Willingness, and parental infidelity. Sexual infidelity in the last two years was negatively associated with IB Acceptable and positively associated with Willingness and parental infidelity for males, and positively associated with IB Positive and SOI for females. Number of sexual infidelity episodes was positively associated with Willingness and parental infidelity for males, and positively associated with SOI and Willingness for females. Finally, number of sexual infidelity partners was positively associated with SOI for males and females.

In response to Research Question 2, it appears that there are some differences between males and females although the overall pattern is similar. For males, parent infidelity was only associated with MFF Fidelity and FC Argue whereas for females, parent infidelity was associated with MFF Fidelity, FC Faithful, and FC Argue. Additionally, a number of the infidelity and sexuality beliefs were associated with different family communication variables. It should be noted that all relationships are in the expected directions with more positive messages about fidelity and higher conflict associated with less positive beliefs about infidelity, a more restricted sociosexual

orientation, and less willingness to engage in infidelity. Whereas individuals who were told by their parents that infidelity was acceptable reported more positive beliefs about infidelity and greater willingness to engage in infidelity. The one exception to this pattern is that for males, FC Faithful was negatively associated with Infidelity Beliefs-Negative Outcomes, so males who more frequently heard their parents communicating about faithfulness and commitment to one another were less likely to endorse the negative outcomes associated with infidelity behavior. Moreover, more positive beliefs about infidelity, an unrestricted sociosexual orientation, and greater willingness to engage in infidelity were associated with higher levels of infidelity for both males and females, although the exact relationships differed somewhat. The most notable distinction between males and females is that the experience of parental infidelity was significantly associated with a number of offspring infidelity behaviors for males, whereas for females parental infidelity was only directly associated with having ever cheated in a romantic relationship.

Mother Infidelity and Father Infidelity as Separate Exogenous Variables

Next, mother infidelity and father infidelity were entered separately as exogenous variables to explore whether the gender of the cheating parent is associated with any changes to the model. Fit statistics indicated a good fit [$\chi^2(319) = 692.15$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.04; CFI = 0.93] (see Table 15 and Figure 6). Mother infidelity was negatively associated with MFF Fidelity, and positively associated with FC Argue and FC Acceptable. In contrast, father infidelity was negatively associated with MFF Fidelity and FC Faithful, and positively associated with FC Argue and FC Acceptable.

IB Acceptable was negatively associated with MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and positively associated with FC Acceptable. IB Positive also negatively related to MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and positively related to FC Acceptable. Additionally, IB Negative was positively associated with MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and negatively associated with FC Acceptable. SOI scores were negatively associated with MFF Fidelity and positively associated with FC Acceptable. Willingness was again negatively associated with MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and positively associated with FC Acceptable.

Having ever cheated in a romantic relationship was negatively associated with IB Acceptable and IB Negative, and positively associated with SOI, Willingness, mother infidelity, and father infidelity. Sexual infidelity in the last two years was positively associated with IB Positive, SOI, Willingness, and father infidelity. Additionally, number of sexual infidelity episodes was positively related to SOI, Willingness, and father infidelity. Finally, number of sexual infidelity partners was also positively associated with SOI and Willingness.

Thus, the model with mother infidelity and father infidelity as separate exogenous variables was almost identical to the model with the combined parental infidelity as the exogenous variable. In fact, only a few differences emerged; in this model mother infidelity was not significantly associated with FC Faithful and Infidelity Beliefs-Positive Outcomes was now positively related to sexuality infidelity and number of sexual infidelity episodes. Additionally, father infidelity was significantly associated with three

out of four infidelity behaviors whereas mother infidelity was only significantly related to having ever cheated in a romantic relationship.

Gender Differences. Gender was included as a grouping factor in order to explore whether different patterns emerge when the same-sex parent commits an infidelity. The model was still found to have a good fit [$\chi^2(668) = 1004.55$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.04; CFI = 0.92] with males contributing 399.41 and females contributing 605.14 to the chi-square value. Please see Figure 7 for male results and Figure 8 for female results. For males, mother infidelity was negatively associated with MFF Fidelity, and positively associated with FC Argue and FC Acceptable, whereas for females mother infidelity was negatively associated with MFF Fidelity and FC Faithful, and positively associated with FC Argue and FC Acceptable. In contrast for males, father infidelity was negatively related to MFF Fidelity and positively related to FC Argue, whereas for females father infidelity was negatively related to MFF Fidelity and FC Faithful, and positively related to FC Argue.

IB Acceptable was negatively associated with MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and positively associated with FC Acceptable for males, and positively related to FC Acceptable for females. IB Positive was negatively associated with MFF Fidelity for males and positively related to FC Acceptable for females. IB Negative was positively associated MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and negatively associated with FC Faithful and FC Acceptable for males, as well as positively related to MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and negatively related to FC Acceptable for females. SOI scores were again not predicted by any of the family communication variables for males and were negatively associated

with FC Faithful for females. Willingness scores for males were negatively associated with MFF Fidelity and FC Argue, and positively related to FC Acceptable, and for females Willingness scores were negatively associated with MFF Fidelity, and positively associated with FC Acceptable.

Having ever cheated in a romantic relationship was negatively related to IB Acceptable, and positively related to SOI, Willingness, and father infidelity for males. For females, having ever cheated in a relationship was negatively associated with IB Acceptable and IB Negative, and positively associated with SOI, Willingness, father infidelity, and mother infidelity. For males, sexual infidelity in the last two years was negatively associated with IB Acceptable, and positively associated with Willingness and father infidelity, whereas for females sexual infidelity was positively associated with IB Positive and SOI scores. Number of sexual infidelity episodes was negatively associated with IB Acceptable, and positively associated with Willingness and father infidelity for males, with SOI and Willingness positively associated with number of sexual infidelity episodes for females. Finally, number of sexual infidelity partners was positively associated with SOI scores for males and females.

Again, males and females overall exhibited a similar pattern of relationships although there were some notable differences. Specifically, mother infidelity and father infidelity were associated with Family Communication-Faithful only for females. Additionally, a number of the infidelity and sexuality beliefs were again related to different family communication variables for males and females. An interesting pattern did emerge which sheds light on Research Question 3, as it appears that the gender of the

cheating parent is differentially associated with offspring infidelity behavior for males

and females. Particularly, for males mother infidelity was not directly associated with any

infidelity behaviors but father infidelity was directly associated with having ever cheated,

sexual infidelity in the last two years, and number of sexual infidelity episodes. For

females, mother infidelity and father infidelity were directly related only to having ever

cheated in a romantic relationship and no other infidelity behaviors. Thus, it appears that

father infidelity is more consistently related to infidelity behavior for males whereas for

females, parent infidelity, regardless of gender, is only associated with having ever

engaged in infidelity while in a romantic relationship.

Additional Analyses

One caveat to be aware of in the results of these structural models is that there

was some evidence of multicollinearity. Specifically, concern was raised as IB

Acceptable was negatively related to cheating behavior in a number of the presented

models. Such a relationship is counter to expectations theoretically and empirically, as

the previous multivariate analyses indicated that participants who had engaged in

infidelity viewed infidelity as more acceptable (see Tables 8 and 9). The MANOVAs and

multiple regression analyses previously conducted demonstrated no evidence of a

collinearity issue. However, structural equation modeling is more sensitive to

multicollinearity as errors are correlated by default. As the correlation between

Willingness to Engage in Infidelity and IB Acceptable was quite high ($r = .68, p < .001$),

the decision was made to re-run the main model with parental infidelity as the exogenous

variable two more times, once without Willingness and once without IB Acceptable.

Results revealed that without IB Acceptable in the model, having ever cheated in a romantic relationship was no longer associated with Willingness and IB Negative. All other regression paths remained identical and Willingness continued to positively predict sexual infidelity, number of infidelity episodes, and number of infidelity partners. Additionally, without Willingness in the structural model, IB Acceptable was marginally associated with having ever cheated in a romantic relationship ($B = -.13$, $p = .067$) although this relationship was still negative. IB Acceptable was also marginally associated with sexual infidelity in a positive direction ($B = .14$, $p = .066$) and significantly associated with number of sexual infidelity episodes ($B = .29$, $p < .001$) and partners ($B = .16$, $p = .002$). Both models continued to demonstrate good fit even without IB Acceptable [$\chi^2(235) = 510.39$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.04; CFI = 0.93] and Willingness to Engage in Infidelity [$\chi^2(285) = 593.07$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.04; CFI = 0.93] in the models. Therefore, the surprising result that IB Acceptable was negatively associated with infidelity behavior in some models appears to be mainly explained by a collinearity issue. Overall, participants who believe infidelity is more acceptable and are more willing to engage in infidelity are more likely to have engaged in infidelity and at higher rates.

Additionally, it was decided to explore how participants' relationship status may relate to the model as participants recruited through MTurk were more likely to be in a romantic relationship compared to the college students recruited from UNR and USF. Initially, models were run separately for those currently involved in a romantic relationship and those that are single. The models were run both with attachment style included as a variable and without attachment style. However, none of these models

converged indicating that relationship status may not be a critical variable in the

intergenerational transmission of infidelity. Next, it was decided to explore relationship

status as a covariate similarly to how age was treated in the model. The model was run

without attachment style, and with the other discussed modifications and relationship

status as a covariate. This model was found to be a good fit [$\chi^2(314) = 668.80$, $p < .001$,

RMSEA = 0.04; CFI = 0.93], and no significant relationships among variables changed

as a result of including relationship status in the model. Individuals who were currently

involved in romantic relationships reported lower scores for FC Acceptable and higher

scores for MFF Fidelity. Individuals currently involved in romantic relationships were

also less likely to believe infidelity is acceptable, and were less willing to engage in

infidelity as well as uncommitted sexual activity. Finally, individuals currently involved

in romantic relationships were more likely to have ever cheated in a romantic

relationship, although this relationship may be confounded by age as older individuals

were also more likely to be in a relationship.

Age

Finally, the relationship between participant age and the variables of interest in

the structural model must be discussed. In the model, age was significantly negatively

associated with FC Faithful, FC Argue, and FC Acceptable. These results indicate that

older participants were less likely to report that parents directly communicated with

offspring about the importance of faithfulness and the acceptability of infidelity. Older

participants were also less likely to report that they witnessed their parents fighting about

infidelity. Age was unrelated to any of the infidelity and sexuality beliefs indicating that

participants held similar beliefs regardless of age. Finally, age was positively associated with having ever cheated in a romantic relationship and negatively associated with having engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years, number of sexual infidelity episodes, and number of sexual infidelity partners. Therefore, older participants were more likely to have engaged in infidelity during some point in their lives but were less likely to have engaged in infidelity more recently.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Infidelity is a common occurrence in romantic relationships despite social norms against the behavior. The vast majority of individuals expect monogamy in their relationships (Traes & Giesen, 2000), yet romantic partners engage in infidelity frequently (Allen et al., 2005; Wiederman & Hurd, 1999). Infidelity has a number of negative consequences for the individual who experienced an infidelity including decreases in self-esteem and increases in depression and anxiety (Allen et al., Buunk, 1995), and is commonly associated with relationship dissolution for dating and married couples (Amato & Previti, 2003). As such, personal relationship researchers, relationship educators, and clinicians have sought out information about why certain individuals may be more likely to engage in infidelity. Insight into why some individuals have a greater likelihood of committing infidelity will allow educators and clinicians to prevent future infidelities as well as treat couples who have experienced an infidelity.

The purpose of the current dissertation project was to explore whether the experience of a parental infidelity is associated with offspring's own infidelity behavior. Social learning theory provided the framework for a theoretical model to help explain the mechanism underlying such an intergenerational transmission of infidelity. It was postulated that the experience of parental infidelity is related to receiving more negative messages about fidelity, faithfulness, and commitment, and more positive messages about infidelity. These communications will then relate to more favorable beliefs about infidelity, greater willingness to engage in uncommitted sexual relationships, and greater willingness to engage in infidelity, and subsequently, more permissive infidelity and

sexuality beliefs will be associated with higher levels of offspring infidelity. The role of gender of the offspring and gender of the cheating parent were also explored in this theoretical model. Finally, attachment style, outcomes of parental infidelity, and age when offspring first suspected an infidelity in their parent's relationship were also considered with regards to infidelity beliefs and behaviors.

In the current section, results of the multivariate analyses exploring the relationships between parental infidelity, family communication, infidelity and sexuality beliefs, and infidelity behaviors will first be discussed. Next, the relationship between attachment style and infidelity behavior will be discussed, followed by a discussion of the structural equation models and how the results inform the relationship between social learning theory and infidelity patterns. The role of gender and infidelity patterns will then be discussed, as well as the relationship between characteristics of the parental infidelity and offspring's infidelity beliefs and behaviors. Strengths and limitations of the current project, as well as future directions for this area of research will be presented. Finally, implications and conclusions will be discussed.

Parent Infidelity, Family Communication, Infidelity Beliefs and Behaviors

Foremost, support was found for Hypothesis 1 as parental infidelity was significantly associated with offspring infidelity. Specifically, it was found that the experience of a parental infidelity was positively associated with offspring having ever engaged in infidelity, engaging in sexual infidelity in the last two years, and a higher number of sexual infidelity episodes. When exploring the association between just maternal infidelity and offspring infidelity, results revealed that mother infidelity was

only positively associated with offspring having ever engaged in infidelity. Father

infidelity, in contrast, was positively associated with offspring having ever cheated,

engaging in sexual infidelity in the last two years, a higher number of sexual infidelity

episodes in the last two years, and a higher number of infidelity partners in the last two

years. These results suggest that father infidelity is more consistently related to various

types of infidelity behavior whereas the experience of a mother infidelity is only related

to offspring's likelihood of having ever cheated in a romantic relationship. The separate

results for males and females in the structural equation models help to illuminate and

explain this finding; these relationships will be discussed further in the section focusing

on gender and infidelity patterns.

Thus, consistent with social learning theory there is general support for the

hypothesis that the experience of a parental infidelity is associated with offspring's own

infidelity behavior, particularly with regards to the likelihood of offspring having ever

cheated in a romantic relationship. The fact that parental infidelity is most often

associated with offspring's cumulative infidelity history is not surprising because

individuals in general are more likely to have committed some type of an infidelity at

some point in a relationship compared to a sexual infidelity in the last two years.

Researchers typically estimate that approximately 22-25% of married men and 11-15% of

married women have engaged in infidelity (Allen et al., 2005), but the rate for any given

year is much lower with researchers finding that 1.5-4% of individuals have engaged in

infidelity within a 12 month period (Blow & Hartnett, 2005). For the current study, only

101 individuals indicated they engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years whereas

226 individuals indicated they have at some point engaged in some form of infidelity. That parental infidelity, specifically father infidelity, was associated with offspring infidelity within a contracted time frame speaks to the robustness of this relationship. Further support for this hypothesis was found in the structural equation models which will be discussed in the following section.

Support was also found for Hypothesis 2, as the experience of parental infidelity, regardless of whether offspring's mother or father was the individual who cheated, was associated with family communication about fidelity, faithfulness, conflict, and infidelity acceptability. Individuals who reported a parental infidelity indicated they were less likely to have received broad, general messages from their family about the importance of fidelity and monogamy in romantic relationships. Participants who experienced a parental infidelity also reported significantly lower levels of direct communication about faithfulness and commitment. These individuals were less likely to have observed their parents discuss the value of faithfulness and fidelity, and were also less likely to have had their parents directly discuss the importance of faithfulness and fidelity with them. As expected, participants who reported a parental infidelity also reported observing greater parental conflict about infidelity and jealousy. Furthermore, individuals who experienced a parental infidelity also indicated they were more likely to have had a parent directly communicate to them that infidelity is acceptable behavior. These findings indicate that the experience of a parental infidelity is associated with offspring reporting having received a number of indirect and direct messages about infidelity, monogamy, and commitment from their family-of-origin. Moreover, these findings suggest that one way

the intergenerational transmission of infidelity occurs is through the context and nature of communication in the family regarding relationship fidelity and monogamy. These relationships signify that social learning may have occurred as parental infidelity is associated with offspring's perceptions of communication about these infidelity-relevant values and beliefs (Bandura, 1986).

Little support was found for Hypothesis 3 as infidelity beliefs, sociosexual orientation, and willingness to engage in infidelity overall did not differ as a function of parent infidelity. Participants who reported a parental infidelity indicated greater willingness to engage in infidelity whereas participants who reported just a father infidelity indicated greater endorsement of the positive outcomes of infidelity and greater willingness to engage in infidelity. However, the effect sizes for all these relationships were all quite small and no true consistent pattern of significant results emerged. These findings imply that the experience of a parental infidelity is not directly related to offspring's infidelity and sexuality beliefs.

