

Perceptions of Infidelity in the Context of Online Dating

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A thesis submitted to the Psychology Program in partial fulfillment of the requirements of
Bachelor of Arts (Honours), Division of Social Science

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April 2020

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“Perceptions of Infidelity in the Context of Online Dating”

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts (Honours)

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April 2020

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I want to thank my parents for encouraging me to pursue the road less travelled – without them, I would never have realized the potential I had and the drive to overcome the obstacles that I may encounter in life. They put my stress and overthinking at ease with their words of encouragement, love and support. I want to thank my siblings for continuing to provide the sibling love and support equivalent that we may never openly admit. Thank you to all my friends that I have met here for supporting and making Grenfell such a wonderful university experience. I want to thank Dr. Peter Stewart for all that he has done for me throughout my years at Grenfell – some of the most amazing things I've gotten to experience would not have been possible if it wasn't for this man. Special thanks to Rayna house for help setting up my online survey and for enduring my many many annoying questions about updates of the survey. Thank you, Kelly Brown, for agreeing to be my second reader and for being my favorite statistics lab instructor! Thank you, Dr. Jim Duffy, for being the most influential professor during my years here – I think I am beginning to see what you saw in me. Last but not least, an immense thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Kelly Warren, I know that I may not have been the easiest student to deal with and none of this work could have been accomplished without you. You taught me so much within the span of this year, us working together and I am so glad that I had you to pick me up when I fall, to brainstorm my crazy ideas, straighten my incohesive thoughts and most of all, for pushing me to be better.

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Abstract

Dating apps have become increasingly popular as online dating has become more normalized than when it was first introduced in the early 1990s. More relationships are formed online than ever before. However, not everyone uses dating apps for the purpose of dating, and some may even use them to commit infidelity. It is important then to understand perceptions of infidelity in an online context and of how they vary according to gender, culture, peer pressure, and the reasons people use dating apps. A sample of 290 participants (200 women and 83 men) recruited from both Belize and Canada completed an online survey that assessed perceptions of sexual and emotional infidelity across four reasons for using dating apps. Results showed that participants believed it was more unacceptable for a person who was using the dating app to find a relationship or to find an attractive person to show off to engage in sexual and emotional infidelity than a person who was using the dating app for entertainment or sexual purposes. Participants believed it was more unacceptable for men to commit emotional infidelity than women, and Belizean women were more likely to find sexual behaviours as indicative of infidelity than Belizean men. Culture and peer pressure had no apparent effects on perceptions. Findings suggest clear communication as to why a person is using a dating app is important in order to ensure fair perceptions of infidelity versus normal dating app behaviour.

Perceptions of Infidelity in the Context of Online Dating

Infidelity is the main reason for relationship dissolution (Moller & Vossler, 2015; Negash et al., 2013; Scott et al., 2013) and remains a common phenomenon within marriages and dating relationships in Western society. Its prevalence is linked to the increasing use of technology, social media, and online dating sites (Henline et al., 2007; Hertlein & Piercy, 2008; Vossler, 2016). The behaviours that constitute infidelity vary from couple to couple, as well as across gender and culture, as some individuals may permit certain behaviours or see them as non-issues, while others perceive the opposite (Fedrick & Fales, 2014; Gayet et al., 2013; Guitar et al., 2016). Differences in perceptions of “unacceptable behaviours” seen across these variables illustrate the difficulty in operationally defining the concept of infidelity (Moller & Vossler, 2015). In an online dating environment, the complexity of this becomes even more ubiquitous as geographical dating apps allow users to match and speak to several potential partners at the same time.

An online dating relationship, at least initially, removes the face-to-face contact of the offline relationship and replaces it with text messages, and shared photos and/or videos. The online interaction makes it easier for people to create entirely new personas different from their true selves, as well as to hide their true intentions in dating someone. While traditional studies have measured differences in perceptions of infidelity across gender, culture, and other variables that may play a role, given the differences in online versus offline interactions, it seems the manner with which infidelity occurs and how it is

perceived could vary. However, to date, little research has examined perceptions of infidelity in relationships that initially developed purely online.

Emotional and Sexual Infidelity

Studies that have examined offline infidelity indicate that it can be either sexual, emotional, or both in nature (Roscoe et al., 1988). As the names suggest, sexual infidelity refers to sexual activities (e.g., kissing or having sex with someone), while emotional infidelity refers to the development of a romantic emotional bond (e.g., sharing intimate secrets or keeping the relationship a secret from one's partner) (Ellis & Kleinplatz, 2018). Since the behaviours that constitute sexual infidelity and emotional infidelity may differ from person to person, Luo et al. (2010) proposed a comprehensive list of what behaviours fall under each type of infidelity. They compiled a list of 80 behaviours linked to infidelity from many studies conducted at that time, removed redundant behaviours, and retained those with the clearest descriptions. Sexual activities included any physical behaviours or the expression of explicit or implicit thoughts that could lead to sex. Emotional behaviours included physical and affective behaviours that were more intimate in nature and that increased the possibility of becoming more than friends while keeping these behaviours a secret from one's partner. For instance, sharing details or complaints that one would only share with one's partner or spending more time with the person than with one's actual partner could constitute emotional infidelity. While research has not indicated which of the two occurs more, studies have suggested that men may use emotional tactics (e.g., getting to know the person more and eliciting feelings of connection with the person) to commit sexual infidelity (Luo et al., 2010; Martins et al.,

2015). Women on the other hand, may be more likely to engage in emotional infidelity and sometimes this leads to sexual infidelity (Luo et al., 2010; Martins et al., 2015).

