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Motivations for Extradyadic Infidelity Revisited

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Relationship infidelities are motivated by many distinct factors, with previous research indicating motivations of dissatisfaction, neglect, anger, and sexual desire (Barta & Kiene, 2005). We expand on this by demonstrating additional, empirically distinct motivations for infidelity. Using an Internet-based questionnaire, participants (N = 495), most of whom were young adults, self-reported their infidelities. In addition to evidence for previously studied motivations, our data demonstrate additional factors, including lack of love (“I had ‘fallen out of love with’ my primary partner”), low commitment (“I was not very committed to my primary partner”), esteem (“I wanted to enhance my popularity”), gaining sexual variety (“I wanted a greater variety of sexual partners”), and situational factors (“I was drunk and not thinking clearly”). Our results also show personality correlates with infidelity motivations. Consistent with predictions, attachment insecurity was associated with motivations of anger, lack of love, neglect, low commitment, and esteem, while unrestricted sociosexual orientation was associated with sexual variety. Implicit beliefs (e.g., growth, destiny, romanticism) were differentially associated with sexual desire, low commitment, lack of love, and neglect. These findings highlight multifaceted motivations underlying infidelity, moving beyond relationship deficit models of infidelity, with implications for research and psychotherapy involving people’s romantic and sexual relationships.

Past research has uncovered a variety of factors associated with sexual infidelity, ranging from demographic variables such as income and religion (Atkins, Baucom, & Jacobson, 2001) to personality traits such as conscientiousness and agreeableness (Schmitt, 2004) to biological traits such as neurogenetic individual differences (Garcia et al., 2010) to dyadic/social factors such as attractive alternatives and boredom (Allen et al., 2005). While these factors give some insight into what variables predict the occurrence of infidelity, they do not offer direct insight into people’s specific motivations for having unfaithful extradyadic encounters. In the current study, we sought to examine people’s self-reported motivations for engaging in infidelity.

Consistent with prior research, we conceptualize infidelity as involving an extradyadic intimate partner. It is worth noting that there is variability in people’s definitions of infidelity and some qualifying behaviors may be solitary. However, for most people there is consensus that extradyadic sexual behavior comprises infidelity to the largest extent, whereas other types (e.g., technology/online behaviors, romantic/affectionate behaviors, and solitary behaviors) are less agreed upon (Thompson & O’Sullivan, 2016). Research on infidelity is typically predicated on this dyadic component, drawing on patterns of pair-bonding in human populations, with the (sometimes implied) condition of expected romantic and/or sexual exclusivity. Evolutionary scientists in particular often distinguish between social and sexual monogamy, highlighting cross-cultural and biological evidence suggesting that humans have a tendency to form long-term sociosexual pair-bonds that are generally characterized as socially, but not necessarily sexually, monogamous (Fisher, 2016; Gray & Garcia, 2013). Across cultures, while consensual engagement in sexual activity with more than one partner may be admissible, several studies have

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demonstrated that extradyadic, and in particular extramarital, sexual affairs are generally discouraged or socially prohibited (Ford & Beach, 1951; Frayser, 1985; Jankowiak, Nell, & Buckmaster, 2002). In the vast majority of societies studied, while sexual infidelity may occur, both men and women often presume and attempt to enforce sexual propriety over marital partners (Jankowiak et al., 2002). As such, infidelity can be quite costly, especially in terms of interpersonal and social consequences, including loss of partner, violence, or other reparations sought by the betrayed partner. The factors that motivate infidelity despite such risks deserve further attention.

The social and behavioral scientific literature systematically examining motivations for infidelity is thin. In a pioneering paper, Barta and Kiene (2005) reported a four-factor model predicting romantic infidelity, including dissatisfaction, neglect, sex, and anger as distinct motivation variables. Using a sample of college students including both those with and without infidelity experiences, their model yielded a better statistical fit than the alternative hypothesized two-factor model of sexual and emotional motivations.¹ In Barta and Kiene's (2005) model, dissatisfaction refers to a lack of positive feelings about one's partner or relationship ("I had 'fallen out of love with' my steady partner") and seeking fulfillment elsewhere. Neglect refers to feeling mistreatment from one's partner ("My steady partner wasn't spending enough time with me"), also consistent with relationship deficit models. Sex refers to an interest in greater sexual frequency and sexual variety ("My steady partner wasn't interested in sexual activities that I find exciting"). Anger refers to a desire to punish the primary partner because of a transgression ("I wanted to 'get back at' my steady partner for something he or she did"). Similar results have been reported elsewhere. For example, in one qualitative study, Omarzu, Miller, Schultz, and Timmerman (2012) found that sexual and emotional needs, as well as falling in love with someone else, were key reasons why people reported engaging in affairs.

The primary goal of the current study was to expand on this line of research. One observation about the Barta and Kiene (2005) model is that the factors are entirely dyadic. For all factors, there is some implied deficit or complication in the primary relationship (e.g., negative feeling, lack of contact, low sexual gratification, presence of conflict), which then predicts infidelity. These motivating factors rely heavily on deficit models of infidelity (see Thompson, 1983). Barta and Kiene (2005) claimed that although situational variables play a role in whether infidelity occurs, situational variables themselves (e.g., mere opportunity) do not uniquely predict the decision to be unfaithful. The implication is there must always be underlying dyadic factors that predict infidelity, even if situational factors are

concurrently present. The authors claim that because in the clinical literature unfaithful individuals often report multiple occurrences of infidelity with numerous extradyadic partners, it is underlying relationship deficits that are the true source of most infidelity motivations, with some personality traits predicting greater likelihood of some motivations.

In this article, we propose that a more extensive model for infidelity motivations may also include factors that are beyond the scope of the relationship itself, that is, motivations not stemming from deficits or feelings toward one's primary partner. We predict that in addition to the four established categories of motivations carefully detailed by Barta and Kiene (2005), there are other dispositional and situational variables that could drive people to engage in infidelity. Some of these additional motivations for infidelity may be similar to the motivations for sexual activity in general. For example, research has shown that people engage in sexual activity often due to mere situational opportunity (Meston & Buss, 2007) but not necessarily to enhance their relationships. In this vein, we predicted that people might at times be motivated to engage in infidelity simply because an extradyadic partner showed interest or because of other unique situational variables, such as being intoxicated. We also predicted motivations stemming from people's self-concepts. Specifically, people may engage in infidelity because of career/work-related opportunities, to enhance their self-esteem, to increase autonomy/independence, or to explore their sexuality (e.g., related to sexual orientation or fluidity). We also predicted that people would report being motivated to engage in infidelity if they witnessed others around them behaving this way (social conformity). Given that all of these variables are implicated in people's motivations to have sex in general, we propose that they may also be implicated in motivations for sexual activity outside of their primary partnership (infidelity) as well. Last, we predicted that motivations involving relationship dissatisfaction might stem from distinct underlying variables. Specifically, infidelity could be driven by lack of loving feelings or (separately) a low commitment toward the primary partner.