On the other hand, support was found for Hypothesis 4 that fidelity messages from family-of-origin and family communication about infidelity were related to infidelity beliefs, sociosexual orientation, and willingness to engage in infidelity. General messages from family about fidelity was negatively associated with believing infidelity was acceptable, endorsing positive outcomes of infidelity, an unrestricted sociosexual orientation, and willingness to engage in infidelity, and positively associated with endorsing negative outcomes of infidelity. Higher levels of parental conflict about infidelity was also negatively associated with believing infidelity was acceptable and

willingness to engage in infidelity, and positively associated with endorsing negative outcomes of infidelity. Additionally, direct communication from parents about the acceptability of infidelity was positively associated with believing infidelity was acceptable, endorsing positive outcomes of infidelity, willingness to engage in uncommitted sexual activity, and willingness to engage in infidelity, and negatively associated with endorsing negative outcomes of infidelity.

Therefore, while parent infidelity was not directly associated with offspring's infidelity and sexuality beliefs, family communication about infidelity and relationships were related to these beliefs. These findings imply that the experience of parental infidelity alone does not shape offspring's beliefs but how parents communicate about infidelity behavior, monogamy, and commitment is related to infidelity and sexuality beliefs. These results are consistent with social learning theory, as Bandura (1986) stressed that the meaning and consequences attached to behaviors influence how individuals then perceive the relevant behavior. In particular, broad messages from family-of-origin about fidelity and direct communication from parents about infidelity acceptability were consistently related to infidelity beliefs.

A less consistent picture emerged when examining the relationship between parent conflict about infidelity and offspring's infidelity beliefs. However, all relationships were in the expected directions, with greater parental conflict being associated with more negative views of infidelity. Only willingness to engage in uncommitted sexual activity was not related to parental conflict, an understandable relationship as greater parental conflict about infidelity does not necessarily transmit a

relevant message about more permissive sexuality in general. In fact, the weakest relationships emerged between sociosexual orientation and the family communication variables overall. These findings indicate that the family communication about infidelity are not as robustly linked to general sexuality beliefs, compared to infidelity beliefs.

Moreover, the results suggest that direct family communication about fidelity and faithfulness was unrelated to offspring's infidelity beliefs and sexuality beliefs. One reason for this lack of significance may be because all offspring, regardless of family history, are likely told that it is important to be faithful and committed to romantic partners. Parents likely try to socialize their children with the prevailing social norm that individuals should not engage in infidelity. This may help to explain why the majority of individuals consider infidelity unacceptable in a relationship (Wiederman & Allgeier, 1996), yet engage in the behavior at a high rate. Most individuals are told that infidelity is not appropriate and endorse this value but at the same time observe individuals engaging in the behavior and are therefore more willing to engage in the behavior. Offspring may also have observed their parents communicating about the importance of faithfulness at some point in their relationship, whether or not an infidelity ever occurred. Indeed, participants indicated higher levels of such communications compared to parent conflict about infidelity and communication about infidelity acceptability. Thus, the meaning of such communication for offspring may be diminished because it is more typical.

Finally, Hypothesis 5 was supported overall as individuals who had engaged in the various types of infidelity behavior reported more permissive infidelity and sexuality beliefs. Participants who had ever cheated indicated they believed infidelity was more

acceptable, endorsed greater positive and lower negative outcomes of infidelity, a more

unrestricted sociosexual orientation, and greater willingness to engage in infidelity. An

identical pattern was found for participants who had engaged in sexual infidelity in the

last two years. Individuals who had committed a sexual infidelity in the last two years

also reported they believed infidelity was more acceptable, endorsed greater positive and

lower negative outcomes of infidelity, a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation, and

greater willingness to engage in infidelity. However, results revealed that only

sociosexual orientation and greater willingness to engage in infidelity were positively

associated with number of sexual infidelity episodes and partners.

These findings suggest that more permissive infidelity beliefs, greater willingness

to engage in infidelity, and greater willingness to engage in uncommitted sexual activity

all relate to whether infidelity has occurred or not, but greater willingness to engage in

infidelity and uncommitted sexual activity are associated with rates of infidelity, as well.

Individuals who are most willing to engage in infidelity and have uncommitted sexual

relationships, are also the individuals who engage in infidelity more frequently and with

more individuals. These findings are consistent with expectations as researchers have

consistently found individuals with more permissive infidelity and sexuality beliefs are

more likely to have engaged in infidelity (Glass & Wright, 1992; Simpson & Gangestad,

1991; Wiederman, 1997). The current study extends these findings by also suggesting

that sexuality beliefs and willingness to engage in infidelity are associated with how often

individuals engage in infidelity. Due to the correlational nature of the study, however, it

is not possible to state that more permissive infidelity and sexuality beliefs lead to greater

infidelity behavior, or whether greater infidelity behavior leads to more permissive infidelity and sexuality beliefs.

Attachment Style and Infidelity Behaviors

The relationship between attachment style and infidelity behaviors was also considered in the current project. Contrary to expectations, little support was found for Hypothesis 6 as attachment style was not significantly associated with the majority of infidelity behaviors. Results revealed that individuals who had ever engaged in infidelity reported higher levels of avoidance and anxiety, although these effect sizes were small. Additionally, attachment style was unrelated to having engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years, number of sexual infidelity episodes, and number of sexual infidelity partners. Moreover, when entered into the structural equation model, the model failed to obtain an adequate fit and only avoidance was weakly associated with having ever cheated in a romantic relationship. As such, the attachment dimensions were removed from the structural equation model, and all subsequent models were found to have a good fit.

Such a finding is surprising as previous research has linked attachment style to infidelity behavior (Allen & Baucom, 2004; Bogaert & Sadava, 2002). These studies also utilized a community sample, as well as an undergraduate sample in the Allen and Baucom study, suggesting that these differing results are not due to sample differences. These inconsistent results may be due to how researchers operationalize both attachment style and infidelity behavior. For example, Allen and Baucom utilized a different measure of attachment style (the Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory by Brennan, Clark,

& Shaver, 1998); although this measure assesses dimensions of anxiety and avoidance as well, the researchers then placed participants in the attachment categories of secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissive. Allen and Baucom found that individuals with a dismissive attachment style reported the highest rate of infidelity partners. The current study utilized the two continuous dimensions of avoidance and anxiety, rather than relying on attachment categories, as suggested by many researchers (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Bogaert and Sadava operationalized attachment in the same manner as the current study and found that the attachment dimensions were associated with having ever engaged in infidelity. This finding is consistent with the current study as it was also found that attachment was related to overall infidelity history but not the other forms of infidelity. Thus, the present findings are consistent with Bogaert and Sadava, although when looking at other forms of infidelity behavior the relationship between attachment style and infidelity behavior disappears.

As a whole, these results suggest that further research is needed to refine the relationship between attachment style and infidelity as findings appear to depend on how attachment style and infidelity behavior are measured. Attachment style does appear to be somewhat linked with whether individuals have ever engaged in infidelity but is less consistently associated with more recent infidelity behavior. Future research should utilize a number of assessments of infidelity behavior in order to more fully understand how attachment may or may not be related to infidelity. Additional studies should also assess other qualities, such as relationship status, relationship satisfaction, and

commitment, which may moderate the relationship between attachment style and infidelity behavior.

Social Learning Theory and Infidelity Patterns

Based on these findings, the proposed theoretical model was assessed by structural equation modeling to answer Research Question 1 (please refer back to Figure 1). The model, grounded in social learning theory, postulated that the experience of a parental infidelity would be associated with offspring having received more negative messages about fidelity and faithfulness, and more positive messages about infidelity from their family-of-origin. These family messages would then be related to offspring possessing more permissive beliefs about infidelity and sexuality, and these beliefs would then be directly related to higher levels of offspring's own infidelity behavior. The model was found to have a good fit, indicating that the variables proposed by social learning theory at least partially explain intergenerational infidelity patterns. The structural equation model results replicate much of the relationships found in the previous analyses; however, by considering all variables in one model the robustness of these relationships may be assessed.

Results of the model reveal that the experience of parental infidelity is negatively related to offspring's reports of having received messages of fidelity from family-of-origin and family communication about faithfulness and monogamy, and positively related to parental conflict about infidelity and family communication about the acceptability of infidelity. Thus, the experience of parental infidelity is associated with both direct and indirect communications about relationship values and experiences.

Previous work has indicated that parents send a number of messages about the nature of romantic relationships and sexual practices (Davis & Friel, 2001; Hare et al., 2009; Jaccard & Dittus, 1991), and the current findings indicate that the occurrence of infidelity is associated with having received more negative message about fidelity, and more positive messages about infidelity from the family-of-origin.

It was expected then that these relationship messages from family-of-origin would be associated with offspring reporting more permissive and positive beliefs about infidelity and uncommitted sexual behavior, as communication is the major tool through which individuals learn and construct their beliefs (Bandura, 1986; Kunkel et al., 2006). In the current study, the messages that offspring received about infidelity acceptability appear to be integrated into their own belief systems about infidelity and sexuality as most of the family communication variables were significantly associated with infidelity and sexuality beliefs. This finding is consistent with a great deal of previous work which has found that individuals form their own romantic relationship schemas, beliefs, and attitudes based on information which was learned from the family-of-origin (e.g., Fletcher & Thomas, 1996). Thus, there is support for a social learning model as offspring's beliefs and values appear to be in line with what they observed and what was directly communicated to them by their family-of-origin.

According to social learning theory, these beliefs are then directly related to individuals' behaviors. Bandura (2001) argued that individuals choose to perform a behavior based on both expected social sanctions as well as their own self-expectations. Therefore, although most individuals are likely to be aware of the social norm against

infidelity, if individuals possess more permissive beliefs about their own infidelity and sexual behavior, it is likely that they will engage in higher levels of infidelity. Previous research has consistently found a significant positive association between permissive infidelity and sexuality beliefs and individuals' infidelity behaviors (Seal et al., 1994; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991; Traes & Giesen, 2000). This relationship was also supported in the current study as more permissive infidelity and sexuality beliefs were associated with a higher likelihood of having engaged in infidelity behavior as well as higher rates of infidelity behavior.

Overall, these results provide support for the proposed model grounded in social learning theory. Although not every pathway was significant, a meaningful pattern emerged in which the experience of parental infidelity was associated with more negative messages about fidelity and faithfulness, higher levels of parental conflict about infidelity, and more communication about the acceptability of infidelity behavior. These communications were then associated with more permissive infidelity and sexuality beliefs, which were subsequently related to a greater likelihood of offspring having engaged in infidelity. The findings of the current study also support many of the propositions made by clinicians based on their professional experiences. These results indicate that the experience of parental infidelity does indeed send messages about the appropriateness of infidelity to offspring, as suggested by Brown (2001) as well as Reibstein and Richards (1993). Additionally, Sori (2007) proposed that the experience of a parental infidelity shapes offspring's beliefs about relationships and these beliefs will then relate to offspring's own behavior. Although it is impossible for the current study to

make such causal statements, there is certainly correlational support for how the experience of parental infidelity is related to offspring's own infidelity beliefs and behaviors.

It is important to note that not every individual who experiences a parental infidelity will necessarily engage in infidelity. According to social learning theory, individuals use information to actively construct their belief systems and then use these beliefs to guide their actions (Bandura, 2001). How individuals think and feel about a parental infidelity will likely influence how individuals think about infidelity in general. Individuals then choose to engage in certain behaviors based on their belief systems as well as the social context. Thus, individuals have significant agency in constructing their beliefs and enacting behaviors.

Social learning theory has been previously used to explain the intergenerational transmission of divorce (Amato & DeBoer, 2001), and the results of the current study indicate that the intergenerational transmission of infidelity may occur via a similar mechanism. Overall, researchers have found that the experience of parental divorce is associated with having received a number of negative relationship messages (Weigel, 2007), and offspring who experienced a parental divorce possess more negative attitudes towards marriage and more positive attitudes about divorce (Amato & Booth, 1991b; Cunningham & Thornton, 2005; Kapinus, 2004). These relationship beliefs and attitudes are then directly related to offspring's greater propensity to divorce (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Cui & Fincham, 2010). The current project may be considered a complement to

this field of study as many of the assumptions of the intergenerational transmission of divorce were successfully applied to study intergenerational infidelity patterns.

This study also informs a broader social-cognitive approach to studying romantic relationships, and infidelity in particular. Fletcher and Thomas (1996) argued that personal experiences, including family-of-origin experiences, provide individuals with information with which to construct beliefs and knowledge structures pertaining to romantic relationships. These knowledge structures influence individuals' experiences in personal relationships (Baldwin, 1992; Baldwin, Fehr, Keedian, Seidel, & Thomson, 1993). Knowledge structures pertinent to romantic relationships are strongly related to relationship outcomes as well as interactions between relationship partners (Fletcher & Thomas). In sum, how individuals think about romantic relationships has implications for how individuals behave in relationships. In the current project, a social-cognitive framework was applied to study the intergenerational transmission of infidelity, although social learning theory was more specifically utilized. Interactions with the social environment, particularly the experience of parental infidelity, are related to how individuals view infidelity and these cognitive structures are significantly associated with individuals' behavior. The current findings indicate that social experiences pertaining to infidelity are integrated into individuals' knowledge structures about relationships, and these beliefs then relate to individuals' behavior.

Gender and Infidelity Patterns

The results of the study indicated overall support for Hypothesis 7 as males were more likely to have engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years and reported a

greater number of sexual infidelity episodes and partners compared to females. These results are in line with prior research which has found that men engage in infidelity more often and have a greater number of extradyadic partners (Allen & Baucom, 2004; Atkins et al., 2001). However, no gender differences were found for having ever cheated in a romantic relationship. This finding is consistent with previous research, as Brand et al. (2007) found that women actually reported higher rates of infidelity when cheating was more broadly defined and included behaviors other than sexual intercourse outside of an exclusive relationship. In the current study, participants were asked if they had ever cheated in an exclusive romantic relationship, allowing the participants to define infidelity as including behaviors other than sexual intercourse. Therefore, it is not entirely unexpected that no gender differences emerged for this particular variable.

Additionally, significant gender differences were found for infidelity and sexuality beliefs in support of Hypothesis 8. Males viewed infidelity as significantly more acceptable, endorsed more positive outcomes and less negative outcomes, reported a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation, and greater willingness to engage in infidelity. These results are consistent with expectations as researchers have previously found that men are more accepting of infidelity, have more permissive sexual attitudes, and are more willing to engage in uncommitted sexual activities (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Oliver & Hyde, 1993; Petersen & Hyde, 2010). Hence, the current study further extends existing research which signifies that men view infidelity more favorably and engage in infidelity at higher rates.

Gender Patterns in Structural Model with Parent Infidelity as Exogenous Variable

Gender patterns were also examined in the structural equation model with parent infidelity as the exogenous variable and some differences between males and females emerged, although a similar pattern was observed overall. For males, parent infidelity was only negatively associated with messages about fidelity from family-of-origin and positively associated with parental conflict about infidelity. For females, parent infidelity was negatively associated with both messages from family about fidelity and direct family communication about faithfulness, as well as positively associated with parental conflict about infidelity. It is important to note that when data were analyzed together for males and females, parent infidelity had a significant positive relationship with family communication about the acceptability of infidelity, but when data were analyzed separately this relationship was marginally significant (significance levels were .054 and .051 for males and females respectively). These findings indicate that the experience of parental infidelity is similarly associated with the various types of communications for both males and females, although these relationships are more consistent for females.

However, different pattern for males and females began to emerge when exploring which family communication variables related to infidelity and sexuality beliefs. All relationships were in the expected directions with less communication about fidelity, greater parental conflict, and greater communication about infidelity acceptability related to more positive infidelity beliefs, greater willingness to engage in uncommitted sexual relationships, and greater willingness to engage in infidelity. For males, messages of fidelity from family-of-origin was negatively associated with beliefs

about infidelity acceptability, endorsement of positive outcomes following infidelity, and willingness to engage in infidelity, as well as positively associated with endorsement of negative outcomes following infidelity. In contrast, for females, messages of fidelity were only negatively associated with willingness to engage in infidelity and positively associated with endorsement of negative outcomes. Parental conflict was negatively associated with beliefs about infidelity acceptability and willingness to engage in infidelity, and positively related to endorsement of infidelity negative outcomes for males. Conversely, for females, parent conflict about infidelity was only positively associated with endorsement of negative outcomes for infidelity behavior. For males, family communication about infidelity acceptability was positively related to beliefs about infidelity acceptability and willingness to engage in infidelity, and negatively related to endorsement of negative outcomes of infidelity. Whereas for females, family communication about infidelity acceptability was positively related to beliefs about infidelity acceptability, endorsement of positive outcomes of infidelity, and willingness to engage in infidelity, and negatively related to endorsement of negative outcomes of infidelity. Finally, family communication about faithfulness was negatively associated with endorsement of negative outcomes for infidelity in males, and sociosexual orientation for females.