Research assessing gender differences in perceptions of infidelity illustrates that men and women vary in what they consider acceptable/unacceptable behaviours according to whether sexual versus emotional infidelity is being discussed. However, past research findings have been mixed. Some studies suggest that heterosexual men are generally more likely to be upset by sexual infidelity than by emotional infidelity while the opposite is true for heterosexual women (Ellis & Kleinplatz, 2018; Frederick & Fales, 2016; Krueger et al., 2015; Martins et al., 2015; Walsh et al., 2019). Other studies, however, suggest that while heterosexual women have stronger reactions to emotional infidelity than heterosexual men, both men and women are more distressed with sexual infidelity than with emotional infidelity (Carpenter, 2012; Leeker & Carlozzi, 2012).

Similar to gender, research has shown that cross-cultural differences also exist in perceptions of infidelity. Zandbergen and Brown (2015) assessed culture and gender differences in jealousy towards sexual and emotional infidelity using a mixed methods survey. Participants were asked to describe a jealousy-evoking event and to answer questions from a modified version of the Horizontal and Vertical Individualism and Collectivism Scale, Self-Report Jealousy Scale, and a modified Emotional and Sexual Jealousy Scale. The authors defined collectivism as how the individuals viewed themselves within society as a part of a community while they defined individualism as how individuals viewed themselves within society as separate and unique from society. Zandbergen and Brown (2015) found that ratings of jealousy were accounted for most by gender when emotional infidelity was described while ratings of jealousy were accounted

for most by measures of collectivism and individualism (indicators of culture) when sexual infidelity was described. Unfortunately, the authors did not elaborate on their explanation of culture, other than saying that cultural values may have a substantial effect on jealousy in relationships.

William and Hickle (2011) compared Caucasian American and Mexican American adolescents and found that Mexican American adolescents felt worse about cheating than their white counterparts, which likely influenced the views they held towards infidelity in general. The researchers held focus groups and allowed the adolescents to control the direction of the conversation. All participants cited infidelity as a main problem in relationships. The authors suggested that Mexican American adolescent females viewed commitment in a relationship as more important than white girls and reasoned this was because their culture holds family in higher regard. Mexican American girls described cheating in more detail than their gender and cultural counterparts and were more emotional when talking about it. Unfortunately, the study did not distinguish between sexual and emotional infidelity, but instead looked at infidelity in general.

Online Dating

Online dating has become increasingly popular and is more socially acceptable in contemporary societies, especially with the invention and widespread usage of mobile dating apps such as Tinder, Bumble, and Grindr and online dating sites such as Eharmony and Match.com (Anzani et al., 2018; Couch & Liamputtong, 2008; Smith & Duggan, 2013). Younger adults (25–34 years of age) are more likely to use apps for online dating than older adults (Sumter et al., 2017). Tinder, for example, has been estimated to have

approximately 50 million active users worldwide (Bilton, 2014). Users create digital profiles of themselves comprised of a short biography and pictures that present them in the best light. They are then presented with a number of possible matches (i.e., others who have signed up for the same dating site or app) one at a time. Users who mutually like each other are then allowed to message each other and can arrange for offline meetings that will allow them to establish a relationship. This perceived likeability is based solely on how people present themselves in a few short sentences and pictures.

Finkel et al. (2012) describe what they call an “assessment mindset” whereby users evaluate the information in a profile, decide whether they like a person or not, and then move on, in a matter of minutes. This interaction is limited to how users want to present themselves online through their profiles and thus, differences (e.g., facial expression) that can only be seen in face-to-face interactions are negated. Even after users match, tone and pitch, which are relied upon to convey the real meaning behind the words a person says, are replaced with text-based communication. Perhaps as a consequence when dating online, users are more likely to develop idealized impressions of the person that they are texting or chatting with (Antheunis et al., 2019). This results in users being able to selectively reveal information about themselves that might have been perceived negatively if it had been revealed holistically. Those who receive the limited information are then left to fill in the gaps about the person to whom they are speaking (Finkel et al., 2012). Given the limited information people choose to present, those receiving it would be more likely to form positive impressions of the sender than they would in an offline interaction. Consider someone who sends an ambiguous message such as “I enjoy watching movies”. The receiver, who also enjoys watching movies, would just focus on

the fact that this person enjoys cinema as an art or that this person must be a movie aficionado which would then strengthen the perceived likability of the sender. The social cues that are absent from texting can lead to a reality check with face-to-face meetings forcing people to realize their incompatibility. These differences illustrate why it is important to look at online dating separate from offline dating.