The bulk of research on sexual infidelity, like much of the research on sexual behavior and relationships in general, as a matter of convenience has focused on young adults, and in particular on college students. While age and developmental factors have been implicated in the prevalence of infidelity, there has been relatively little work, theoretically or methodologically, to indicate whether age might influence motivations for extradyadic sexual behavior. For example, the prevalence of infidelity increases with age (Atkins et al., 2001; Wiederman, 1997), which makes sense given that the longer people live, the more likely they are to have potential opportunities to engage in any variety of relationship or sexual behaviors (including infidelity). This does not mean that older people are more likely to commit infidelity at any given moment in time, but it may indicate that for young adults the incidence of infidelity that we assess may be their first, or within the context of their first meaningful

¹Note that while the two-factor model of sexual and emotional infidelity has been widely applied to studies on types of infidelity people engage in and reactions to such infidelity (see Guitar et al., 2017), it has not been well supported as a model to assess infidelity motivations.

romantic relationship (which may come with new experiences, such as integrating unanticipated feelings of love and negotiating expectations for fidelity and/or exclusivity). But the existing literature on this topic has not revealed consistent age-related effects with regard to the psychological factors underlying infidelity (for more commentary, see Tsapelas, Fisher, & Aron, 2011). For the purpose of the current study, we suggest there may be some qualitative distinctions between younger and older adults' experiences with infidelity in terms of social context variables but that these do not indicate taxonomic age effects that necessarily bear on motivations. For example, college students may be exposed to a greater number of available extradyadic partners in their social environment compared to people who are not in college; thus, some young people will avail themselves of these opportunities for infidelity. However, this does not mean that young people, including college students, are developmentally more likely to be unfaithful to a romantic partner. Instead, older adults may be likely to behave similarly if they were placed into the same social context, because the link between opportunity and infidelity occurrence appears to generalize across age and marital status (Wiggins & Lederer, 1984). While the literature suggests that young adults' experiences with infidelity are not taxonomically distinct from older adults, some meaningful qualitative nuances do emerge upon close examination that are important to acknowledge given the current study focus on infidelity motivations in a sample of mostly young people.

To summarize, the general prediction for the current study was that people will report an array of motivations for infidelity that extend beyond the two-factor and four-factor models from previous studies, with particular emphasis on additional motivations beyond relationship deficit conceptions. Although we did not hypothesize a specific number of factors to emerge in a statistical model, we predicted that people will report motivations, including dyadic problems (e.g., partner neglect, sexual dissatisfaction, anger/conflict, lack of loving feelings, low commitment), sexual identity exploration, autonomy/independence, social influence (e.g., conformity and obedience), stressors (e.g., work), and intoxication (e.g., alcohol). We predicted these categories will show some overlap but will be largely independent of one another. To measure these diverse motivations for infidelity, we created a large survey tool to capture a wide range of potential motivations, including those previously noted (refer to the Method section).

In the current study, we also examined personality correlates of self-reported motivations for infidelity. Much has been written about which personality variables are linked with infidelity behavior (Mark, Janssen, & Milhausen, 2011; Tsapelas, Fisher, & Aron, 2011), which we briefly summarize here. Within personality models, the Big Five personality trait model provides a framework for understanding individual differences in a variety of behaviors, including those within the sexual domain (see John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008). Specifically, those who are low in the trait

agreeableness are more distrusting and less cooperative with others. Those low in *conscientiousness* are more careless about the consequences of their actions. Those high in *neuroticism* have difficulties maintaining quality relationships due to unstable emotions. Those high in *extroversion* seek abundant social stimulation. Those high in *openness* seek variety. Numerous studies suggest that the Big Five traits predict likelihood of infidelity (e.g., Orzeck & Lung, 2005; Schmitt, 2004; Schmitt & Buss, 2001). Higher extroversion, lower agreeableness, and lower conscientiousness are all related to extradyadic affairs, in addition to (albeit less consistently) neuroticism and openness, which are also related to extradyadic sexual behaviors (see Schmitt & Shackelford, 2008). Among other results, Barta and Kiene (2005) found that extroversion predicted infidelity motivated by dissatisfaction; neuroticism predicted infidelity motivated by neglect; and neuroticism and (lower) agreeableness predicted infidelity motivated by anger.

Barta and Kiene (2005) also found that sociosexual orientation predicted infidelity motivated by sexual factors. Sociosexual orientation is an indicator of attitudes, feelings, and engagement in uncommitted sexual activity beyond pair-bonds (Simpson, Wilson, & Winterheld, 2004). High sociosexuality scores indicate an unrestricted orientation, which predicts more promiscuous behaviors and more sexually permissive attitudes, while low sociosexuality scores indicate a restricted orientation, which predicts sexual behaviors typically within a committed emotional pair-bond. Sociosexuality is theoretically relevant in explaining individual differences in short-term versus long-term mating strategies, and a number of studies have shown sociosexuality to be associated with extradyadic sexual activity and infidelity (for a review, see Penke & Asendorpf, 2008).

Attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety are two types of insecure personality dimensions also associated with infidelity (Allen & Baucom, 2004; Bogaert & Sadava, 2002). Attachment styles are considered to form in infancy and serve as the blueprint for close relationships later in life (Bowlby, 1969/1982), including romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). High insecurity is associated with more conflict and more negativity in relationships, which are precursors to infidelity. Avoidance is associated with wanting greater independence/autonomy as a motivator for infidelity, while attachment anxiety is associated with wanting greater intimacy and emotional fulfillment as a motivator for infidelity (Allen & Baucom, 2004).

To extend the literature, in the current study we also included new traits pertaining to views on romantic relationships, which (as far as we are aware) have not yet been studied with respect to infidelity: implicit beliefs. Implicit beliefs are "schematic knowledge structures that involve specific beliefs about the stability of an attribute and those conditions that are likely to promote change" (Knee, Patrick, & Lonsbary, 2003, p. 41; see also Ross, 1989). Implicit beliefs about relationships are characterized by attitudes toward romantic compatibility based on either

initial chemistry between partners or substantial effort to increase relationship quality over time (Knee et al., 2003). People who endorse a growth viewpoint generally believe that romantic relationships require effort and that quality relationships take time to develop (Knee, 1998). In contrast, people who endorse a destiny viewpoint generally believe that initial chemistry is most important (Knee, 1998). These variables are particularly important predictors of how people will cope with relationship stressors (Knee & Canevello, 2006). Growth believers tend to view conflict as an opportunity for learning and developing the relationship, whereas destiny believers tend to view conflict as a sign that the relationship will not work (Knee, Nanayakkara, Vietor, Neighbors, & Patrick, 2001). Similarly, romantic belief or romanticism (Sprecher & Metts, 1989) shares many of the same features as destiny beliefs, including the idea of “love at first sight.” Given this conceptual overlap, romanticism might predict similar infidelity motivations as destiny beliefs. In the current study, we expected that these variables would predict infidelity motivated by factors specifically pertaining to relationship stressors or deficits in the relationship (love, commitment, neglect, anger). That is, people who score high in either destiny beliefs or romanticism were predicted to be more likely to engage in infidelity if their relationship is perceived to be going poorly, due to their belief that such deficits are a sign that the relationship was not “meant to be.” In contrast, growth believers are predicted to be less likely to be motivated to be unfaithful based on relationship deficits, because their view is that relationships implicitly require effort to maintain and improve for the future.