These results indicate that messages from family are related to offspring's infidelity beliefs, although slightly divergent patterns emerged for males and females. For both genders, messages from family about fidelity and communication about infidelity acceptability were the family communication variables most consistently associated with

infidelity beliefs. For males, the results also indicated that parental conflict about infidelity is more consistently and strongly associated with infidelity beliefs. This finding suggests that observing parents fight about infidelity may be more influential on males' infidelity beliefs, compared to females. This may be because males are socialized in general to hold more permissive sexual beliefs and engage in more unrestricted sexual behavior (Baldwin & Baldwin, 1997), and subsequently seeing their parents argue about such behavior may run counter to what they originally learned about infidelity and sexuality. As a result, parental conflict about a previously accepted behavior may be particularly salient for males and influence their infidelity and sexuality beliefs to a greater degree.

Additionally, when looking at these relationships separately for males and females, only family communication about faithfulness was significantly associated with sociosexual orientation for females. No other family communication variables were related to general willingness to engage in uncommitted sexuality behavior. This finding may indicate that other factors besides family communication about infidelity and faithfulness, most likely broader gender role socialization and messages about sexuality in general, are associated with sociosexual orientation. Essentially from birth, parents begin to socialize their children to behave in ways consistent with their biological sex (Crawford & Unger, 2004), and the gender role beliefs and schemas individuals develop influence specific beliefs about sexuality. Parents who communicate that infidelity is unacceptable, may still communicate to their male children that more permissive sexual behavior is acceptable and that men are expected to behave in a sexually unrestricted

manner. Furthermore, messages about infidelity from the family-of-origin are just one component of the many messages parents will communicate to their children about sexuality and sexual behavior. It is likely that specific messages about infidelity will not influence offspring's broader sexual beliefs to the same extent that specific communications about infidelity are associated with infidelity-relevant beliefs.

Males and females also exhibited different patterns about which beliefs were related to infidelity behavior. For males, having ever cheated was positively associated only with sociosexual orientation and parent infidelity. In contrast, for females, having ever committed an infidelity was positively associated with sociosexual orientation, willingness to engage in infidelity, and parent infidelity, as well as negatively associated with beliefs about infidelity acceptability and endorsement of negative outcomes following infidelity. Having engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years was negatively associated with beliefs about infidelity, and positively associated with willingness to engage in infidelity and parental infidelity for males. For females, sexual infidelity in the last two years was positively associated with endorsing the positive outcomes of infidelity and sociosexual orientation. For males, number of sexual infidelity episodes was positively associated with willingness to engage in infidelity and parental infidelity, but for females, was positively associated with willingness to engage in infidelity and sociosexual orientation. For both males and females, number of sexual infidelity partners was positively associated only with sociosexual orientation.

The most notable difference for males and females is that the experience of a parental infidelity is directly associated with having ever engaged in infidelity, sexual

infidelity in the last two years, and number of sexual infidelity episodes for males. Further explanation of these patterns will be discussed in the subsequent section. For both genders, however, willingness to engage in infidelity and uncommitted sexual behavior were the beliefs most often associated with infidelity behavior.

Gender Patterns in Structural Model with Separate Mother and Father Infidelity

Gender differences were also explored with mother infidelity and father infidelity entered as exogenous variables separately. Overall, mother and father infidelity were similarly associated with the family communication variables for males and females. For both genders, mother and father infidelity was negatively related to messages from family about fidelity and positively related to parent conflict about infidelity. Additionally, for both genders, only mother infidelity was positively associated with communication about infidelity acceptability. For females only, the experience of mother and father infidelity was positively associated with communication about faithfulness and commitment in relationships whereas for males, mother and father infidelity was unrelated to the construct. Thus, the only difference which emerged was that parent communication about faithfulness was negatively associated with both mother and father infidelity for females whereas no significant relationships emerged for males. This may be because females are more attuned to parent communication and more likely to pick up negative messages about faithfulness following a parent infidelity. Females are typically socialized to put more emphasis on personal relationships and to strive for cohesion in these relationships (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Crawford & Unger, 2004). For females, the experience of a parental infidelity, regardless of parent gender, may undermine such socialization as

parents are communicating that faithfulness and fidelity are not as valued as they had previously been taught.

For both genders in this model, all relationships between family communication variables and infidelity and sexuality beliefs remained identical to the model with parent infidelity as the exogenous variable. The only exception being that family communication about infidelity acceptability was no longer significantly associated with sociosexual orientation for males in this model. Additionally, the same infidelity and sexuality beliefs were associated with offspring infidelity behavior for both males and females. The most notable differences emerged when exploring how the experience of mother infidelity and father infidelity were directly associated with offspring infidelity behavior. For males, mother infidelity was not directly associated with any infidelity behaviors but father infidelity was positively associated with having ever cheated, sexual infidelity in the last two years, and number of sexual infidelity episodes in the last two years. For females, mother and father infidelity were positively associated with having ever engaged in infidelity only. Thus, for males, the experience of father infidelity is directly associated with an array of infidelity behaviors but the experience of mother infidelity is not directly related to any forms of infidelity behavior. Females, in contrast, display an identical pattern regardless of whether it was the mother or father who engaged in infidelity.

These results help to explain why previous research has only found a significant relationship between father infidelity and male offspring's infidelity behavior (e.g. Havlicek et al., 2011; Platt et al., 2008). These researchers only looked at how parent infidelity was directly associated with offspring infidelity. The current study found a

similar pattern of behavior in that father infidelity was directly related to son's infidelity. However, the present study also indicates that mother infidelity is indirectly associated with sons' infidelity, and that the experience of either mother or father infidelity is associated with daughters' infidelity behavior as well. Interestingly, both mother and father infidelity were directly associated with daughter's likelihood of having ever engaged in infidelity. Thus, there is some support for the idea that offspring are more likely to replicate the behaviors of the same-sex parent (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Pittman, 1989; Reibstein & Richards, 1993), particularly for males, although the behaviors of both parents play a role in the sexual socialization of sons and daughters. This finding is consistent with previous work which has found sons are more likely to model their fathers' behaviors which suggests that fathers' actions are particularly influential for sons (Dadds et al., 1999, Schrodt et al., 2009). This may be because males may face more severe social sanctions for acting in a gender inappropriate manner (Crawford & Unger, 2004) and therefore, may be particularly motivated to adopt the behaviors modeled by the same-sex parent.

Characteristics of Parent Infidelity, Infidelity Beliefs and Behaviors

The current findings indicate that certain characteristics of the parental infidelity were generally unrelated to offspring's beliefs and behaviors. Some support was found for Hypothesis 9 as outcome of parental infidelity was associated with some forms of offspring infidelity behavior. Participants who indicated their parents remained together were more likely to have engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years and a higher number of sexual infidelity partners. In contrast, parent infidelity outcome was unrelated

to having ever cheated and number of sexual infidelity episodes. Additionally, some support was found for Hypothesis 10 as results revealed that individuals who reported that their parents were still together endorsed more positive outcomes associated with infidelity and greater willingness to engage in infidelity. However, further analysis revealed that relative to the infidelity and sexuality beliefs, outcome of parental infidelity was not associated with offspring infidelity behavior. These results are consistent with social learning theory, as Bandura (1986) argued that individuals will view behaviors more favorably and be more likely to enact behaviors if they observed similar actions without consequences. The experience of parental infidelity without a subsequent divorce may give offspring the impression that infidelity has fewer negative consequences as the family unit at least remains intact. Moreover, parents who remained married may have more successfully dealt with conflict surrounding the infidelity and addressed issues which may have led to the infidelity. On the other hand, offspring whose parents remained married may also be exposed to a higher degree of parental conflict. The current findings indicate that how parents navigate an infidelity may relate to offspring's subsequent infidelity beliefs and behaviors. Although such results were not strong, to a certain degree the findings indicate that individuals whose parents who remained together following an infidelity viewed infidelity more favorably and were more likely to engage in infidelity. Future studies should further investigate how parent infidelity outcomes (e.g., parental divorce, conflict, relationship quality) may relate to offspring's infidelity beliefs and behaviors.

Finally, no support was found for Hypotheses 11 and 12, as age when individuals first suspected a parental infidelity was not significantly associated with any infidelity behavior or infidelity and sexuality beliefs. These findings were unexpected as Bandura (1986) argued that for social learning to occur, individuals must be able to comprehend the nature of a behavior and the associated consequences. It was expected that individuals who learned of a parental infidelity as an adolescent may be more impacted by the experience because they were better able to understand a parent's actions and infidelity outcomes. This lack of significant results may be because all participants in the current study were adults who were able to reflect on their parents' actions, and assimilate parents' behaviors into their existing belief systems. Offspring may have been told about a parental infidelity throughout childhood and adolescence and the experience may be considered part of their family history. Therefore, age when offspring first suspected a parental infidelity may not be influential because offspring continue to navigate the experience throughout their lifetime. It is also possible that age when parental infidelity was suspected just has little influence over how offspring experience the event. Past research about the relationship between offspring outcomes and age at parental divorce has been mixed, with some researchers finding age at parental divorce having no impact on offspring (Enos & Handal, 1987) whereas other researchers have found that older offspring adjust better to parental divorce (Allison & Furstenberg, 1989; Howell, Portes, & Brown, 1997). More information is needed about when and how offspring learned of the infidelity to fully piece together whether age is related to offspring's subsequent beliefs and behaviors. In particular, longitudinal research is necessary to understand how

and when children experienced a parental infidelity, how parents negotiated the infidelity, and children's beliefs and behaviors as they mature and enter in their own relationships.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

The current dissertation project possesses several strengths which should be highlighted. Primarily, the study builds upon observations by clinicians and two previous empirical studies of intergenerational infidelity patterns by illustrating that the experience of a parental infidelity is indeed associated with offspring's own behaviors. The current study also expands on previous work by beginning to research the mechanism underlying an intergenerational transmission of infidelity. Previous research only explored whether the relationship between parent and offspring behaviors existed but did not address how or why such patterns may exist. By utilizing social learning theory, the current project is able to at least partially explain these patterns of behavior. It appears that the experience of a parental infidelity is associated with communication about infidelity behavior, which in turn is associated with infidelity beliefs and subsequent infidelity behavior.

An additional strength of the current project is that the findings also begin to explain why previous work only found a relationship between father and son infidelity (e.g. Havlicek et al., 2011; Platt et al., 2008). The current study found for males, the experience of a father infidelity was directly associated with sons' infidelity behavior. However, mother infidelity was indirectly associated with sons' infidelity behavior. Moreover, the study suggests that parental infidelity is also related to daughters' behavior but again this association is mainly indirect, although both mother and father infidelity were directly related to daughter's likelihood of having ever cheated in a romantic

relationship. Thus, the dissertation project adds to the literature by showing that both mother and father infidelity are related to sons' and daughters' behavior, albeit through different paths. Previous research which only explored direct paths between parent infidelity and offspring infidelity behavior overlooked this more nuanced relationship.

Another strength of the current study is that the results provide further validation for the infidelity beliefs questionnaire developed by the researcher. An overall consistent factor structure was found in both the pilot study and the main dissertation project. Furthermore, the measure was found to be reliable with a high level of predictive validity. Currently, there is no existing measure which assesses global beliefs about infidelity, with most researchers assuming individuals view infidelity in a negative manner. The development of the infidelity beliefs questionnaire therefore may be useful for future infidelity research.

Of course, every research project contains limitations, as well, and this dissertation project is no exception. Foremost, the current project relies on offspring's own recollections and perceptions of parental infidelity. Although children are often knowledgeable of their parents' indiscretions (Duncombe & Marsden, 2004), it is likely that some offspring remain in the dark. Future research should capture information from both parents and children in order to gain a clearer picture of which families actually experienced a parental infidelity. Some offspring may erroneously believe an infidelity occurred, when in fact no infidelity occurred. Conversely, it would be particularly interesting to see whether an unknown parental infidelity may also relate to offspring's beliefs and infidelity behaviors. Offspring likely still sense some disruption in their

family-of-origin and may nevertheless gain memorable messages about monogamy, faithfulness, and infidelity even without the explicit knowledge of a parental infidelity. Family secrets are often not as well-kept as individuals may believe and have the potential to greatly impact family patterns even if the secret is never disclosed (Brown-Smith, 1998; Imber-Black, 1998). Future research should ideally collect information from both parents and offspring in order to gain a more accurate understanding of the parental infidelity and how it relates to offspring's behavior. It should also be pointed out that in the case of the family communication variables, assessing offspring's perceptions of communication rather than the actual communications, may actually be a strength of the study as offspring's beliefs and behaviors are likely most influenced by how they remember and frame childhood experiences. Simply, memorable messages cannot impact offspring if they do not perceive having received these messages.

The study also relied on a convenience sample rather than a random sample, which ultimately limits the generalizability of results. However, data were gathered from a somewhat diverse range of individuals. Data were collected from two university communities in different United States regions as well as through MTurk. Although information was not gathered about geographic location, it is likely that data were collected from MTurk workers all over the United States. Certainly, the results of the current study cannot be generalized to all adults in the United States but some effort was made to capture a more varied sample. In particular, individuals of various ages took part in the current project; hence, the results of the project can be somewhat extended to a non-college student population. One major shortcoming of the sample is that the vast

majority of participants, regardless of recruitment method, were Caucasian (75.5% UNR, 60.8% from USF, and 83.1% from MTurk). Additionally, it is likely that all participants were of relatively higher socioeconomic backgrounds as all participants were either enrolled in college or had regular access to the MTurk website. Future research would be enhanced by gathering data from individuals of more diverse sociocultural backgrounds so findings could be further generalized.

Another limitation related to the convenience sample is that it is also possible that the current study may exhibit a selection bias. Participants were informed from the beginning that the study would ask questions about their relationship beliefs, family background, and relationship experiences. Furthermore, the information sheet explicitly stated that the study was about infidelity beliefs and experiences. It is therefore possible that certain types of individuals would be drawn to completing the study.

Moreover, the correlational nature of the current study does not permit definite directional conclusions. The study provides valuable information about the associations between parent infidelity, family communication, and offspring's infidelity beliefs and behaviors. However, it is possible that current beliefs and offspring's own infidelity behaviors shape remembrances about family-of-origin messages and experiences. Future research must take a longitudinal approach to assess how parent infidelity in childhood relates to offspring's future infidelity beliefs and behaviors. This temporal component will allow researchers to more thoroughly determine how these family experiences relate to offspring's behavior.

An additional limitation is that all participants completed materials in the same order which generates the potential for an ordering effect. The decision was made to provide these materials in a certain order for strategic reasons. Participants were first given the attachment questionnaire to ease them into the survey (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009), and then completed all materials about their own infidelity beliefs and behaviors before reporting about communication in their family and their parent's relationship. Such an order helps to ensure that reporting about a parent's infidelity does not influence participants' ratings of their own beliefs and behaviors. Despite this rationale for the presentation of materials, the potential for ordering effects must be considered.

Another limitation is that the dissertation project only focuses on the relationship between parental infidelity and offspring infidelity behavior. As demonstrated in the earlier preliminary findings and previous research, other aspects of family relationships appear to be associated with offspring infidelity behavior as well. Parental divorce, parental conflict, and perceptions of parental happiness and satisfaction also seem to impact offspring's own infidelity behaviors. It is also likely that parent-child relationship quality may influence how offspring experience a parental infidelity as well as their infidelity beliefs and behaviors. The main goals of the current project were to empirically demonstrate that the intergenerational transmission of infidelity does indeed exist and to test a preliminary theoretical model of this phenomenon. To more fully understand how family-of-origin impacts offspring infidelity behavior, future research must take into account a wider array of family background variables. These additional variables may

account for unique variance or moderate the relationship parental infidelity has on offspring behavior. Families where infidelity is coupled with particularly high levels of conflict and parental divorce, may have offspring who are especially more likely to engage in infidelity themselves. Therefore, future research should take into account additional family background characteristics in order to gain an even more accurate understanding of the intergenerational transmission of infidelity.

Related to this suggestion, future research should also employ a more comprehensive theoretical orientation. In particular, this line of research would be enhanced by integrating a biopsychosocial perspective; a position advocated for in the intergenerational transmission of divorce literature as well. Although little support is found for a passive genetic transmission of divorce behaviors, there is growing evidence that biological factors interact with social influences (Amato, 2010). In a large scale twin study using the Australian Twin Registry, D'Onofrio et al. (2007) found that the intergenerational transmission of divorce is partially accounted for by genetic factors although the experience of a parental divorce is also directly related to offspring's likelihood of divorce. Related to this topic, in a study of husband-wife dyads, neither partner's testosterone levels were directly related to relationship quality, but a significant interaction between husband's testosterone level and role overload was found (Booth, Johnson, & Conger, 2005).