Given the existing literature on infidelity, including theoretical and empirical gaps between existing findings, we formed the following predictions. For the sake of clarity, a positive gender association indicates that women will be associated with an increase in the variable relative to men.

H1: A four-factor model will fit the data less adequately than a model with greater than four factors; we hypothesized new factors that will be statistically independent from the four original factors (dissatisfaction, anger, neglect, and sex). However, we hypothesized that the original four factors will remain meaningful independent factors in our data (that is, they will not be subsumed by new factors).

H2: Should similar factors emerge in our data, we expected to replicate prior findings (Barta & Kiene, 2005), such that high neuroticism and low agreeableness will predict infidelity motivated by anger. High neuroticism will predict infidelity motivated by neglect. High extroversion and gender will predict infidelity motivated by dissatisfaction.

H3: Low conscientiousness will predict infidelity motivated by stressors, situational factors, or intoxication.

H4: Restricted sociosexual orientation and gender will inversely predict infidelity motivated by sexual desire.

H5: High attachment avoidance and anxiety will predict infidelity motivated by dyadic factors (e.g., neglect) and independence/autonomy.

H6: High destiny beliefs, high romanticism, and low growth beliefs will predict infidelity motivated by dyadic factors (e.g., neglect).

Method

Participants

Participants in this study were 562 adults recruited either through the psychology department subject pool at the University of Maryland, College Park, or through relationship-themed online message boards on Reddit (e.g., AskMen). However, 67 individuals were excluded due to failure to follow directions (explanation follows in Materials and Procedure section). The final N was 495 (259 women, 213 men, and 23 not reporting gender). Of those, mean age was 20.36 years ($SD = 3.45$, median = 20). Most (87.9%) participants reported being heterosexual. Approximately half (51.8%) reported currently being in a romantic relationship, with 11.7% casually dating, 34.5% exclusively dating, 2.0% cohabiting, and 3.6% engaged/married.

Inclusion criteria also included having previously engaged in infidelity. We did not explicitly define infidelity for participants, and many different definitions may apply, depending on the behaviors involved. However, we stipulated that participants must have committed infidelity in the context of a committed romantic relationship (they must have “cheated” on a partner) to be eligible to participate. Thus, all participants self-reported at least one instance of their own infidelity. A vast majority of participants included in the current analyses (94.3%) indicated their infidelity included physical/sexual activity.

Materials and Procedure

Questionnaires were administered online via Qualtrics software and were completed during the same study session. The key measure for this study was a 77-item questionnaire that we created to assess participants’ motivations for engaging in infidelity. We utilized the items listed in Barta and Kiene’s (2005) paper and created new, theoretically informed items to tap into the additional factors hypothesized, many of which were inspired by previous research on motivations for sex (Meston & Buss, 2007). The full items are listed in the appendix. All items were answered using a 7-point Likert-type *Agree/Disagree* scale. We embedded two attention checks in the questionnaire (e.g., “My affair partner and I had an affair, but this question is to make sure you are paying attention. Please mark 5 for this question”) and excluded data from 67 participants who failed an attention check. A full list of questionnaire items is available online at <https://osf.io/4jjpgs/>.

Participants also completed a battery of personality questionnaires, including a 50-item version of the Big Five Inventory, available through the International Personality Item Pool Web site (Goldberg, 1999; Goldberg et al., 2006), which measures openness to new experiences ($\alpha = .78$), conscientiousness ($\alpha = .82$), extroversion ($\alpha = .88$), agreeableness ($\alpha = .81$), and neuroticism ($\alpha = .87$). Participants completed the 12-item Experiences in Close Relationships—Short Form scale (ECR-S; Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, & Vogel, 2007) to assess attachment-related anxiety and avoidance. The ECR-S assesses tendencies toward emotion and behavior in relationships, with items such as “I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back” (avoidance; $\alpha = .77$) and “I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner” (anxiety; $\alpha = .77$). We assessed sociosexuality using the nine-item Revised Sociosexual Orientation Inventory ($\alpha = .88$; Penke & Asendorpf, 2008). Finally, participants completed Sprecher and Metts’s (1989) Romantic Beliefs Scale, which includes items such as “I believe that to be truly in love is to be in love forever” ($\alpha = .85$) and Knee’s (1998) measure of implicit relationship beliefs, which includes items such as “Potential relationship partners are either compatible or they are not” (destiny; $\alpha = .72$) and “The ideal relationship develops gradually over time” (growth; $\alpha = .76$).

Results

In our first set of analyses, we attempted to reduce our 77 infidelity motivation items to meaningful entities. Importantly, our goal was not to develop a traitlike scale for infidelity motivations; our goal was to reduce the number of analyses to a meaningful and manageable amount, reduce the likelihood of a Type 1 error due to multiple comparisons, and to test whether a solution yielding more than four variables would better fit the data. To that end, we first conducted a principal component analysis (PCA). Oblimin rotation yielded a conceptually meaningful eight-factor solution: (1) anger, (2) sexual desire, (3) lack of love, (4) low commitment, (5) esteem, (6) situation, (7) neglect, and (8) variety. Factor loadings are displayed in Table 1. We also ran principal axis factoring and varimax rotation, which yielded very similar factor structures to the one we report here. We also conducted a parallel analysis (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2012; Sakaluk & Short, 2017), which also yielded an eight-factor solution using simulated data with $\alpha = .05$ cutoff. We removed six items due to low factor loadings ($< .25$) or strong loading on multiple factors (or conceptually unrelated factors). These items were 8, 24, 32, 40, 42, and 71 (see the appendix). The remaining 71 items comprised the eight-factor solution that we retained for analyses.

To test hypothesis 1, we ran confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) using MPlus software, which confirmed that an eight-factor model ($\chi^2/2386$, $df = 2.79$; root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06) fit the data better than a four-factor model ($\chi^2/2409$, $df = 3.29$;

RMSEA = .07). Fit indices were significantly improved in the eight-factor model relative to a four-factor model ($\chi^2/23$, $df = 54.79$, $p < .001$). Correlations between infidelity motivation factors are displayed in Table 2. Our first hypothesis was supported by the data.