A complete understanding of the intergenerational transmission of infidelity likewise necessitates a biological component. Research suggests that a number of biological factors relate to individuals' propensity to engage in infidelity. In a large study

of female twins, infidelity behavior was at least partially linked to genetic factors, although infidelity attitudes were only associated with social influences (Cherkas, Oelsner, Mak, Valdes, & Spector, 2004). Booth and Dabbs (1993) found that men with higher levels of testosterone reported higher levels of infidelity. Additionally, it appears that impulse control may be linked to specific genetic variations (Passamonti et al., 2006), and lower impulse control is associated with greater willingness to engage in infidelity (McAlister, Pachana, & Jackson, 2005). Overall, these findings indicate that the most fruitful intergenerational relationship research will account for social, psychological, and biological contributions. Additional theoretical perspectives, such as family systems theory, may also aid this area of research by investigating how the entire family experiences and communicates about a parental infidelity, rather than just focusing on how individual offspring experience a parental infidelity and their subsequent beliefs and behaviors. These theoretical perspectives would complement the social learning theory approach utilized in the current study as all frameworks emphasize how information from the environment influences behaviors.

A final limitation of the current study is that other sources of information besides family-of-origin experiences are apt to influence infidelity beliefs and behaviors. Individuals are likely influenced by their peers and other members of their social networks as well as experiences in their own romantic relationships. Individuals receive messages about infidelity from the news, television shows, and movies, as well. Individuals are privy to the details of both fictional and non-fictional infidelity episodes through these mediums. Research should further consider the relative contributions of

these sources of information for explaining infidelity behavior in addition to family-of-origin variables. As most previous research has focused on individual and relational predictors of infidelity, such an avenue could potentially provide much valuable information about individuals' infidelity beliefs and behaviors.

Implications

The current project has a number of implications for personal relationship researchers, relationship educators, and clinicians. The findings demonstrate that the experience of parental infidelity is both directly and indirectly associated with offspring infidelity behavior. Additionally, the findings suggest that social learning at least partially plays a role in explaining these intergenerational patterns of infidelity. Many new research questions and avenues are also raised as a result of the project. Although the results implicate a relationship between parental infidelity and offspring infidelity, much information is still needed to fully explain this connection. As discussed in the previous section, there are still many insights to be gained about how the experience of a parental infidelity influences offspring's infidelity behavior. The current project is the beginning of what is a potentially rich area of study for personal relationships researchers. Future studies should attempt to gather data from both parents and offspring in order to more fully gauge how a parental infidelity may be associated with offspring's beliefs and behaviors. Researchers must begin to undertake longitudinal research to understand how the experience of a parental infidelity, and other variables such as parental divorce and conflict, impact offspring's infidelity beliefs and behaviors over time. Moreover, other theoretical perspectives must be considered in future research. Although there was

support for the model grounded in social learning theory, parental infidelity was also found to be directly associated with offspring infidelity behavior indicating other variables must be considered to fully explain how parent and offspring infidelity behaviors are linked.

The results of the current study also have implications for relationship education efforts. For example, Braithwaite et al. (2010) developed a course titled "Relationship U" which educates students about how to foster commitment and communicate with partners, generates awareness of how personality traits relate to mate selection and decision making, and informs students about realistic expectations for relationships. The researchers found that students enrolled in the course reported less infidelity behavior over time compared to students who were not enrolled in the "Relationship U" course. Marriage-education courses are also popular and have been found to be effective in building skills necessary for healthy marriages and promoting relationship satisfaction (Halford, Markman, Kline, & Stanley, 2003). The findings of the current study suggest similar courses might also address family history and how experiences within the family shape individuals' beliefs and expectations for relationships. By acknowledging how family experiences may influence beliefs and behaviors, offspring may then be able to accommodate their belief systems about relationships which may be associated with a lower likelihood of engaging in infidelity behavior.

The study also has implications for how clinicians may treat couples negotiating an infidelity. As infidelity is one of the more complex issues to address in a therapeutic context (Peluso & Spina, 2008), clinicians may want to investigate whether their clients

experienced a parent infidelity. Knowledge about a parental infidelity will allow

clinicians the opportunity to discuss beliefs about infidelity and sexual behavior.

Ultimately, such discussions may allow clients to better understand a partner's motives,

catalyze communication, and help individuals cope with the infidelity experience. These

dialogues may also permit clinicians to amend clients' beliefs and schemas, and help

prevent future infidelities.

Conclusion

The research presented represents a first step in understanding family patterns of

infidelity. Most importantly, the study demonstrates that the experience of a parental

infidelity is significantly directly and indirectly associated with higher levels of infidelity

for offspring. Additionally, the dissertation project purports that social learning theory

can at least partially explain the mechanism underlying this process, albeit certainly other

variables will contribute to an intergenerational transmission of infidelity. As a whole, the

results of the study indicate that the experience of a parental infidelity is related to

offspring's perceptions of having received certain messages about infidelity and

relationships, these communications are then associated with offspring's infidelity and

sexuality beliefs, which are linked to their infidelity behavior. The results also indicate

that for males in particular, the experience of a father infidelity is directly associated with

a greater propensity to engage in infidelity. Furthermore, the current findings also

indicate that attachment style and outcome of parent infidelity are not strongly associated

with offspring infidelity behaviors, and that age when offspring first suspected a parent

infidelity is unrelated to offspring infidelity beliefs and behavior.

Importantly, the current project also raises a number of new questions and potential areas of research. Personal relationships researchers have previously suggested that research is needed to explore how family background is associated with propensity to engage in infidelity (Blow & Hartnett, 2005). The findings of this project, along with previous research (i.e. Havlicek et al., 2011; Platt et al. 2008), demonstrate that parent infidelity and offspring infidelity behaviors are linked, although much information is still needed to fully explain an intergenerational transmission of infidelity. The social learning theory approach utilized for the current dissertation is able to explain this relationship in part, although alternative factors and processes must be considered in conjunction.

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Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVAs for Variables of Interest by Location

Variable	All		UNR		USF		MTurk		F	p
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*p*
MFF Fidelity	5.69	1.22	5.75	1.17	5.62	1.14	5.66	1.29	.57	.567
FC Faithful	3.30	1.74	3.63	1.78	3.87	1.61	2.80	1.61	9.32	<.001**
FC Argue	2.32	1.58	2.35	1.63	2.51	1.52	2.23	1.55	.42	.660
FC Acceptable	1.55	1.07	1.50	1.07	1.78	1.12	1.50	1.05	2.36	.095
IB Acceptable	2.13	1.10	2.08	1.07	2.13	.96	2.17	1.17	.90	.409
IB Positive	3.04	1.58	2.96	1.55	2.88	1.46	3.17	1.64	1.92	.148
IB Negative	5.74	1.20	5.63	1.28	5.72	1.15	5.84	1.14	1.67	.190
SOI	57.09	42.38	54.33	33.57	56.61	53.12	59.68	44.62	1.07	.345
Willingness	2.17	1.29	2.11	1.18	2.06	1.08	2.26	1.43	1.37	.254
Avoidance	3.57	1.05	3.41	.98	3.55	.83	3.72	1.16	4.49	.012*
Anxious	3.51	1.06	3.53	1.01	3.62	1.00	3.44	1.12	.22	.802
Age Suspect Infidelity	13.36	6.07	12.89	5.68	11.07	5.40	14.27	6.35	1.22	.297
# Sexual Episodes	4.89	3.54	4.52	3.41	4.71	3.70	5.53	3.63	.22	.800
# Sexual Partners	2.40	2.36	2.30	2.30	2.96	3.30	2.13	1.43	1.43	.246

Note. N = 713-718 for whole sample. Age was entered as a covariate for all analyses. Means only calculated on number of sexual episodes and partners for those who indicated they had engaged in a sexual infidelity. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$.

Table 2

Frequencies and Logistic Regressions for Variables of Interest by Location

Variable	All n	All %	UNR n	UNR %	USF n	USF %	MTurk n	MTurk %	Wald	*p*
Ever Cheated									.23	.893
Yes	226	31.5	83	29.9	36	29.8	107	33.5		
No	492	68.5	195	70.1	85	70.2	212	66.5		
Sexual Infidelity									.36	.835
Yes	101	14.1	44	15.8	24	19.8	33	10.4		
No	616	85.9	234	84.2	97	80.2	285	89.6		
Parental Infidelity									.28	.868
Yes	246	34.3	95	34.2	40	33.1	111	34.8		
No	472	65.7	183	65.8	81	66.9	208	65.2		
Maternal Infidelity									.57	.753
Yes	98	13.6	40	14.4	15	12.4	43	13.5		
No	620	86.4	238	85.6	106	87.6	276	86.5		
Paternal Infidelity									.40	.819
Yes	189	26.3	72	25.9	30	24.8	87	27.3		
No	529	73.7	206	74.1	91	75.2	232	72.7		
Infidelity Outcome									3.34	.189
Ended	177	77.0	72	84.7	22	78.6	83	70.9		
Stayed Together	53	23.0	13	15.3	6	21.4	34	29.1		

Note. $N = 718$ except for parent infidelity outcomes which had an N of 230. Age was entered in the first block for all analyses.

Table 3

Correlations among Family Variables, Infidelity and Sexuality Beliefs, and Attachment Style

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. MFF Fidelity	-										
2. FC Faithful	.26**	-									
3. FC Argue	-.41**	.14**	-								
4. FC Acceptable	-.40**	.15**	.47**	-							
5. IB Acceptable	-.35**	-.05	.14**	.41**	-						
6. IB Positive	-.20**	-.04	.07†	.19**	.40**	-					
7. IB Negative	.32**	.01	-.12**	-.34**	-.55**	-.39**	-				
8. SOI	-.18**	-.09*	.09*	.14**	.30**	.11*	-.18**	-			
9. Willingness	-.31**	-.05	.13**	.34**	.68**	.31**	-.42**	.43**	-		
10. Avoidance	-.21**	-.19**	.10**	.13**	.23**	.06†	-.14**	.08*	.15**	-	
11. Anxious	-.15**	-.04	.14**	.11*	.10*	.02	-.10*	.08*	.06	.24**	-

Note. N = 710-718 for whole sample. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$. † $< .10$

Table 4

MANOVAs for Messages from Family, Family Communication, and Infidelity and Sexuality Beliefs as a Function of Parental Infidelity

Variable	M		F	p	Partial η^2
	No Parent Infidelity	Parent Infidelity			
MFF Fidelity	5.99	5.10	98.45	<.001**	.12
FC Faithful	3.49	2.93	15.27	<.001**	.02
FC Argue	1.77	3.39	228.77	<.001**	.24
FC Acceptable	1.47	1.70	8.85	.003**	.01
			Wilks' $\lambda = .68$, $F(4,711) = 83.10$, $p < .001$**, partial $\eta^2 = .32$		
IB Acceptable	2.12	2.14	.04	.841	.00
IB Positive	2.99	3.13	1.25	.264	.00
IB Negative	5.76	5.70	.56	.455	.00
SOI	55.61	59.94	1.61	.204	.00
Willingness	2.09	2.32	5.38	.021*	.01
			Wilks' $\lambda = .99$, $F(5,711) = 2.02$, $p = .073^{\dagger}$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$		

Note. Age was entered as a covariate for all analyses. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$. † $< .10$

Table 5

MANOVAs for Messages from Family, Family Communication, and Infidelity and Sexuality Beliefs as a Function of Maternal Infidelity

Variable	M		F	p	Partial η^2
	No Mother Infidelity	Mother Infidelity			
MFF Fidelity	5.78	5.05	31.90	<.001**	.04
FC Faithful	3.36	2.92	4.42	.036*	.01
FC Argue	2.12	3.59	82.45	<.001**	.10
FC Acceptable	1.49	1.90	13.35	<.001**	.02
			Wilks' $\lambda = .88$, $F(4,711) = 24.26$, $p < .001**$, partial $\eta^2 = .12$		
IB Acceptable	2.13	2.09	.14	.709	.00
IB Positive	3.04	3.02	.02	.878	.00
IB Negative	5.73	5.76	.03	.858	.00
SOI	56.55	60.49	.70	.404	.00
Willingness	2.14	2.34	1.90	.169	.00
			Wilks' $\lambda = .99$, $F(5,711) = 1.05$, $p = .389$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$		

Note. Age was entered as a covariate for all analyses. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$. † $< .10$

Table 6

MANOVAs for Messages from Family, Family Communication, and Infidelity and Sexuality Beliefs as a Function of Paternal Infidelity

Variable	M		F	p	Partial η^2
	No Father Infidelity	Father Infidelity			
MFF Fidelity	5.94	4.98	97.48	<.001**	.12
FC Faithful	3.45	2.87	12.16	.001*	.02
FC Argue	1.95	3.37	141.60	<.001**	.17
FC Acceptable	1.51	1.67	4.84	.028*	.01
			Wilks' $\lambda = .76$, $F(4,711) = 57.40$, $p < .001**$, partial $\eta^2 = .24$		
IB Acceptable	2.09	2.23	2.34	.127	.00
IB Positive	2.96	3.25	4.51	.034*	.01
IB Negative	5.78	5.63	2.39	.123	.00
SOI	55.77	60.78	1.83	.177	.00
Willingness	2.10	2.37	6.05	.014*	.01
			Wilks' $\lambda = .98$, $F(5,711) = 1.75$, $p = .122$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$		

Note. Age was entered as a covariate for all analyses. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$. † $< .10$

Table 7

Multiple Regressions of Messages from Family and Family Communication on Infidelity and Sexuality Beliefs

Outcome	Predictor	*B*	*SE*	β	*p*	sr^2(unique)
IB Acceptable						
	MFF Fidelity	-.22	.04	-.24	<.001**	.04
	FC Faithful	-.01	.02	-.02	.545	.00
	FC Argue	-.09	.03	-.13	.001**	.01
	FC Acceptable	.39	.04	.39	<.001**	.10
IB Positive						
	MFF Fidelity	-.22	.06	-.17	<.001**	.02
	FC Faithful	.00	.04	.00	.928	.00
	FC Argue	-.08	.04	-.08	.077†	.00
	FC Acceptable	.24	.07	.16	<.001**	.02
IB Negative						
	MFF Fidelity	.26	.04	.27	<.001**	.05
	FC Faithful	-.02	.03	- .03	.393	.00
	FC Argue	.10	.03	.14	.001*	.01
	FC Acceptable	-.33	.05	-.29	<.001**	.06
SOI						
	MFF Fidelity	-4.03	1.58	-.12	.011*	.01
	FC Faithful	-1.91	1.02	-.08	.061†	.01
	FC Argue	-.06	1.18	-.00	.963	.00
	FC Acceptable	4.38	1.74	.11	.012*	.01
Willingness						
	MFF Fidelity	-.24	.05	-.22	<.001**	.03
	FC Faithful	-.00	.03	-.00	.961	.00
	FC Argue	-.09	.03	-.11	.009**	.01
	FC Acceptable	.37	.05	.31	<.001**	.07

Note. Age was entered as a control for all analyses. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$. † $< .10$

Table 8

MANOVAs for Infidelity Beliefs, Sexuality Beliefs, and Attachment as a Function of Ever Cheated

Variable	*M* Did Not Ever Cheat	Cheated	*F*	*p*	Partial η^2
IB Acceptable	2.03	2.34	12.63	<.001**	.02
IB Positive	2.95	3.23	4.42	.036*	.01
IB Negative	5.88	5.43	24.04	<.001**	.03
SOI	46.84	79.41	104.77	<.001**	.13
Willingness	1.92	2.71	63.85	<.001**	.08

Wilks' $\lambda = .83$, $F(5,711) = 29.07$, $p < .001$**, partial $\eta^2 = .17$

| Avoidance | 3.50 | 3.70 | 4.47 | .035* | .01 |
| Anxiety | 3.46 | 3.60 | 4.84 | .028* | .01 |

Wilks' $\lambda = .99$, $F(2, 706) = 3.71$, $p = .025$*, partial $\eta^2 = .01$

Note. Age was entered as a covariate for all analyses. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$. † $< .10$

Table 9

MANOVAs for Infidelity Beliefs, Sexuality Beliefs, and Attachment as a Function of Sexual Infidelity in the Last Two Years