Here we also report the percentage of participants who scored above the scale midpoint for each of the infidelity motivation factors, indicating at least some agreement with the motivation statements: 43% for anger, 32% for sexual desire, 77% for lack of love, 70% for neglect, 41% for low commitment, 70% for situation, 57% for esteem, and 74% for variety. These scale agreement percentages are broken down by gender and displayed in Figure 1. Men were more likely to endorse items pertaining to sexual desire, $t(470) = 5.55$, $p < .001$; situation, $t(470) = 2.79$, $p = .006$; and variety, $t(470) = 8.16$, $p < .001$, while women were more likely to endorse items pertaining to neglect, $t(470) = -4.90$, $p < .001$. The means for each motivation factor broken down by gender are displayed in Table 3. For all statistically significant gender effects reported here, the 95% confidence interval (CI) of the mean difference did not include 0.

To test hypotheses 2 through 6, which all pertained to understanding which variables would predict infidelity motivation factors, we conducted a series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses by sets. In each analysis, the outcome variable was one of the eight infidelity motivation factors. The first set of predictors consisted of all the variables drawn from prior research: gender, sociosexual orientation, and Big Five traits. The second set of predictors consisted of attachment variables (avoidance and anxiety). The third set of predictors consisted of relationship implicit belief variables (romantic beliefs, destiny beliefs, and growth beliefs). All regression analyses are presented in Table 4. The beta coefficients displayed are for the entire model (all sets of predictors), and the incremental R^2 illustrates whether that specific set of predictors accounted for a significant unique percentage of variance in the outcome variable, independent from the other sets. All variables were entered continuously except for gender, which was coded as 1 = man, 2 = woman, so a positive association between gender and another variable indicates that identifying as a woman was positively linked with that variable.

Analyses showed that sexual desire motivation was significantly associated with identifying as a man ($\beta = -.20$, $p < .001$), attachment anxiety ($\beta = .19$, $p < .001$), and inversely with having growth beliefs ($\beta = -.11$, $p = .025$), although the set of belief predictors was not statistically significant, so the effect of growth beliefs should be interpreted with caution. Overall the combined predictors explained approximately 13% of the variance in sexual desire motivation, $R^2 = .13$, $F(12, 437) = 5.55$, $p < .001$. Anger motivation was significantly associated with attachment avoidance ($\beta = .10$, $p = .041$) and anxiety ($\beta = .24$, $p < .001$). The entire model explained approximately 10% of the variance in anger motivation, $R^2 = .10$, $F(12, 437) = 4.16$, $p < .001$. Lack of love motivation was

Table 1. *Factor Loadings for the Exploratory Principal Components Analysis (see Appendix for Full Items)*

Item Number and Abbreviation	Anger	Sexual Desire	Lack of Love	Neglect	Lack Commitment	Situation	Esteem	Variety
75. Score/Score	.79							
19. Q/Cheating	.76							
77. Experience	.74							
22. Cheat/Past	.74							
73. Get/Back	.71							
74. Imagine/Pr	.71							
21. Avoid/Hurt	.70							
20. Cheat/Ex	.66							
57. Fight/Bef	.58							
21. Avoid/1st	.52							
59. Bad/Note	.50							
58. Date/Anymo	.50							
23. Accuse	.39							
12. Disint/Sex		.77						
13. Refuse/Sex		.74						
14. Try/Sex		.74						
16. Lost/Int		.69						
62. Sex/Confli		.65						
17. Taboo/Sex		.65						
69. Doubt/Prim		.62						
9. Freq/Sex		.61						
11. No/Chem		.55						
10. Sex/Gifted		.54						
18. Embar/Sex		.53						
2. Reaf/Orien		.51						
1. Conf/Orien		.47						
31. Job/Benefi		.42						
29. Prove/Id		.40						
65. Right/Pers			-.80					
44. End/Primar			-.80					
67. End/Love			-.79					
66. Love/Prim			-.75					
55. Bored			-.65					
53. Dull/Stag			-.47					
7. Intel/Stim			-.45					
27. Other/Bet			-.44					
56. Neglect				-.76				
72. Emot/Dist				-.67				
54. Enough/Tim				-.67				
63. Doubt/Love				-.66				
48. Trouble				-.56				
60. Build/Up				-.56				
61. Stability				-.56				
70. Attract/Re				-.49				
45. No/Discuss					-.79			
46. Technical					-.73			
43. Not/Comm					-.61			
6. Too/Close					-.50			
34. Child/Oth					-.29			
35. Not/Self						.61		
41. People/Ple						.60		
47. Stressors						.57		
36. Drunk						.52		
33. Can't/No"						.49		
38. Acceptable						.42		
51. Long/Dist						.30		
4. Assert/Ind							-.65	
5. Boost/Est							-.65	
3. Want/Ind							-.62	
76. Prove/Attr							-.56	
64. Test/Love							-.50	
28. Self/Bet							-.47	
52. Spark							-.47	

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued)

Item Number and Abbreviation	Anger	Sexual Desire	Lack of Love	Neglect	Lack Commitment	Situation	Esteem	Variety
26. Up/Status							-.43	
49. No/End							-.41	
30. Stat/Res							-.39	
15. Vary/Sex								.63
50. No/Find								.45
37. Oppor								.42
68. Pre-Marry								.41
39. Person								.35

Table 2. Correlations Among Infidelity Motivation Factors

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Anger (1)	—	.28***	.24***	.63***	.18**	.20**	.44***	-.02
Sexual desire (2)	.13*	—	.28***	.42***	.17*	.25***	.45***	.19**
Lack of love (3)	.14*	.44***	—	.35***	.30***	.06	.38***	.15*
Neglect (4)	.62***	.26***	.32***	—	.11	.14*	.34***	-.09
Low commitment (5)	.23**	.28***	.22***	.09	—	.11	.32***	.12 ⁺
Situation (6)	.16**	.23***	.06	.14*	.26***	—	.30***	.30***
Esteem (7)	.48***	.40***	.33***	.44***	.27***	.35***	—	.33***
Variety (8)	.07	.38***	.24***	.10 ⁺	.14*	.34***	.40***	—

Note. Data for men (*N* = 213) are above the diagonal and women (*N* = 259) are below the diagonal.