Variable	*M*		*F*	*p*	Partial η^2
	No Sexual Infidelity	Sexual Infidelity			
IB Acceptable	2.00	2.90	65.42	<.001**	.08
IB Positive	2.93	3.69	22.37	<.001**	.03
IB Negative	5.84	5.11	32.62	<.001**	.04
SOI	51.40	91.99	93.56	<.001**	.12
Willingness	1.95	3.46	151.35	<.001**	.18
			Wilks' $\lambda = .79$, $F(5,710) = 37.72$, $p < .001**$, partial $\eta^2 = .21$		
Avoidance	3.57	3.56	.11	.742	.00
Anxiety	3.48	3.64	.70	.404	.00
			Wilks' $\lambda = .99$, $F(2,705) = .36$, $p = .701$, partial $\eta^2 = .00$		

Note. Age was entered as a covariate for all analyses. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$. † $< .10$

Table 10

Multiple Regressions of Infidelity Beliefs and Sexuality Beliefs on Number of Sexual Infidelity Episodes and Partners

Outcome	Predictor	B	SE	β	p	sr^2(unique)
# Sexual Episodes						
	IB Acceptable	.02	.10	.01	.827	.00
	IB Positive	.08	.05	.06	.147	.00
	IB Negative	.03	.08	.02	.670	.00
	SOI	.01	.00	.23	<.001**	.04
	Willingness	.42	.08	.25	<.001**	.03
				$R = .43, R^2 = .19, F(6,709) = 27.10, p < .001**$		
# Sexual Partners						
	IB Acceptable	-.00	.06	-.00	.955	.00
	IB Positive	.01	.03	.02	.648	.00
	IB Negative	-.03	.04	-.03	.465	.00
	SOI	.01	.00	.32	<.001**	.08
	Willingness	.20	.05	.21	<.001**	.02
				$R = .47, R^2 = .23, F(6,709) = 34.28, p < .001**$		
# Sexual Episodes						
	Avoidance	.05	.08	.02	.533	.00
	Anxiety	.08	.08	.04	.326	.00
				$R = .12, R^2 = .01, F(3,704) = 3.14, p = .025*$		
# Sexual Partners						
	Avoidance	.03	.05	.02	.542	.00
	Anxiety	.05	.05	.05	.250	.00
				$R = .11, R^2 = .01, F(3,704) = 2.78, p = .040*$		

Note. $N =$ Age was entered as a control for all analyses. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$. † $< .10$

Table 11

MANOVAs for Infidelity Beliefs, Sexuality Beliefs, and Sexual Infidelity Episodes and Partners as a Function of Gender

Variable	*M* Males	Females	*F*	*p*	Partial η^2
IB Acceptable	2.48	1.91	48.13	<.001**	.06
IB Positive	3.24	2.92	6.98	.008*	.01
IB Negative	5.60	5.83	5.73	.017*	.01
SOI	71.57	48.09	56.57	<.001**	.07
Willingness	2.59	1.91	50.92	<.001**	.07

Wilks' λ = .89, $F(5,709)$ = 18.06, p <.001**, partial η^2 = .11

Variable	Males	Females	*F*	*p*	Partial η^2
# Sexual Episodes	1.02	.50	9.01	.003*	.01
# Sexual Partners	.58	.21	15.22	<.001**	.02

Wilks' λ = .98, $F(2,710)$ = 7.71, p < .001**, partial η^2 = .02

Note. Age was entered as a covariate for all analyses. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$. † $< .10$

Table 12

MANOVAs for Infidelity Beliefs and Sexuality Beliefs as a Function of Parent Infidelity Outcome

Variable	*M*		*F*	*p*	Partial η^2
	Parent Relationship Ended	Still Together			
IB Acceptable	2.07	2.25	1.24	.267	.01
IB Positive	3.06	3.67	5.52	.020*	.02
IB Negative	5.72	5.58	.50	.481	.00
SOI	61.20	62.61	.04	.840	.00
Willingness	2.13	2.77	9.26	.003*	.04

Wilks' $\lambda = .92$, $F(5,223) = 3.69$, $p = .003$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$

Note. Age was entered as a covariate for all analyses. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$. † $< .10$

Table 13

Regressions of Age When Suspected Parental Infidelity on Infidelity Beliefs, Sexuality Beliefs, and Infidelity Behavior

Outcome	B	SE	β	p	sr^2 (unique)
IB Acceptable	-.02	.01	-.09	.215	.01
IB Positive	-.02	.02	-.06	.429	.00
IB Negative	.01	.02	.05	.510	.00
SOI	-.04	.49	-.01	.928	.00
Willingness	.00	.02	.00	.964	.00
# Sexual Episodes	-.03	.03	-.08	.251	.01
# Sexual Partners	-.01	.01	-.04	.544	.00

Note. Age was entered as a control for all analyses. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$ † $< .10$.

Table 14

Final Structural Equation Model with Parental Infidelity as Exogenous Variable

Outcome	Predictor	All		Males		Females	
		β	*p*	β	*p*	β	*p*
MFF Fidelity							
	Age	-.02	.719	-.08	.232	.01	.869
	Parent Infidelity	-.32	<.001**	-.31	<.001**	-.34	<.001**
FC Faithful							
	Age	-.28	<.001**	-.29	<.001**	-.26	<.001**
	Parent Infidelity	-.12	.002*	.02	.754	-.19	<.001**
FC Argue							
	Age	-.11	.001*	-.17	.005*	-.08	.082†
	Parent Infidelity	.53	<.001**	.47	<.001**	.56	<.001**
FC Acceptable							
	Age	-.16	.002*	-.21	.047*	-.11	.084†
	Parent Infidelity	.10	.016*	.12	.054†	.12	.051†
IB Acceptable							
	Age	.03	.396	-.07	.298	.07	.133
	MFF Fidelity	-.27	<.001**	-.54	<.001**	-.07	.345
	FC Faithful	-.02	.706	.00	.990	-.07	.272
	FC Argue	-.14	.001*	-.20	.008*	-.08	.119
	FC Acceptable	.45	<.001**	.26	<.001**	.54	<.001**

Note. $N = 718$. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$ † $< .10$. For Cheat and Sexual Infidelity, unstandardized coefficients (log odds) are reported.

Table 14 (continued)

Outcome	Predictor	All		Males		Females	
		β	p	β	p	β	p
IB Positive							
	Age	.04	.261	-.03	.611	.06	.175
	MFF Fidelity	-.21	<.001**	-.38	<.001**	-.11	.093[†]
	FC Faithful	.03	.472	.10	.157	-.02	.739
	FC Argue	-.11	.019*	-.10	.250	-.10	.069[†]
	FC Acceptable	.15	.003*	.05	.516	.16	.013*
IB Negative							
	Age	-.00	.982	.04	.621	-.02	.772
	MFF Fidelity	.35	<.001**	.51	<.001**	.28	.001*
	FC Faithful	-.08	.114	-.16	.024*	-.06	.388
	FC Argue	.18	<.001**	.28	.001*	.16	.020*
	FC Acceptable	-.36	<.001**	-.43	<.001**	-.24	<.001**
SOI							
	Age	.01	.731	.04	.551	.01	.823
	MFF Fidelity	-.12	.030*	-.06	.533	-.11	.110
	FC Faithful	-.09	.084[†]	-.12	.134	-.12	.024*
	FC Argue	.01	.863	.07	.497	.01	.902
	FC Acceptable	.12	.003*	.17	.059[†]	.02	.741
Willingness							
	Age	.06	.113	.00	.970	.09	.029*
	MFF Fidelity	-.24	<.001**	-.39	<.001**	-.14	.040*
	FC Faithful	.02	.668	.02	.857	-.01	.927
	FC Argue	-.14	<.001**	-.29	.001*	-.09	.107
	FC Acceptable	.32	<.001**	.36	<.001**	.32	<.001**

Note. $N = 718$. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$ † $< .10$. For Cheat and Sexual Infidelity, unstandardized coefficients (log odds) are reported.

Table 14 (continued)

Outcome	Predictor	All		Males		Females	
		β	*p*	β	*p*	β	*p*
Ever Cheated							
	Age	.01	.004*	.02	.026*	.01	.097[†]
	IB Acceptable	-.32	.001*	-.40	.060[†]	-.45	.049*
	IB Positive	.01	.827	-.05	.280	.01	.747
	IB Negative	-.22	.001*	-.13	.258	-.33	.011*
	SOI	.19	<.001**	.15	.006*	.24	<.001**
	Willingness	.24	<.001**	.47	.077[†]	.33	.007*
	Parent Infidelity	.51	<.001**	.44	.019*	.57	<.001**
Sexual Infidelity							
	Age	-.04	<.001**	-.04	<.001**	-.04	.006*
	IB Acceptable	-.09	.402	-.47	.035*	-.10	.728
	IB Positive	.08	.056[†]	-.01	.865	.12	.031*
	IB Negative	-.10	.204	-.01	.928	-.11	.457
	SOI	.13	<.001**	.03	.602	.12	.004*
	Willingness	.29	<.001**	.84	.005*	.23	.075[†]
	Parent Infidelity	.24	.057[†]	.48	.017*	.23	.188
# Sexual Episodes							
	Age	-.12	.011*	-.15	.033*	-.12	.217
	IB Acceptable	-.08	.268	-.42	.051[†]	-.24	.414
	IB Positive	.08	.032*	-.04	.698	.06	.223
	IB Negative	.01	.850	.19	.219	-.07	.507
	SOI	.22	<.001**	-.01	.924	.16	<.001**
	Willingness	.31	<.001**	1.10	.001*	.23	.013*
	Parent Infidelity	.06	.079[†]	.20	.001*	.02	.650

Note. *N* = 718. ** *p* < .001 * *p* < .05 † < .10. For Cheat and Sexual Infidelity, unstandardized coefficients (log odds) are reported.

Table 14 (continued)

Outcome	Predictor	All		Males		Females	
		β	*p*	β	*p*	β	*p*
# Sexual Partners							
	Age	-.10	.035*	-.10	.177	-.11	.325
	IB Acceptable	.02	.775	-.12	.452	-.03	.812
	IB Positive	-.00	.916	.02	.806	.03	.544
	IB Negative	-.05	.330	-.13	.216	-.04	.576
	SOI	.32	<.001**	.41	<.001**	.19	<.001**
	Willingness	.19	<.001**	.27	.215	.13	.067†
	Parent Infidelity	.01	.748	.02	.818	.04	.457

Note. $N = 718$. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$ † $< .10$. For Cheat and Sexual Infidelity, unstandardized coefficients (log odds) are reported.

Table 15

Final Structural Equation Model with Mother and Father Infidelity as Exogenous Variables

Outcome	Predictor	All β	All p	Males β	Males p	Females β	Females p
MFF Fidelity							
	Age	-.00	.968	-.06	.405	.02	.752
	Mother Infidelity	-.14	<.001**	-.16	.009*	-.14	.004*
	Father Infidelity	-.32	<.001**	-.34	<.001**	-.33	<.001**
FC Faithful							
	Age	-.27	<.001**	-.29	<.001**	-.26	<.001**
	Mother Infidelity	-.05	.234	.09	.167	-.12	.023*
	Father Infidelity	-.10	.011*	-.03	.623	-.13	.011*
FC Argue							
	Age	-.13	.001*	-.19	.002*	-.09	.058†
	Mother Infidelity	.29	<.001**	.38	<.001**	.25	<.001**
	Father Infidelity	.39	<.001**	.27	<.001**	.47	<.001**
FC Acceptable							
	Age	-.17	.002*	-.21	.046*	-.11	.077†
	Mother Infidelity	.11	.003*	.14	.007*	.11	.023*
	Father Infidelity	.08	.050*	.06	.330	.10	.074†
IB Acceptable							
	Age	.03	.383	-.07	.283	.07	.125
	MFF Fidelity	-.27	<.001**	-.58	<.001**	-.07	.341
	FC Faithful	-.01	.764	.04	.583	-.07	.237
	FC Argue	-.13	.001*	-.22	.002*	-.07	.161
	FC Acceptable	.45	<.001**	.25	<.001**	.54	<.001**

Note. $N = 718$. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$ † $< .10$. For Cheat and Sexual Infidelity, unstandardized coefficients (log odds) are reported.

Table 15 (continued)

Outcome	Predictor	All β	All p	Males β	Males p	Females β	Females p
IB Positive							
	Age	.04	.284	-.04	.568	.06	.179
	MFF Fidelity	-.21	<.001**	-.40	<.001**	-.12	.087†
	FC Faithful	.04	.409	.13	.070†	-.02	.746
	FC Argue	-.11	.012*	-.13	.130	-.10	.067†
	FC Acceptable	.16	.002*	.06	.452	.16	.010*
IB Negative							
	Age	.00	.993	.04	.594	-.02	.773
	MFF Fidelity	.36	<.001**	.53	<.001**	.29	<.001**
	FC Faithful	-.08	.108	-.18	.015*	-.06	.397
	FC Argue	.18	<.001**	.30	<.001**	.15	.025*
	FC Acceptable	-.35	<.001**	-.43	<.001**	-.24	<.001**
SOI							
	Age	.01	.706	.04	.512	.01	.835
	MFF Fidelity	-.11	.039*	-.07	.454	-.10	.132
	FC Faithful	-.09	.064†	-.11	.184	-.12	.019*
	FC Argue	.01	.799	.07	.463	.00	.961
	FC Acceptable	.13	.004*	.17	.060†	.03	.681
Willingness							
	Age	.06	.128	-.00	.958	.09	.025*
	MFF Fidelity	-.25	<.001**	-.41	<.001**	-.15	.032*
	FC Faithful	.02	.646	.04	.627	-.01	.930
	FC Argue	-.17	<.001**	-.32	<.001**	-.08	.116
	FC Acceptable	.33	<.001**	.38	<.001**	.32	<.001**

Note. $N = 718$. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$ † $< .10$. For Cheat and Sexual Infidelity, unstandardized coefficients (log odds) are reported.

Table 15 (continued)

Outcome	Predictor	All β	All *p*	Males β	Males *p*	Females β	Females *p*
Ever Cheated							
	Age	.01	.007*	.01	.042*	.01	.112
	IB Acceptable	-.43	.004*	-.47	.039*	-.52	.040*
	IB Positive	.01	.760	-.06	.195	.02	.737
	IB Negative	-.25	.001*	-.13	.262	-.35	.010*
	SOI	.19	<.001**	.14	.011*	.23	<.001**
	Willingness	.32	.003*	.54	.046*	.38	.007*
	Mother Infidelity	.33	.033*	.19	.469	.37	.027*
	Father Infidelity	.45	<.001**	.53	.008*	.43	.002*
Sexual Infidelity							
	Age	-.04	<.001**	-.04	<.001**	-.04	.006*
	IB Acceptable	-.18	.233	-.52	.029*	-.20	.527
	IB Positive	.08	.047*	-.01	.904	.13	.024*
	IB Negative	-.12	.135	-.06	.678	-.15	.344
	SOI	.12	<.001**	.04	.466	.11	.010*
	Willingness	.36	.001*	.83	.006*	.29	.060†
	Mother Infidelity	.04	.816	-.16	.567	.33	.136
	Father Infidelity	.34	.012*	.72	.001*	.18	.366

Note. *N* = 718. ** *p* < .001 * *p* < .05 † < .10. For Cheat and Sexual Infidelity, unstandardized coefficients (log odds) are reported.

Table 15 (continued)

Outcome	Predictor	All		Males		Females	
		β	*p*	β	*p*	β	*p*
# Sexual Episodes							
	Age	-.12	.005*	-.16	.028*	-.12	.227
	IB Acceptable	-.28	.020*	-.49	.029*	-.26	.134
	IB Positive	.10	.012*	-.05	.643	.07	.133
	IB Negative	-.04	.444	.18	.278	-.12	.203
	SOI	.18	<.001**	-.03	.837	.14	.001*
	Willingness	.49	<.001**	1.14	<.001**	.31	.003*
	Mother Infidelity	.02	.636	.03	.649	.04	.464
	Father Infidelity	.11	.004*	.26	<.001**	.04	.441
# Sexual Partners							
	Age	-.10	.034*	-.10	.191	-.11	.339
	IB Acceptable	.03	.689	-.16	.328	-.04	.805
	IB Positive	-.01	.825	.02	.815	.03	.512
	IB Negative	-.04	.471	-.15	.165	-.04	.630
	SOI	.32	<.001**	.41	<.001**	.19	<.001**
	Willingness	.18	.001*	.29	.192	.13	.088[†]
	Mother Infidelity	-.05	.370	-.08	.336	-.02	.869
	Father Infidelity	.05	.156	.10	.264	.05	.325

Note. $N = 718$. ** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$ † $< .10$. For Cheat and Sexual Infidelity, unstandardized coefficients (log odds) are reported.

Figure 1. Proposed Theoretical Model
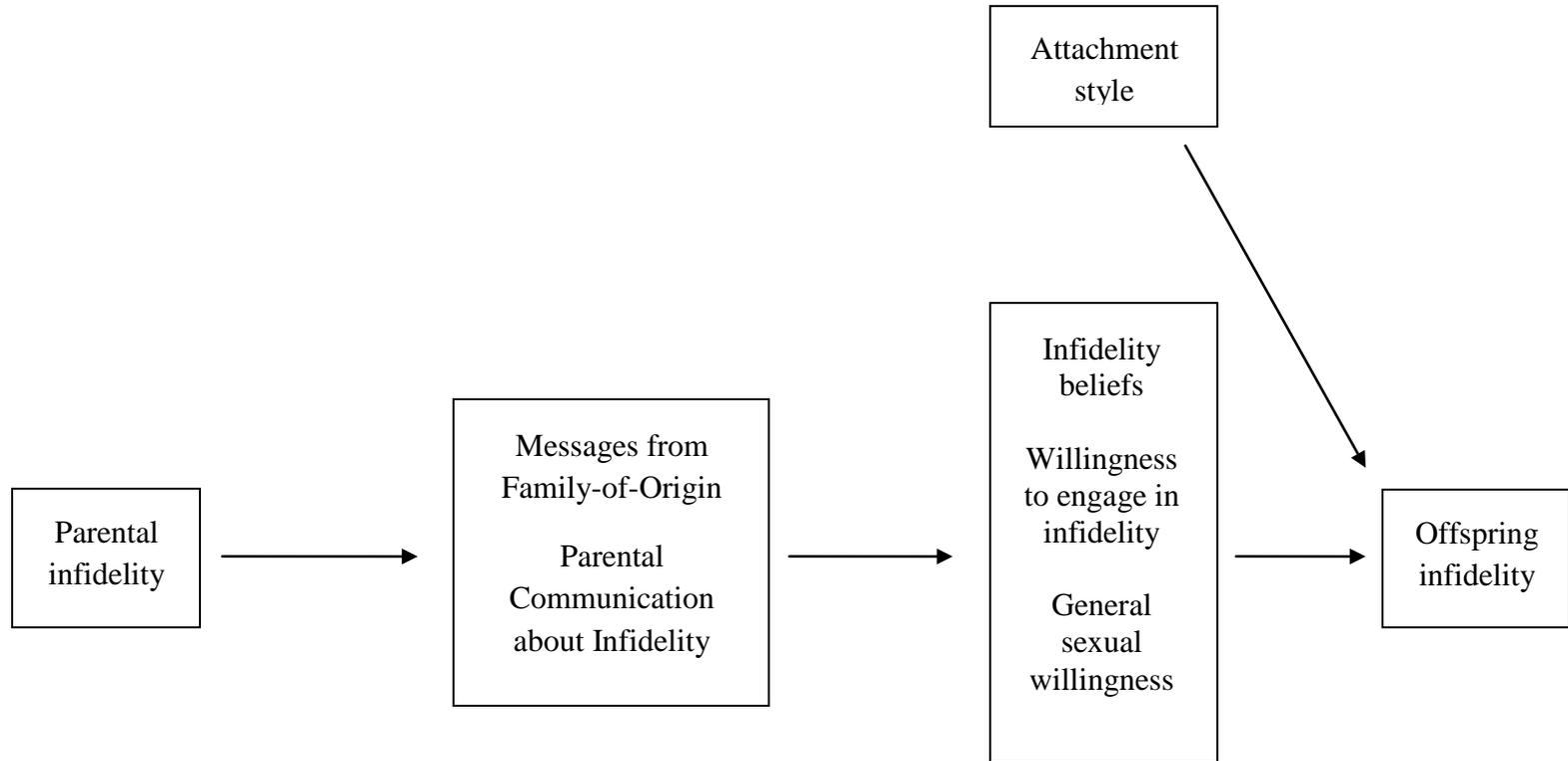
Figure 2. Percentages of Offspring Infidelity
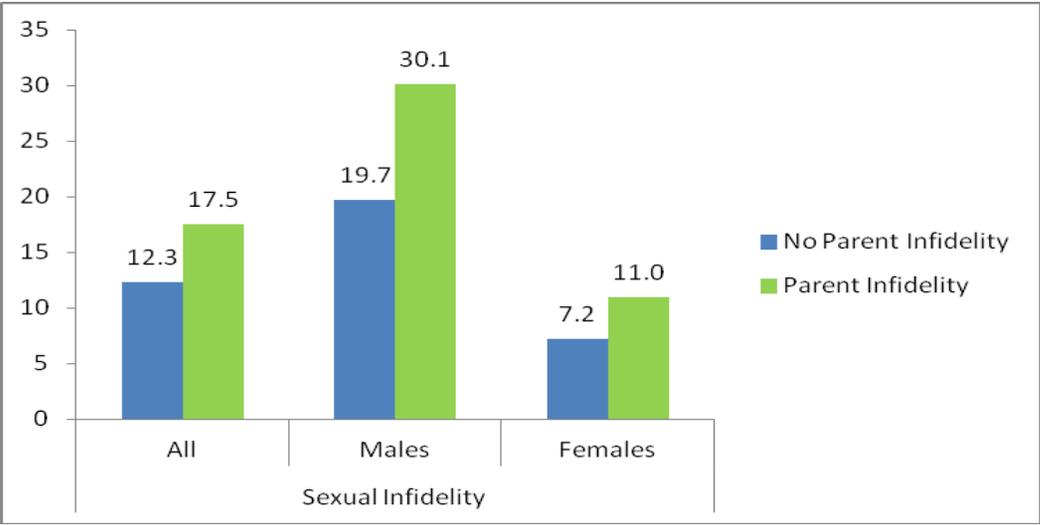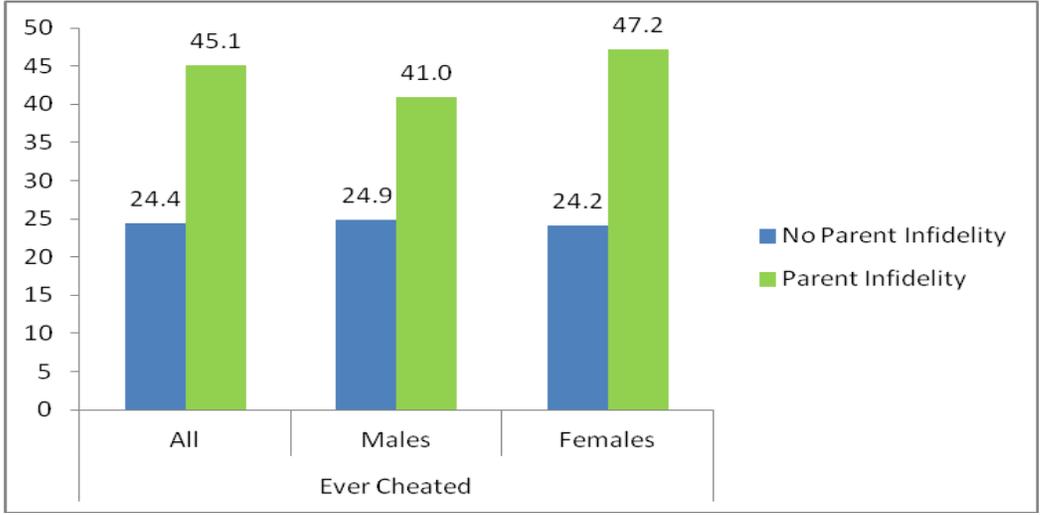
Figure 3. Structural Equation Model for All Participants with Parent Infidelity as Exogenous Variable
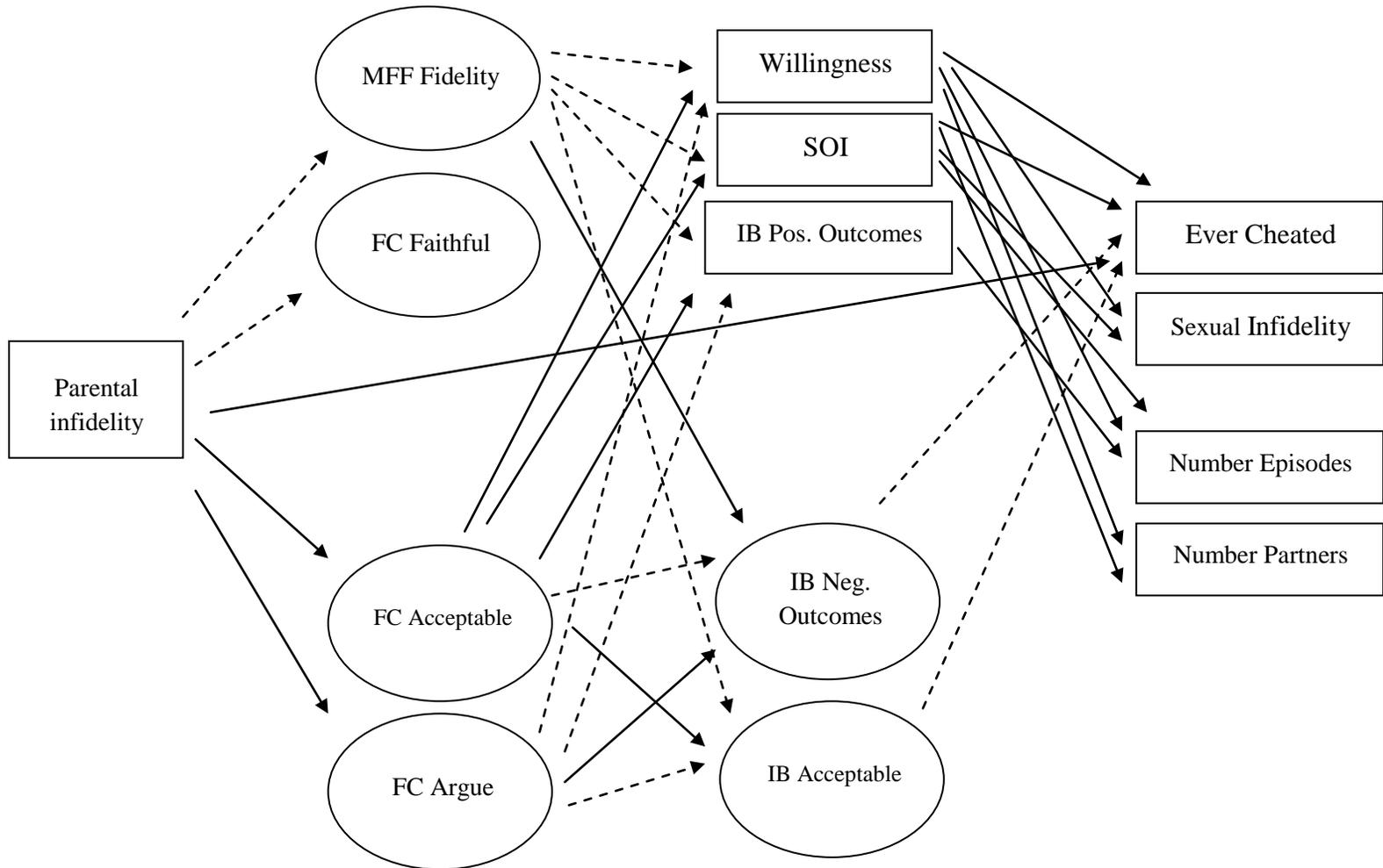
Note. Only significant relationships (*p* < .05) shown. Solid line = positive relationship, Dashed line = negative relationship.

Figure 4. Structural Equation Model for Males with Parent Infidelity as Exogenous Variable
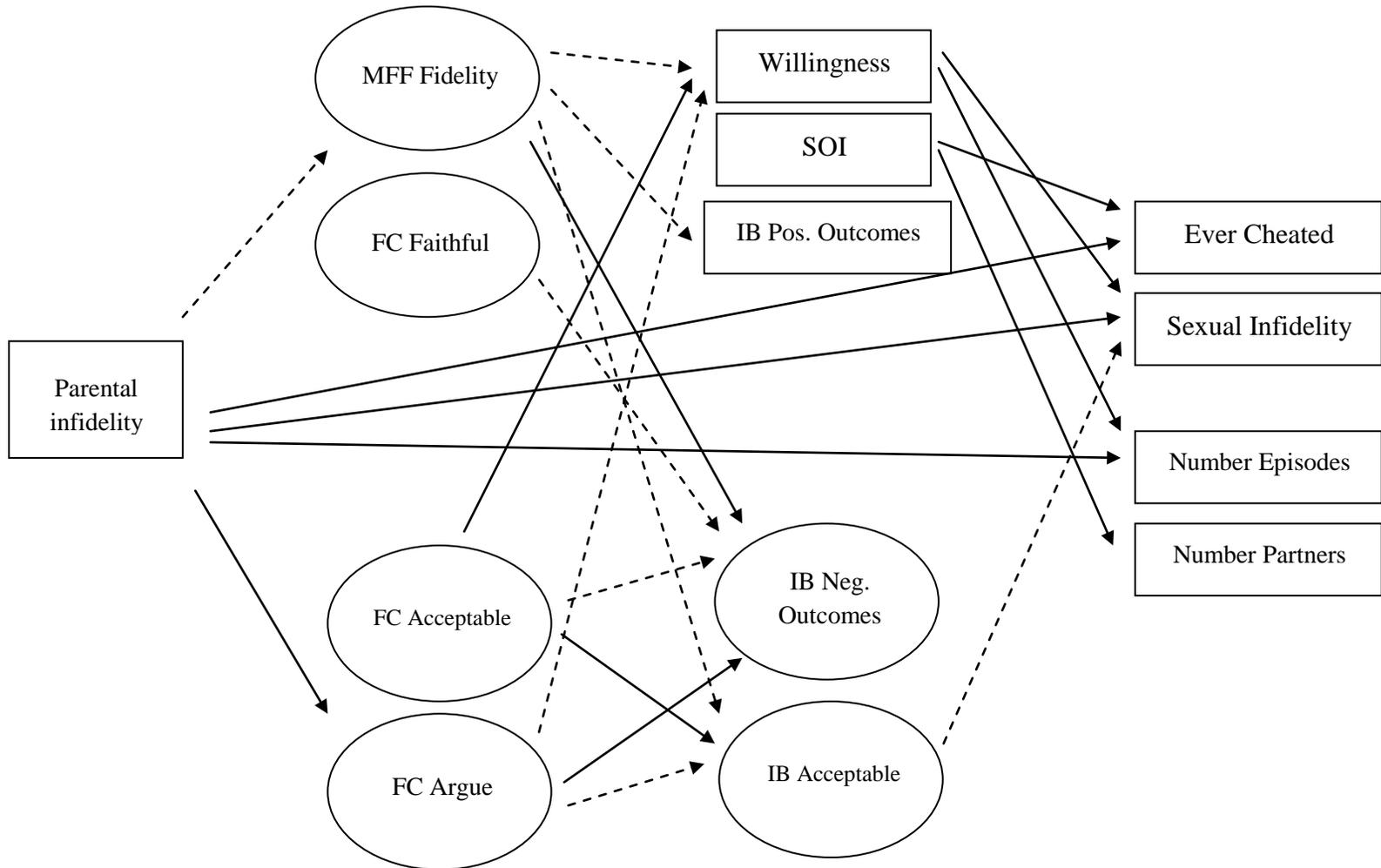
Note. Only significant relationships (*p* < .05) shown. Solid line = positive relationship, Dashed line = negative relationship.