****p* < .001; ***p* < .01; **p* < .05; ⁺*p* < .10.

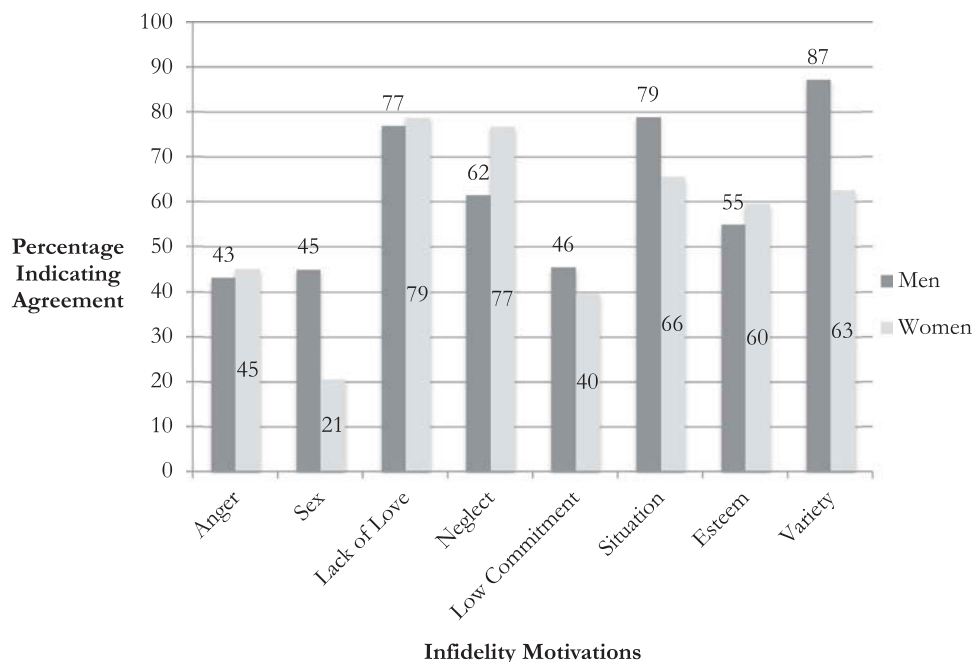


Figure 1. Percentage of men and women indicating agreement for each infidelity motivation factor (*N* = 472).

significantly associated with attachment avoidance ($\beta = -.15, p = .003$) and destiny beliefs ($\beta = .18, p < .001$) and negatively with romantic beliefs ($\beta = -.15, p = .004$). The entire model explained approximately 8% of the variance in lack of love motivation, $R^2 = .08, F(12, 437) = 3.25, p < .001$. Neglect motivation was significantly

associated with agreeableness ($\beta = .12, p = .030$), attachment anxiety ($\beta = .26, p < .001$), and destiny beliefs ($\beta = .12, p = .012$). The entire model explained approximately 17% of the variance in neglect motivation, $R^2 = .17, F(12, 437) = 7.63, p < .001$. Low commitment motivation was significantly associated with attachment avoidance

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations For Infidelity Motivation Factors Based on Gender ($N = 472$)

Infidelity Motivation Factors	Men ($N = 213$)	Women ($N = 259$)	t	d
Anger	2.88 (1.22)	2.98 (1.32)	-.87	-.08
Sexual desire	2.81 (1.01)	2.30 (1.02)	5.55***	.39
Lack of love	3.90 (1.26)	4.04 (1.41)	-1.10	-.11
Neglect	3.10 (1.08)	2.60 (.96)	-4.90***	.38
Low commitment	2.81 (1.25)	2.63 (1.26)	1.51	.14
Situation	3.72 (1.05)	3.43 (1.14)	2.79**	.22
Esteem	3.06 (.97)	3.17 (1.08)	-1.19	-.08
Variety	4.12 (1.09)	3.29 (1.12)	8.16***	.64

($\beta = .41, p < .001$), attachment anxiety ($\beta = .13, p = .008$), and romantic beliefs ($\beta = .13, p = .010$) and negatively with growth beliefs ($\beta = -.11, p = .020$) and sociosexual orientation ($\beta = -.14, p = .008$). The entire model explained approximately 23% of the variance in commitment motivation, $R^2 = .23, F(12, 437) = 10.76, p < .001$. Situation motivation was significantly associated with identifying as a man ($\beta = -.14, p = .014$) and negatively associated with conscientiousness ($\beta = -.12, p = .016$). The entire model explained approximately 6% of the variance in situation motivation, $R^2 = .06, F(12, 437) = 2.67, p = .010$. Esteem motivation was significantly associated with

Table 4. Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Infidelity Motivations Based on Gender, Sociosexuality, Big Five Traits, Attachment, Romantic Beliefs, and Destiny/Growth Beliefs ($n = 450$)

	Sexual Desire β	Anger β	Lack of Love β	Neglect β
Step Variables				
1. Gender	-.20***	-.01	.01	.10+
Sociosexual Orientation	.06	-.03	-.05	-.07
Openness	.01	-.09+	.07	.04
Conscientiousness	.01	.06	.06	.01
Extroversion	-.05	.07	.01	-.05
Agreeableness	-.06	.05	.01	.12*
Neuroticism	-.05	.01	-.03	.07
Incremental sR^2	.08***	.03	.01	.09***
Overall R^2	.08***	.03	.01	.09***
2. Attachment Avoidance	.08	.10*	.15**	.06
Attachment Anxiety	.19***	.24***	.07	.26***
Incremental sR^2	.04***	.07***	.034***	.07***
Overall R^2	.12***	.09***	.045*	.16***
3. Romantic Beliefs	.01	.08	-.15**	.03
Destiny Beliefs	.01	.04	.16***	.12*
Growth Beliefs	-.11*	-.02	.05	-.01
Incremental sR^2	.01	.01	.037***	.02*
Overall R^2	.13***	.10***	.08***	.17***
	Low Commitment β	Situation β	Esteem β	Variety β
Step Variables				
1. Gender	-.07	-.14*	.01	-.16**
Sociosexual Orientation	-.14	-.03	-.05	.37***
Openness	.03	-.03	.07	-.02
Conscientiousness	-.06	.06	.06	-.04
Extroversion	.03	.09+	.01	.05
Agreeableness	.05	.03	.01	-.09+
Neuroticism	-.09+	.01	-.03	-.02
Incremental sR^2	.02	.04*	.02	.26***
Overall R^2	.02	.04*	.02	.26***
2. Attachment Avoidance	.41***	-.02	15**	-.02
Attachment Anxiety	.13**	.04	.07	.02
Incremental sR^2	.19***	.00	.05***	.00
Overall R^2	.21***	.04*	.07***	.26***
3. Romantic Beliefs	.13*	.08	.10+	.09+
Destiny Beliefs	-.01	.04	.05	.01
Growth Beliefs	-.11*	-.02	-.06	-.07
Incremental sR^2	.02*	.02+	.01	.01
Overall R^2	.23***	.06**	.07***	.27***

8
Notes*** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$ + $p < .10$. The Beta coefficients are taken from the full model with all predictors included. Coefficients for partial (sR^2) and total (R^2) variance explained are included after each step.

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conscientiousness ($\beta = .10, p = .036$), attachment avoidance ($\beta = .12, p = .020$), and attachment anxiety ($\beta = .17, p = .001$). The entire model explained approximately 7% of the variance in esteem motivation, $R^2 = .07, F(12, 437) = 2.82, p = .001$. Variety motivation was significantly associated with identifying as a man ($\beta = -.16, p = .002$) and sociosexual orientation ($\beta = .37, p < .001$). The entire model explained approximately 27% of the variance in variety motivation, $R^2 = .27, F(12, 437) = 13.13, p < .001$.

Discussion

The current study expands on the existing literature by conducting an extensive assessment of self-reported motivations for committing infidelity. We interpret the main findings in this study as an extension of Barta and Kiene's (2005) key findings. Our data yielded a similar factor structure as their previously published one, with neglect, anger, and sexual factors emerging as distinct variables. In addition, our data yielded new factors that were independent from the others, including esteem, situations, and variety, as well as two factors conceptually similar to the original dissatisfaction variable, which were lack of love and low commitment.