Figure 5. Structural Equation Model for Females with Parent Infidelity as Exogenous Variable
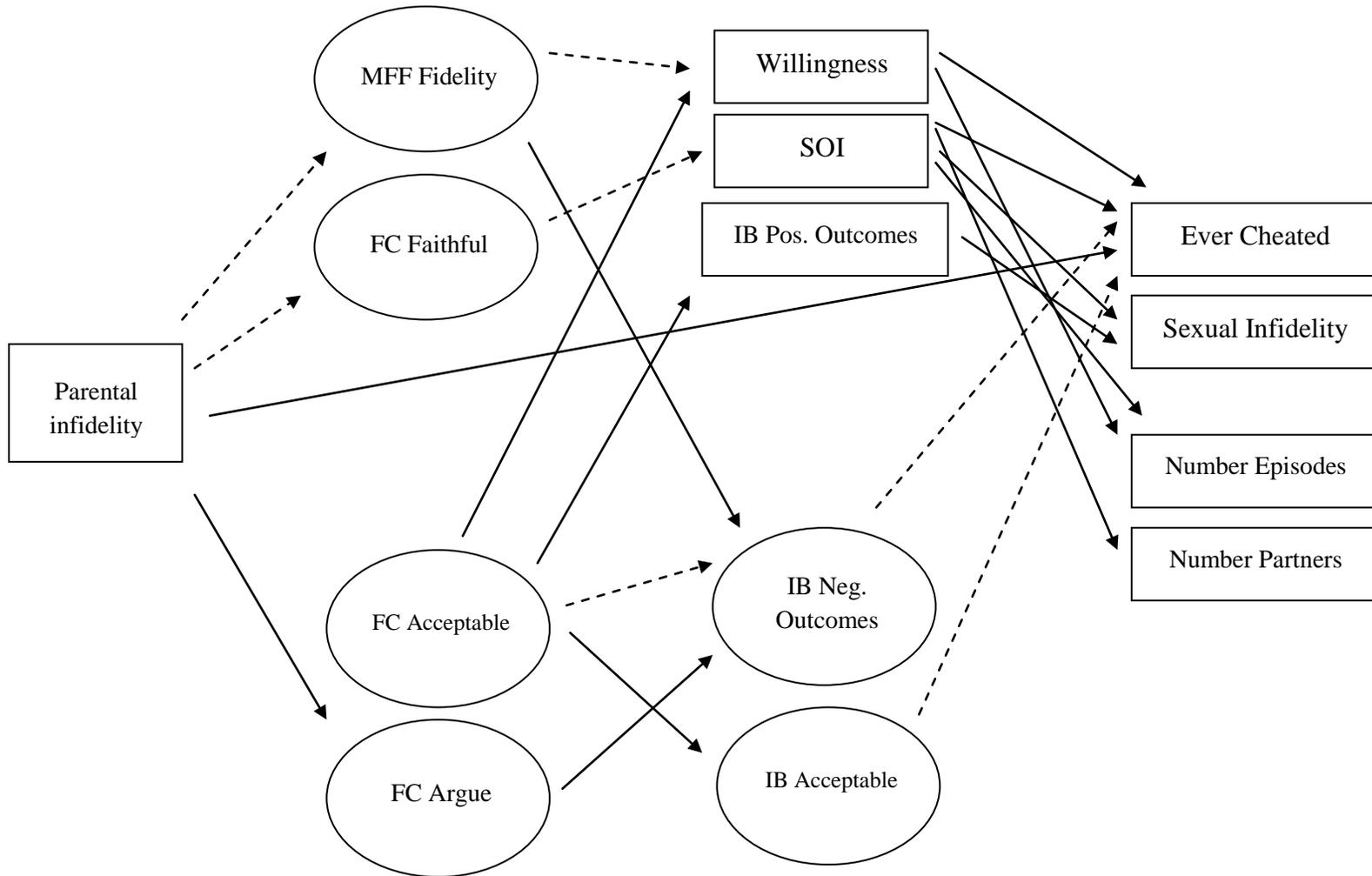
Note. Only significant relationships (*p* < .05) shown. Solid line = positive relationship, Dashed line = negative relationship.

Figure 6. Structural Equation Model for All Participants with Mother and Father Infidelity as Exogenous Variables
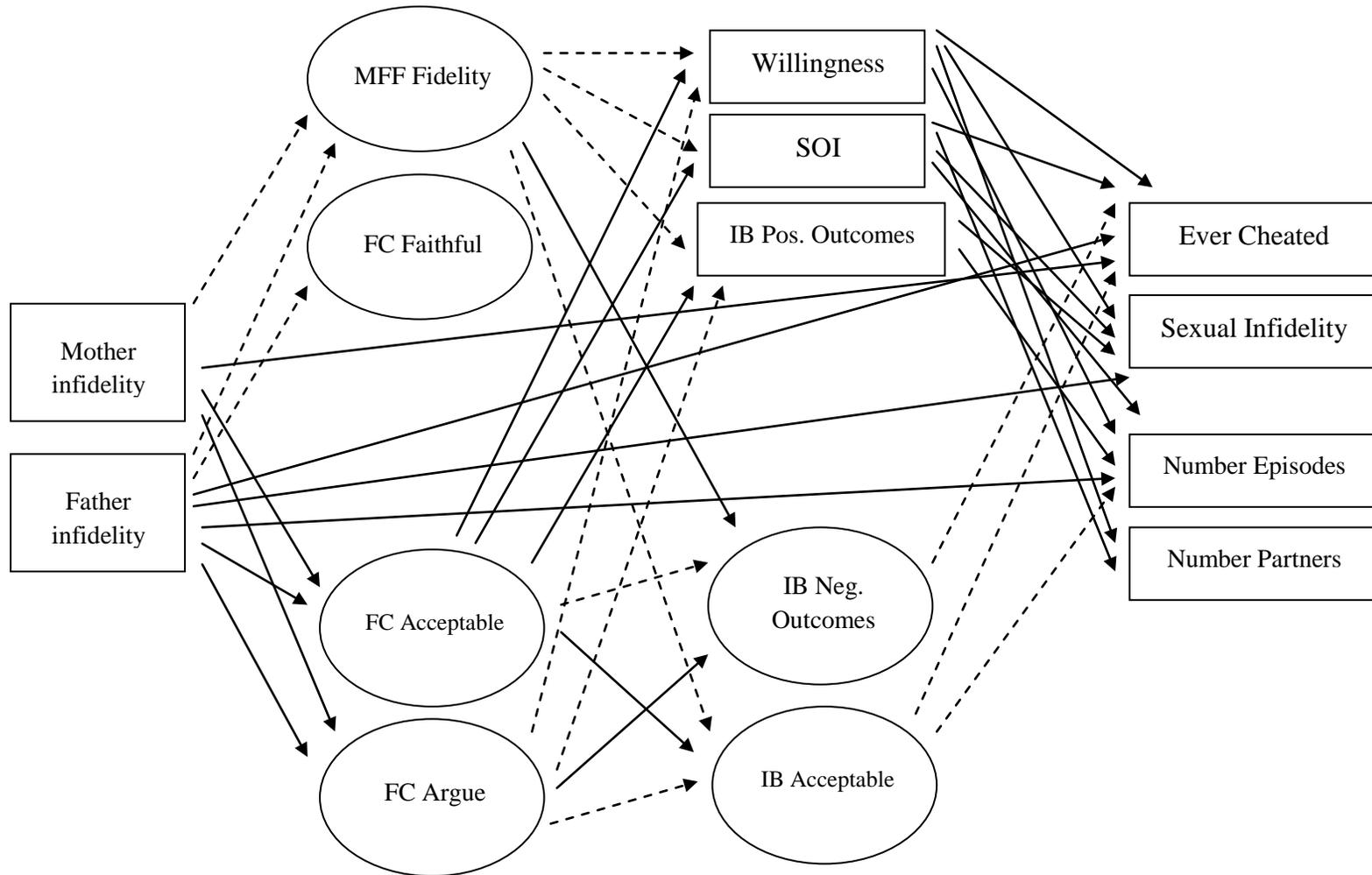
Note. Only significant relationships ($p < .05$) shown. Solid line = positive relationship, Dashed line = negative relationship.

Figure 7. Structural Equation Model for Males with Mother and Father Infidelity as Exogenous Variables
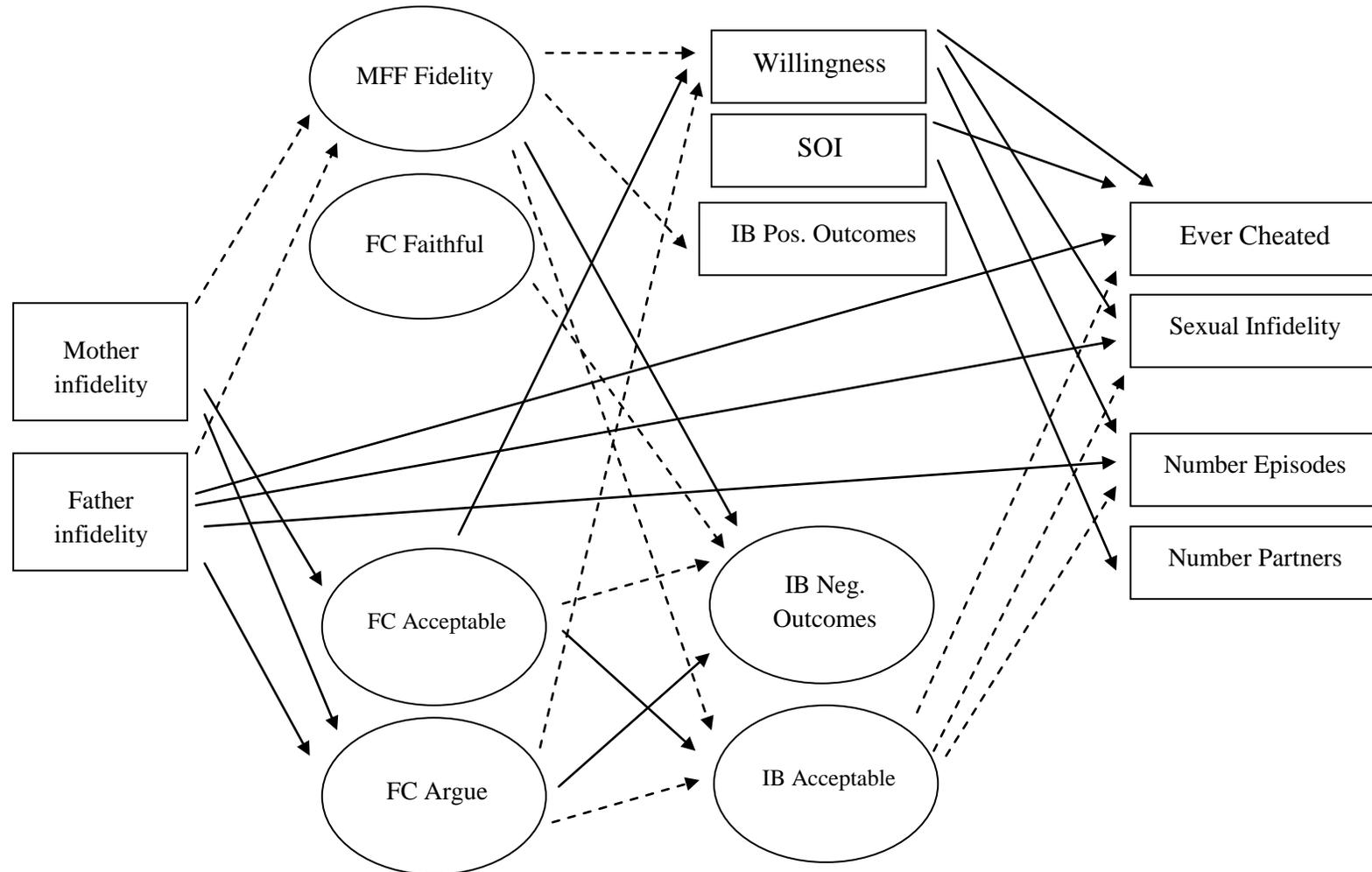
Note. Only significant relationships (*p* < .05) shown. Solid line = positive relationship, Dashed line = negative relationship.

Figure 8. Structural Equation Model for Females with Mother and Father Infidelity as Exogenous Variables
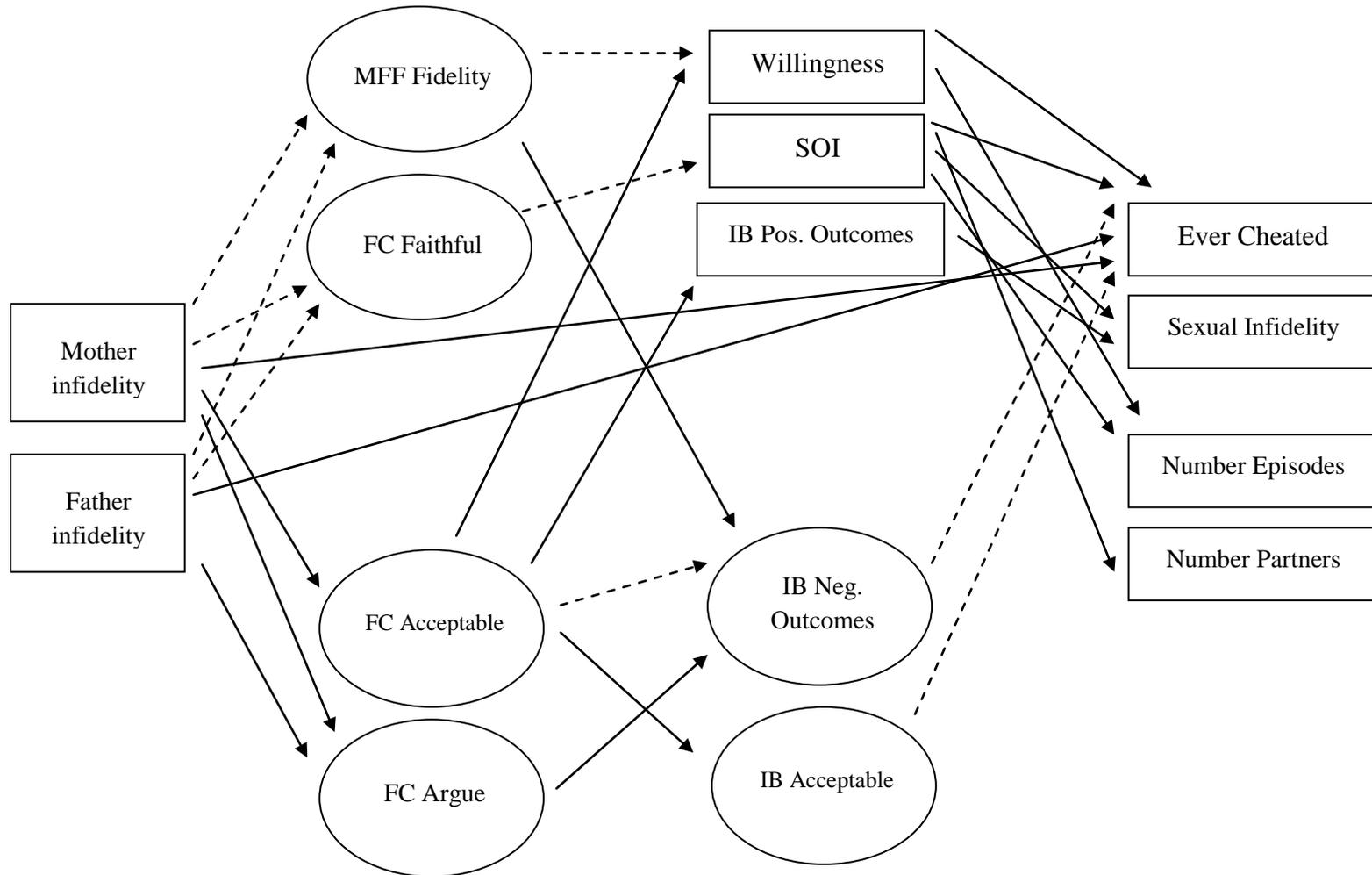
Note. Only significant relationships ($p < .05$) shown. Solid line = positive relationship, Dashed line = negative relationship.

Appendix A: Specific Hypotheses and Data Analysis

Hypothesis/Research Question	Variables/Scale	Statistical Test
Hypothesis 1: Offspring with a parent who committed an infidelity will be more likely to have ever engaged in infidelity, will be more likely to have engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years, and report a greater number of sexual infidelity episodes and partners.	IV: Parent Relationship Questionnaire DV: Infidelity History Questionnaire	Logistic regression, MANOVA
Hypothesis 2: Offspring with a parent who committed an infidelity will be less likely to have gained positive messages about fidelity and faithfulness from their family-of-origin and will be more likely to have gained messages about infidelity as an acceptable behavior and witnessed greater levels of parental conflict about infidelity.	IV: Parent Relationship Questionnaire DV: Messages Received from Family-of-Origin Questionnaire, Family Communication Questionnaire	MANOVA
Hypothesis 3: Offspring with a parent who committed an infidelity will report greater beliefs about the acceptability of infidelity, endorse more positive and less negative outcomes following infidelity, greater willingness to engage in infidelity, and a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation.	IV: Parent Relationship Questionnaire DV: Infidelity Beliefs Questionnaire, Extradyadic Behavioral Intentions Scale, Sociosexual Orientation Inventory	MANOVA
Hypothesis 4: Individuals who report higher levels of family messages about fidelity and faithfulness, lower levels of family messages about infidelity as an acceptable, and witnessed great levels of parental conflict about infidelity will report lower beliefs about the acceptability of infidelity, endorse less positive and more negative outcomes following infidelity, lower willingness to engage in infidelity, and a more restricted sociosexual orientation.	IV: Messages Received from Family-of-Origin Questionnaire, Family Communication Questionnaire DV: Infidelity Beliefs Questionnaire, Extradyadic Behavioral Intentions Scale, Sociosexual Orientation Inventory	Multiple Regression

Hypothesis 5: Individuals who have ever cheated, engaged in sexual infidelity, and report a greater number of sexual infidelity episodes and partners will report greater beliefs about the acceptability of infidelity, endorse more positive and less negative outcomes following infidelity, greater willingness to engage in infidelity, and a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation.	IV: Infidelity History Questionnaire DV: Infidelity Beliefs Questionnaire, Extradyadic Behavioral Intentions Scale, Sociosexual Orientation Inventory	MANOVA, Multiple Regression
Hypothesis 6: Individuals who have ever cheated, engaged in sexual infidelity, and report a greater number of sexual infidelity episodes and partners will report higher levels of Avoidance and Anxiety.	IV: Infidelity History Questionnaire DV: Adult Attachment Questionnaire	MANOVA, Multiple Regression
Hypothesis 7: Males will be more likely to have ever engaged in infidelity, will be more likely to have engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years, and report a greater number of sexual infidelity episodes and partners.	IV: Demographics DV: Infidelity History Questionnaire	Logistic regression, MANOVA
Hypothesis 8: Males will report greater beliefs about the acceptability of infidelity, endorse more positive and less negative outcomes following infidelity, greater willingness to engage in infidelity, and a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation.	IV: Demographics DV: Infidelity Beliefs Questionnaire, Extradyadic Behavioral Intentions Scale, Sociosexual Orientation Inventory	MANOVA
Hypothesis 9: Offspring whose parents are still together following a parental infidelity will be more likely to have ever engaged in infidelity, will be more likely to have engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years, and report a greater number of sexual infidelity episodes and partners.	IV: Parent Relationship Questionnaire DV: Infidelity History Questionnaire	Logistic regression, MANOVA
Hypothesis 10: Offspring whose parents are still together following a parental infidelity will report greater beliefs about the acceptability of infidelity, endorse more positive and less negative outcomes following infidelity, greater willingness to engage in infidelity, and a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation.	IV: Demographics DV: Infidelity Beliefs Questionnaire, Extradyadic Behavioral Intentions Scale, Sociosexual Orientation Inventory	MANOVA

Hypothesis 11: Offspring who first suspected parental infidelity at an older age will be more likely to have ever engaged in infidelity, will be more likely to have engaged in sexual infidelity in the last two years, and report a greater number of sexual infidelity episodes and partners.	IV: Parent Relationship Questionnaire DV: Infidelity History Questionnaire	Logistic regression, Regression
Hypothesis 12: Offspring who first suspected parental infidelity at an older age will report greater beliefs about the acceptability of infidelity, endorse more positive and less negative outcomes following infidelity, greater willingness to engage in infidelity, and a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation.	IV: Demographics DV: Infidelity Beliefs Questionnaire, Extradyadic Behavioral Intentions Scale, Sociosexual Orientation Inventory	Regression
Research Question 1: Does the model outlined in Figure 1 adequately fit the data; that is does the proposed model grounded in social learning explain the intergenerational transmission of infidelity?	All measures Parent, mother, and father infidelity as exogenous factor	SEM
Research Question 2: Is the model different for males and females?	All measures Parent infidelity as exogenous factor	SEM; separate analyses for males and females
Research Question 3: Is the model different for males and females if the same-sex parent committed the infidelity?	All measures Mother and father infidelity as exogenous factor	SEM; separate analyses for males and females

Appendix B: Survey

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS: For the following questionnaires, you should keep these definitions in mind:

By **romantic relationship partner**, we mean an individual that you are in a dating or marital relationship with, whom you have passionate feelings about, and are possibly physically and sexually involved with.

By **infidelity,** we mean any secret emotional, physical, or sexual involvement with an individual who is not your romantic relationship partner while you are in an exclusive dating or marital relationship. Infidelity would be any act that violates the rules about exclusivity in your relationship.

By **monogamy**, we mean being in a relationship where it is assumed that both partners will not engage in any type of emotional, physical, or sexual involvement with another individual.

Parent Relationship Questionnaire
(adapted from Greene, 2006)

The following questions focus on your parents' relationship. You may answer the following questions about step-parents and adoptive parents if they played an important role in your life and consider them a primary parent.

1. Are your parents currently married?
      a. Yes (skip to question 3)
      b. No

2. Why aren't your parents currently married?
      a. They divorced
      b. They were never married
      c. One of my parents passed away

3. Please CHECK ALL statements that apply to your parents' relationship. Note: By relationship infidelity, we mean a romantic and/or physical involvement with an individual who is not the primary relationship partner.

    a. _____My mother did not commit a relationship infidelity, to the best of my knowledge.

    b. _____I suspect my mother committed a relationship infidelity but am not certain.

    c. _____I am confident my mother committed a relationship infidelity.

    d. _____My father did not commit a relationship infidelity, to the best of my knowledge.

    e. _____I suspect my father committed a relationship infidelity but am not certain.

    f. _____I am confident my father committed a relationship infidelity.

The following questions will only be visible to individuals who indicated that they suspected or knew of a parental infidelity. Individuals who complete the survey using paper-and-pencil will be instructed to skip to the next section if they have no knowledge of a parental infidelity.

4. Please check ALL statements that apply to your parents' relationship:

   a. _____I believe my mother cheated on my father with only one other individual.
   b. _____I believe my mother cheated on my father with multiple individuals.
   c. _____I believe my father cheated on my mother with only one other individual.
   d. _____ I believe my father cheated on my mother with multiple individuals.

5. How did you find out your parent(s)cheated? *Please check ALL that apply.*

   a. _____My parent who cheated told me.
   b. _____My parent who was cheated on told me.
   c. _____Another family member or friend told me.
   d. _____Figured it out on my own
   e. _____Other (please
specify)_____

6. How old were you when you first suspected an infidelity in your parents' relationship?

   _____years

7. How old were you when your parent's infidelity occurred?

   _____years

8. What was the eventual outcome after the infidelity occurred? (check one)

   a. _____My parents' marriage/relationship ended and it was probably due to the
            infidelity.
   b. _____My parents' marriage/relationship ended and it had nothing to do with the
            infidelity.
   c. _____My parents stayed together and worked things out.
   d. _____My parents stayed together and pretended the infidelity did not occur.

Messages Received from Family-of-Origin Questionnaire

While growing up, people receive a variety of messages about romantic relationships from their families. Some messages are clear and direct, some are subtle and indirect. Please, think about all the messages you received from your family while growing up, read the statements below and ***rate to what degree the messages are similar to what you learned from your family***, using a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 = Not at all Similar and 7 = Very Similar.

1. People cheat on their partners.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all						Very
Similar						Similar

2. Relationship partners should always be faithful.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all						Very
Similar						Similar
Similar						Similar

3. In order to have a successful relationship, individuals should only be involved with their relationship partner.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all						Very
Similar						Similar

4. It is not acceptable to become romantically and/or sexually involved with individuals besides your relationship partner.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all						Very
Similar						Similar

5. Infidelity has negative consequences.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all						Very
Similar						Similar

Parental Infidelity Communication Questionnaire

Think back to when you were growing up and try to recall memories of interactions between your parents as well as discussions between yourself and your parents. You may answer the following questions about step-parents and adoptive parents if they played an important role in your life and consider them a primary parent. ***Please indicate how often the following interactions occurred in your family***, using a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 = Never and 7 = Very Often.

1. My parents discussed the importance of monogamy in their relationship with each other.

   1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**
   Never   **Very Often**

2. My parents argued about showing affection for another man or woman.

   1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**
   Never   **Very Often**

3. I saw my parents discuss their commitment to one another.

   1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**
   Never   **Very Often**

4. My parents discussed with me the importance of being monogamous in romantic relationships.

   1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**
   Never   **Very Often**

5. My parents argued because of a parent's sexual infidelity.

   1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**
   Never   **Very Often**

6. My parents would warn the other not to commit an infidelity.

   1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**
   Never   **Very Often**

7. My parents talked with me about being faithful to a romantic relationship partner.

   1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**
   Never   **Very Often**

8. My parents told me it's ok to become involved with others while in a romantic
    relationship.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** |
| **Never** | | | | | | **Very Often** |

9. I saw my parents get jealous about another man or woman.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** |
| **Never** | | | | | | **Very Often** |

10. I saw my parents discuss the importance of not cheating in their relationship.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** |
| **Never** | | | | | | **Very Often** |

11. I saw my parents discuss their commitment to being faithful to one another.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** |
| **Never** | | | | | | **Very Often** |

12. My parents told me that infidelity is sometimes justified.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** |
| **Never** | | | | | | **Very Often** |

13. My parents argued about other men or women.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** |
| **Never** | | | | | | **Very Often** |

14. My parents told me that infidelity is acceptable in romantic relationships.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** |
| **Never** | | | | | | **Very Often** |

15. My parents told me that I should not cheat in my romantic relationships.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** |
| **Never** | | | | | | **Very Often** |

16. My parents discussed with me the importance of being faithful in romantic relationships.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never						**Very Often**

17. My parents argued about spending time with other men or women.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never						**Very Often**

Infidelity Beliefs Questionnaire

The following questions ask your opinions about infidelity in general. Remember, by infidelity we mean any secret emotional, physical, or sexual involvement with an individual who is not the romantic relationship partner while in an exclusive dating or marital relationship. Infidelity would be any act that violates the rules about exclusivity in an relationship. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement by using a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 7 = Strongly Agree.

1. It is ok to flirt with an individual who is not your romantic partner.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

2. Infidelity is always bad.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

3. Infidelity causes relationships to end.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

4. A relationship can become stronger after an infidelity.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

5. It is ok to passionately kiss an individual who is not your romantic partner.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

6. Discovering your partner has committed an infidelity is a good reason to end a relationship.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

7. Infidelity can have positive outcomes for a relationship.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

8. Infidelity is rewarding for the individual who cheats.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

9. Infidelity destroys relationships.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

10. It is never ok to cheat.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

11. Infidelity is normal in romantic relationships.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

12. Infidelity is acceptable in romantic relationships.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

13. As long as you don't get caught, it is fine to cheat.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

14. It is ok to have romantic feelings for an individual who is not your romantic partner.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

15. It is ok to have sex with an individual who is not your romantic partner.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

16. Infidelity can have negative outcomes for a relationship.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

17. As long as your partner doesn't find out, there is nothing wrong with cheating.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

Extradyadic Behavioral Intentions Scale
(adapted from Buunk, 1998)

Would you engage in the following behavior with another man/woman besides your primary relationship partner if the opportunity were to present itself?

1. Flirting

Certainly	Probably	Maybe	Uncertain	Maybe not	Probably not	Certainly not

2. Passionately Kissing

Certainly	Probably	Maybe	Uncertain	Maybe not	Probably not	Certainly not

3. Sexual hugging and caressing

Certainly	Probably	Maybe	Uncertain	Maybe not	Probably not	Certainly not

4. Oral sex or other sexual contact

Certainly	Probably	Maybe	Uncertain	Maybe not	Probably not	Certainly not

5. Sexual intercourse

Certainly	Probably	Maybe	Uncertain	Maybe not	Probably not	Certainly not

6. Intense romantic feelings without sexual contact (for example, in love with someone)

Certainly	Probably	Maybe	Uncertain	Maybe not	Probably not	Certainly not

7. A long-term sexual relationship

Certainly	Probably	Maybe	Uncertain	Maybe not	Probably not	Certainly not

Sociosexual Orientation Inventory
(Simpson & Gangestad, 1991)

Please answer all of the following questions honestly. For the questions dealing with behavior, write your answers in the blank spaces provided. For the questions about your thoughts and attitudes, select the appropriate number on the scales provided.

1. With how many different partners have you had sex (sexual intercourse) within the past year? _____

2. How many different partners do you foresee yourself having sex with during the next five years? (Please give a *specific, realistic* estimate) _____

3. With how many different partners have you had sex on *one and only one* occasion?

   _____

4. How often do you fantasize about having sex with someone other than your current dating partner?
   a. Never
   b. Once every two or three months
   c. Once a month
   d. Once every two weeks
   e. Once a week
   f. A few times each week
   g. Nearly every day
   h. At least once a day

5. Sex without love is OK.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
Strongly Disagree								**Strongly Agree**

6. I can imagine myself being comfortable and enjoying "casual" sex with different partners.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
Strongly Disagree								**Strongly Agree**

7. I would have to be closely attached to someone (both emotionally and psychologically) before I could feel comfortable and fully enjoy having sex with him or her.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
Strongly Disagree								**Strongly Agree**

Infidelity History Questionnaire
(Extradyadic Experiences Questionnaire; Allen, 2004)
Please fill out the following table in order to indicate whether **during the last two years**
you have engaged in any of the following behaviors with **other people while you were**
in an exclusive romantic relationship. That is, **at the same time** you were dating one
person exclusively, did you engage in any of the following sexual or romantic behaviors
with **someone else** without your significant other's knowledge and permission**? Please**
circle your response for each question.

	Ever occurred? (e.g. yes/no)	**How often did you engage in this behavior? (e.g. 1 time, 2 times, 10 or more times)**	**With how many different people other than your primary partner(s)? (e.g. 1 person, 2 people, 10 or more people)**
1. Flirting	YES NO	0 to 10 or more	0 to 10 or more
2. Passionately kissing	YES NO	0 to 10 or more	0 to 10 or more
3. Sexual hugging and caressing	YES NO	0 to 10 or more	0 to 10 or more
4. Oral sex or other sexual contact	YES NO	0 to 10 or more	0 to 10 or more
5. Sexual intercourse	YES NO	0 to 10 or more	0 to 10 or more
6. Intense romantic feelings without sexual contact (for example, in love with someone)	YES NO	0 to 10 or more	0 to 10 or more
7. A long-term sexual relationship	YES NO	0 to 10 or more	0 to 10 or more
8.Other (please specify): _____	YES NO	0 to 10 or more	0 to 10 or more

1. Have you ever cheated in an exclusive romantic relationship? That is, have you ever committed an infidelity?

    _____Yes   ____No

2. Have you ever been cheated on in an exclusive romantic relationship? That is, have you ever had a romantic partner commit an infidelity?

    _____Yes   ____No

Adult Attachment Questionnaire
(Simpson, Rholes, & Phillips, 1996)

The following questions ask about your interactions with romantic relationship partners. Please indicate how you relate to romantic partners in general using a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 7 = Strongly Agree.

1. I find it relatively easy to get close to others.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

2. I'm not very comfortable having to depend on other people.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

3. I'm comfortable having others depend on me.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

4. I rarely worry about being abandoned by others.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

5. I don't like people getting too close to me.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

6. I'm somewhat uncomfortable being too close to others.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

7. I find it difficult to trust others completely.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

8. I'm nervous whenever anyone gets too close to me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

9. Others often want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

10. Others often are reluctant to get as close as I would like.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

11. I often worry that my partner(s) don't really love me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

12. I rarely worry about my partner(s) leaving me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

13. I often want to merge completely with others, and this desire sometimes scares them away.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

14. I'm confident others would never hurt me by suddenly ending our relationship.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

15. I usually want more closeness and intimacy than others do.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

16. The thought of being left by others rarely enters my mind.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

17. I'm confident that my partner(s) love me just as much as I love them.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Strongly Disagree						**Strongly Agree**

Demographics

Please answer the following questions about you.

1. Please check the following statement that ***best*** characterizes your current relationship status:

        a. _____Not currently in a relationship [Please, skip to question 4]
        b. _____Dating multiple people [Please, skip to question 4]
        c. _____Dating one person exclusively
        d. _____Cohabitating with relationship partner
        e. _____Engaged to marry
        f. _____Married

2. How long you have been in your current romantic relationship?

        _____ # Months _____ # Years

3. Which statement ***best*** describes your relationship?

        a. _____My partner and I are exclusive and neither of us should engage in sexual activities with others.
        b._____ My partner and I have an agreement that we may engage in sexual activities with others.
        c._____ My partner and I have an agreement that we may engage in sexual activities with others but only if we are both present (i.e. threesomes).
        d._____ Other_____ (please specify)

4. Have you ever been in a romantic relationship?

        _____Yes   _____No

5. Are you: _____Male   _____Female

6. How old were you on your last birthday? _____

7. Which of the following best represents your ethnic or racial background?

        a. _____White/Non-Hispanic   e. _____Native American/American Indian

        b. _____Black/African American   f. _____Pacific Islander

        c. _____Asian/Asian American   g. _____Multi-ethnic

        d. _____Mexican/Hispanic/Latino   h. _____Other_____ (please specify)