Many but not all of our hypotheses were supported. Hypothesis 1 was supported; the structure of eight motivation factors was consistent with our prediction that more than four independent motivation factors would emerge. Hypothesis 2 was only partly supported, indicating that we were not able to replicate some of the correlational findings reported by Barta and Kiene (2005). Save for the association between gender and infidelity motivated by sexual desire (with men reporting this to a greater extent than women), none of the effects hypothesized involving the Big Five personality traits emerged as significant. Neuroticism and agreeableness were not associated with infidelity motivated by anger; neuroticism was not associated with infidelity motivated by neglect; and extroversion and gender were not associated with infidelity motivated by either lack of love or commitment. Hypothesis 3 was supported; those lower in conscientiousness were more likely to report infidelity motivated by situational forces. Hypothesis 4 was partly supported; unrestricted sociosexual orientation was associated with infidelity motivated by variety but not sexual desire. In addition, gender was linked with sexual desire and variety, such that men reported stronger sexual/variety motivations compared to women. Hypotheses 5 and 6 received mixed support. Attachment insecurity traits were associated with infidelity motivated by anger, lack of love, neglect, low commitment, and esteem. Growth belief was inversely associated with infidelity motivated by sexual desire and commitment. Destiny belief was associated with infidelity motivated by lack of love and neglect. Romanticism was associated with infidelity motivated by low commitment but inversely associated with lack of love.

Although many of the previous findings involving the Big Five personality traits did not replicate as we predicted,

this is not entirely surprising given that those personality traits are rather broad and pertain more to general social tendencies. The relationship-specific predictors we utilized (attachment, implicit beliefs, sociosexual orientation) were more strongly associated with infidelity motivations than Big Five traits. This makes theoretical sense, because Big Five traits involve generalized tendencies across situations, while the other variables involve people's attitudes, feelings, and experiences specifically for contexts of close relationships and sexuality. Therefore, we suggest that while Big Five traits are still relevant to understand the occurrence of infidelity (as previous studies have demonstrated; e.g., Schmitt & Shackelford, 2008), for relationship-specific motivations and behaviors, other traits such as sociosexuality and attachment have stronger predictive value.

Unrestricted sociosexual orientation is associated with more openness and greater interest in sexual activity outside of a committed romantic relationship (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008). Consistent with this pattern, we found that a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation significantly predicted infidelity motivated by variety. Perhaps surprisingly, this variable was not associated with infidelity motivated by sexual desire. However, this finding may be due to the fact that the sexual desire motivation factor contained a diversity of sex-related items, including sexual orientation/identity items. Thus, infidelity motivated by the sexual desire factor, as categorized in the current study, may not be as conceptually relevant to sociosexuality. Our data demonstrate that while sociosexuality is theoretically meaningful in explaining people's motivations for sexual variety, other facets of sexual motivations (such as identity and pleasure) may more meaningfully stem from other personality factors. This again makes theoretical sense, given that correlations between sociosexuality and both sexual desire and pleasure are low (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008) and some studies have found no meaningful association between them (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). We believe the current findings are more theoretically cogent with the conclusion that unrestricted sociosexuality predicts preferences for a variety of sexual partners rather than sex itself (Simpson et al., 2004).

The present findings for avoidance and anxiety variables are consistent with attachment theory and prior research. Many studies (see Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007) have found that insecurity is associated with dysfunction in relationships, and our findings add to the growing evidence that relationship factors (e.g., anger, neglect, love, commitment) motivate insecure people to engage in romantic infidelity. Furthermore, highly avoidant people, who attempt distancing behavior, were more likely to be motivated toward infidelity as a means to boost their esteem and establish autonomy. This is similar to the patterns of attachment and infidelity shown in previous studies (Allen & Baucom, 2004; Russell, Baker, & McNulty, 2013).

The gender effects reported here were also consistent with prior research. We found that men were more likely to report being motivated by sexual desire, variety, and situational forces, while women were more likely to be motivated by neglect. These findings add to research

suggesting that on average men and women may be fulfilling different desires through infidelity behavior (Glass & Wright, 1985; Tsapelas et al., 2011), with women more likely to be motivated by wanting an emotional connection with a partner, and men more motivated to engage in sexual activity with a partner. However, it is also important to consider that gender norms and social desirability may have biased this responding. For example, research on the sexual double standard suggests that women may be motivated to downplay their sexual desire, and vice versa for men (Conley, Ziegler, & Moors, 2013). Future research should investigate whether measures and instruments meant to capture sexual motivations for infidelity are reifying a gendered response.

Separately, the findings for implicit beliefs strengthen the idea that people's relationship mind-sets predict their motivations to engage in infidelity. Those high in growth beliefs endorse the idea that quality relationships take time and effort, and thus they are less likely to commit infidelity as a function of relationship deficits (e.g., commitment). This is likely due to attitudes endorsing beliefs that the future will yield more promising relationship outcomes with the right effort. Indeed, prior research has shown that couples who invest time and effort in their romantic and sexual relationships also reported greater satisfaction and passion (Frederick, Lever, Gillespie, & Garcia, 2017; Maxwell et al., 2017). Conversely, those high in destiny beliefs endorse the idea that quality relationships are a function of initial chemistry and thus are more likely to report infidelity as a function of neglect and lack of love. Those findings are consistent with prior research (Knee, 1998; Knee & Canevello, 2006). In general, romanticism was not associated with infidelity motivations to the same degree as destiny beliefs, which is contrary to the idea that these constructs predict similar relationship outcomes. However, this lack of support may be due to shared method variance—given the high correlation between romanticism and destiny beliefs, it is likely that only one of those variables would have emerged as statistically significant in our models.

Overall, our findings show a great variety and diversity in motivations associated with infidelity. While it is clear that deficits to the primary relationship are relevant in many cases, to the exclusion of other motives, the relationship deficit model does not solely explain why people engage in affairs, which may be self-oriented (esteem) or situation focused (intoxication). In other words, it would be a mistake to conclude that all affairs (and infidelity-related behaviors) similarly result from deficits in the primary relationship. Some people may have experienced so-called momentary shifts in judgment/decision making, or they may be driven by simultaneous nondyadic motivations related to social status, autonomy, or sexual variety goals. Our effects ranged from small (6% variance explained) to medium (27% variance explained), which suggests that the variables in our model explain some but not most of what constitutes infidelity motivations. This is theoretically justifiable, given that some of the motivation factors were situational in nature, and yet we used trait predictors to capture tendencies toward these factors. Indeed, the model with the lowest

variance explained in our analyses was the situation factor, and the model with the largest variance explained was a preference for variety, with dyadic factors in between.

Limitations and Future Directions

While the present research expands the literature on infidelity and specifically current knowledge on infidelity motivations, several limitations are important to note. One limitation is that there are most likely other motivational factors that we did not capture in this study. Anecdotally, one participant remarked that another motivation for an affair might stem from a highly involving career. We encourage future studies to explore additional motivations for infidelity that were not captured by this study or previous studies. Future research might also investigate how motivations for infidelity are associated with different relationship outcomes. For example, perhaps those committing infidelity and their partners would be more likely to maintain the primary relationship if the infidelity was motivated by situational forces or esteem concerns compared to lack of love, anger, or neglect. We recommend future studies employ a dyadic approach to these questions. For instance, perhaps when individuals make attributions about their partners' infidelity motivations that are inconsistent with self-described infidelity motivations, this could result in more conflict within relationships.

Another limitation of the current study is that we relied on retrospective reports from participants. It is possible that the infidelity motivation items we utilized may reflect post hoc attributions and justifications for an individual's actions, rather than ad hoc motivations for their behaviors. This alternative explanation would be impossible to rule out without a prospective, longitudinal design that would measure motivation items in real time, followed by behavior; this type of design would be difficult, but it is possible. However, it is important to note that post hoc attributions do not invalidate or negate original motivating factors, and the two are not mutually exclusive. It may be that, upon reflection, people attribute their infidelity to factors that did, in fact, motivate them. In addition, it is not necessarily the case that participants are fully aware of their implicit motivations for infidelity prospectively; that is, even with a prospective design, participants' self-reported motivations will not necessarily be any clearer. It may in fact be the case that motivations reported during times of engaging in infidelity are even *more* biased (due to social desirability concerns or other concurrent concerns) compared to a clearer hindsight. We suggest further study of how social desirability biases and self-serving biases might play a role in people's self-reported motivations for engaging in infidelity, especially to the extent that people view their own infidelities as immoral. As with other studies in the field of sexuality research, people may provide socially desirable responses to questions about infidelity, but ensuring anonymity or using clever strategies like the bogus pipeline may help reduce those biases. Such methods have been used successfully to examine gender and responses to sexual questions (e.g., Alexander & Fisher, 2003; Fisher, 2013), including sexual aggression (Strang & Peterson, 2017).

Another limitation concerns demographics. Our sample was skewed toward younger, dating individuals. Only 13 participants reported their age as above 30 years old, and only 18 participants reported being in a marriage or domestic partnership. Thus, we caution against overgeneralizing across age. It is possible that motivations for infidelity in an older sample or among (primarily) married individuals would be somewhat different, and we suggest that future research investigate this. A developmental approach suggests that older adults may experience infidelity in a different context given that their romantic relationships (especially marriage) are longer and some of the consequences of infidelity (e.g., divorce) may not apply to the same extent as for younger, dating individuals. However, we further suggest that while subtle differences in infidelity motivations may exist across age, they are likely not categorically different. For example, older adults are more likely to be motivated by situational variables pertaining to landmark or milestone events (such as a 40th birthday) that are less salient to younger adults who have not yet reached such milestones (Alter & Hershfield, 2014). But this does not invalidate the general idea that situational variables (such as landmarks) are important predictors of infidelity, regardless of age. Thus, age differences may reveal qualitative variations on common themes for infidelity motivations, rather than taxonomical differences. As we suggested earlier, the existing literature does not suggest categorical distinctions between younger and older adults in this regard but rather some qualitatively different experiences due to the developmental period. For instance, if college students have more opportunities to commit infidelity than those who do not attend college, then they likely will, but this does not change the fact that there is a link between available opportunities and infidelity behavior, which is true regardless of the age group examined. For future research, a good way to assess the generalizability of our results would be to collect data from age-diverse samples.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the results of the current study pertain only to nonconsensual infidelity (conceptualized as a betrayal and commonly referred to as “cheating”). We do not believe these results should be generalized to consensually nonmonogamous relationships, in which romantic and sexual interactions with extradyadic partners are accepted or encouraged (Conley, Moors, Matsick, & Ziegler, 2013; Hauptert, Gesselman, Moors, Fisher, & Garcia, 2017). It would be interesting to compare the motivations of people who engage in sexual activity beyond primary pair-bonds (for those who identify as having such) in the context of nonconsensual infidelity with the motivations in the context of consensual nonmonogamy. Perhaps some overlapping motivations would emerge (e.g., boosting esteem, variety) but some differences as well (e.g., lack of commitment/love), as previous research has shown a weak association between need fulfillment in primary and secondary romantic relationships in polyamorous arrangements (Mitchell, Bartholomew, & Cobb, 2014).

In sum, our research adds to a growing literature exploring the psychological nature of infidelity. Whether for those who commit acts of infidelity, those whose partners stray, or those who are the third party to a betrayal, infidelity can have drastic effects on people’s romantic and sexual lives. We hope the current findings will spur more research on this topic. In addition to researchers, these findings may have relevance for couples or clinicians who are attempting to more fully understand their relationships and, in some instances, to overcome the negative effects of sexual infidelity. Findings like these may inform clinical interventions aimed at helping couples be better able to communicate about their relationships, including affairs that might or did occur, perhaps in some cases to illuminate whether there was an underlying dysfunction with their relationship that caused the affair or if the affair was attributable to environmental circumstances. Clinicians may also utilize these findings in their practices to help clients approach a deeper understanding of their own or their partners’ infidelity. With such variety in motivations for sexual infidelity, it may be best to avoid a “one size fits all” approach to evaluating infidelity concerns—in research, in clinical practice, and in people’s sexual lives—and place more emphasis on individuals’ self-described motivations for their behaviors.

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Appendix: Motivations for Infidelity

Instructions to Participants

We are interested in infidelity (cheating behavior in the context of romantic relationships). When thinking about your behavior and the following questions, "**primary partner**" refers to whoever you were/are in a "relationship" with (it may be casual or committed). "**Affair partner**" refers to the *other* person you were romantically involved with. The "**affair**" is **any** kind of romantic, emotional, and/or sexual interaction with the affair partner. It does not have to be for any specific time duration (it could be for 1 night or a month or 3 years, etc.). It does not have to be any specific act or behavior (it could be kissing, dating, sex, etc.). If you have had multiple affairs in your life, please select **just one** affair for your responses.

1. **Conf/Orien**: I was conflicted, confused, or curious about my sexual orientation and wanted a different kind of romantic/sexual experience.
2. **Reaf/Orien**: I wanted to reaffirm my sexual identity/orientation to myself.
3. **Want/Ind**: I wanted more independence/autonomy in my life.
4. **Assert/Ind**: I wanted to assert my independence and autonomy.
5. **Boost/Est**: I wanted to boost my self-esteem/feel better about myself.
6. **Too/Close**: I felt uncomfortable getting "too close" to my primary partner; my affair helped create some distance.
7. **Intel/Stim**: My affair partner was more intellectually stimulating than my primary partner.*
8. **Emot/Bond**: The emotional bond I felt with my affair partner was very strong.*
9. **Freq/Sex**: I wanted more frequent sex.*
10. **Sex/Gifted**: I had the impression that my affair partner was more sexually skilled/gifted than my primary partner; sex with him/her would be more pleasurable.
11. **No/Chem**: I felt a lack of sexual/physical "compatibility" or "chemistry" with my primary partner, despite our emotional connection.
12. **Disint/Sex**: My primary partner was not interested in sexual activities that I find exciting.*
13. **Refuse/Sex**: My primary partner refused to perform certain acts during sex that I normally enjoy.
14. **Try/Sex**: I had a strong desire to try new sex acts that my partner was not interested in trying.
15. **Vary/Sex**: I wanted a greater variety of sexual partners.*
16. **Lost/Int**: My primary partner had lost interest in sex.*
17. **Taboo/Sex**: I was too embarrassed to ask my primary partner to fulfill certain sexual desires, because I feared that he/she may find those desires unappealing or taboo.
18. **Embar/Sex**: I was too embarrassed to tell my primary partner that I did not enjoy or share the same sexual preferences as him/her.
19. **Q/Cheating**: I was suspicious about my partner's faithfulness and questioned whether he/she was cheating.
20. **Cheat/Ex**: My primary partner cheated on his/her ex-partner with me, and therefore I felt a lack of trust in our relationship.
21. **Avoid/Hurt**: It seemed a possibility that my primary partner might cheat, so I wanted to reduce that feeling of vulnerability and avoid being hurt first.
22. **Cheat/Past**: I had confirmed knowledge that my primary partner was unfaithful in one of his/her past relationships, which made me feel vulnerable, and I wanted to reduce that feeling of vulnerability.
23. **Accuse**: My primary partner was very accusatory that I was being unfaithful, which made me feel frustrated.
24. **Prim/Trust**: My partner was very insecure and did not trust me.
25. **Avoid/1st**: I wanted to avoid being hurt in the relationship.
26. **Up/Status**: I wanted to enhance my social status/popularity.
27. **Other/Bet**: Coworkers, friends, family, etc. expressed opinions that I could "do better" than my primary partner.
28. **Self/Bet**: I felt that I had to prove to others that I could "do better" than my current partner.
29. **Prove/Id**: I wanted to prove my sexual identity/orientation to others (e.g., friends) around me.
30. **Stat/Res**: My affair partner was of a higher status and/or had resources that I thought would be beneficial to me.

31. **Job/Benefi:** An opportunity, incentive, or advancement in the workplace was offered to me if I provided something sexual/romantic in exchange.
32. **Boss/“No”:** My affair partner had power/authority over me (e.g., a boss in the workplace) and I feared that saying “no” would jeopardize my position.
33. **Can’t/“No”:** I just could not say no to the affair partner when he/she made a move on me.
34. **Child/Oth:** I wanted to have a child/children with someone other than my primary partner.
35. **Not/Self:** It was during a vacation/unusual time when I had the affair, and I was not my “usual self.”
36. **Drunk:** I was drunk/intoxicated and I was not thinking clearly.
37. **Oppor:** It just happened because I had the opportunity and did not think much about it.
38. **Acceptable:** I witnessed others around me (e.g., friends) having affairs and that seemed to make it more acceptable in my mind.
39. **Person:** I am the kind of person who cheats; it is part of my personality.
40. **Grow/Up:** Growing up, I saw older people (e.g., parents, relatives) having affairs and that seemed to make it more acceptable in my mind.
41. **People/Pl:** I am a “people pleaser” and found myself smooth-talked into the affair.
42. **Parent/Chi:** One of my parents (e.g., mom or dad) had another child/children outside of our own family, and that seemed to make it more acceptable in my mind.
43. **Not/Comm:** I was not very committed to my primary partner to begin with.
44. **End/Primar:** I wanted to end my relationship with my primary partner.*
45. **No/Discuss:** My primary partner and I almost never really talked about being “exclusive” or putting a “label” on our relationship.
46. **Technical:** Even though we were seeing each other, we were not technically “in a relationship” publicly (my close friends/family did not know we were dating).
47. **Stressors:** I was overwhelmed at the time due to external stressors (e.g., school, work, family issues) and was not thinking clearly.
48. **Trouble:** I thought my relationship with my primary partner was in trouble.*
49. **No/End:** I was confident that if my primary partner found out about my affair, he/she would not end the relationship (it would not cause a breakup).
50. **No/Find:** I was confident that my primary partner would not find out about my affair.
51. **Long/Dist:** My primary partner is too far away geographically (e.g., long-distance relationship) to fulfill my needs.
52. **Spark:** I wanted to have an affair to reignite the spark with my primary partner.
53. **Dull/Stag:** My primary relationship fell dull and stagnant, and I wanted to make it more exciting.
54. **Enough/Tim:** My primary partner was not spending enough time with me.*
55. **Bored:** I was bored with my primary partner.
56. **Neglect:** I felt neglected by my primary partner.*
57. **Fight/Bef:** Before my affair, my primary partner and I got into an argument, which led me to seek revenge.
58. **Date/Anymo:** We had a big conflict and I was not sure if we were dating anymore.
59. **Bad/Note:** We left things on a bad note after an argument or heated conversation and that led to my affair.
60. **Build/Up:** I was upset about my partner’s behavior for a long time, which built up to the point of my affair.
61. **Stability:** My primary partner and I were having frequent conflicts and I was questioning the stability of our relationship.
62. **Sex/Confl:** My primary partner and I were having conflicts about sex.
63. **Doubt/Love:** I was not sure how much my primary partner loved me.
64. **Test/Love:** I wanted to “test” the level of attachment I felt for my primary partner.
65. **Right/Pers:** I was not sure if my primary partner was the right person for me.*
66. **Love/Prim:** I was not sure if I really loved my primary partner.
67. **End/Love:** I had “fallen out of love with” my primary partner.*
68. **Pre-Marry:** I knew there would come a time when I would be married and I wanted to take advantage of all opportunities while I was still “single.”
69. **Doubt/Prim:** I was not confident in my primary partner’s sexual identity/orientation and wanted to have a sexual experience with another partner.
70. **Attract/Re:** I was not confident in my primary partner’s attraction to me and wanted to reaffirm it.
71. **Justify:** My primary partner was in a relationship with someone else when we started having our own affair and that served as a justification for my current affair.
72. **Emot/Dist:** My primary partner was emotionally distant.*
73. **Get/Back:** I wanted to “get back at” my primary partner for something he or she did.*
74. **Imagine/Pr:** I found myself imagining my partner cheating and that made me want to have an affair.
75. **Even/Score:** My primary partner had been unfaithful to me and I wanted to even the score.*
76. **Prove/Attr:** I wanted to prove to my primary partner that other people found me physically attractive.*
77. **Experience:** My primary partner had been unfaithful to me and I wanted to understand what that experience was like.

Note. Items denoted with an asterisk (*) were taken from Barta and Kiene (2005).