The phrase “online dating” implies that people are signing up on dating apps for the sole purpose of entering a relationship. However, according to Carpenter and McEwan (2016), Sumter and Vandenbosch, (2018) and Timmermans and De Caluwé (2017), there are different reasons for using dating apps. These include relationship (looking for a partner), sexual (looking for someone to have sex with), entertainment, (dating for recreation purposes), and status reasons (dating to impress others with an attractive partner) (Carpenter & McEwan, 2016; Sumter & Vandenbosch, 2018).

Ranzini and Lutz (2016) suggest that men are more likely to use these apps for hooking up/sex, traveling, and relationships whereas women are more likely to use them for friendship and self-validation. Similarly, Sumter et al. (2017) suggest that men are more likely than women to have a higher casual sex motivation (sexual goals) and a propensity for the thrill or excitement (entertainment goals). In addition to gender differences, there may be culture differences, but this has not yet been assessed. Neither gender nor cultural differences in perceptions of what constitutes infidelity in online dating have been examined. In the offline environment, people often see it as more acceptable (and expected) for men to engage in the hook-up culture and to be more promiscuous than women (Epstein et al., 2009; Snapp et al., 2014). It is unclear whether people conversing with others on online dating sites recognize the behaviours that would

be evident amongst those using the sites for different reasons (e.g., sexual versus romantic). Behaviours that constitute infidelity to one person (e.g., talking to one another) may not be considered infidelity to another person since they are not happening offline (Moreno & Kahumoku-Fessler, 2018; Wilson et al., 2011). Furthermore, if people are not using the sites for the same reason, behaviours that are being perceived as infidelity may simply be a case of miscommunication (e.g., one person just wants to go on a hike in an unfamiliar location and the other wants a relationship). The present study examined these possibilities.

Online Infidelity

Technology can be used as a tool to assist in infidelity and with the extensive geographical reach of the internet, it is possible to engage in online infidelity using just a phone. To date, there is still no data that details the frequency of online infidelity, but couples' therapists have recognized the prevalence of using the internet to engage in infidelity and the negative effects this has on relationships (Henline et al., 2007; Hertlein & Piercy, 2008; Vossler, 2016). As with offline infidelity, according to Henline et al. (2007), online infidelity is found to have both an emotional component and a sexual component. Perceptions of emotional online infidelity have been found to be more distressing than perceptions of sexual online infidelity because emotional online infidelity requires persistent and increasing attachment to a specific person.

As with offline infidelity, studies have suggested that gender differences exist within online infidelity. Henline et al. (2007) assessed gender differences by surveying undergraduate students; some of whom were in committed relationships, some of whom

were single, and some of whom were in casual relationships. Participants were asked about the nature of online infidelity, relative distress in response to sexual and emotional online infidelity, connections between online sexual involvement and online emotional involvement, and beliefs about the potential links between online infidelity and traditional infidelity. The participants were asked to respond with as much detail as possible and to provide any examples they wanted to share. The results indicated that men found online emotional infidelity to be more upsetting than online sexual infidelity, but more men than women still chose offline sexual infidelity as more upsetting than offline emotional infidelity. The study also indicated that both men and women believe that when one of these types of infidelity occurs, there is a greater likelihood that the other type of infidelity will co-occur. There is also a perception that online infidelity leads to offline infidelity, especially among men, either as an extension of online infidelity or in reaction to a partner's online infidelity (Henline et al., 2007).

Muscanell et al. (2013) found that women were more likely to develop negative emotions surrounding ambiguous information on social media (e.g., viewing their partner with someone else despite given no instruction on imagining a specific scenario), often showing intense feelings of jealousy. This may explain why women were more likely than men to characterize certain online behaviours as indicative of infidelity. Martins et al. (2015) found that despite men being more likely to say they engaged in both sexual online and offline infidelity than women and women reporting online and offline emotional infidelity in response to a partner's infidelity, there were no significant gender differences in overall ratings of infidelity. There was also no gender difference in how often men versus women reported engaging in emotional infidelity. The literature

explains that this may signal a direction towards a more liberal attitude regarding sexuality (Brand et al., 2007; Havlicek et al., 2011). Martins et al. (2015) suggest that because of this social change, developing an emotional connection before sexual interaction may be becoming more important for men. In all of these studies, scenarios were created where the participants were asked to imagine a person who was already in a relationship or their own partner, engaging in infidelity. No known research to date has focused on people who just began using an online dating site and perceptions of whether their behaviours are thought to constitute infidelity.

Could peer influence foster encouragement for online infidelity? Bleakley et al. (2011) and Maticka-Tyndale et al. (1998) suggest that strong peer influence predicts engagement in sexual intercourse among adolescent and young adult women. Chan (2017) proposes that these results manifest themselves in dating apps, particularly as it pertains to the use of dating apps for sexual goals. However, to date, no known study has measured the role that peer pressure may have on the use of dating apps for other reasons or on perceptions of infidelity.

Culture

Different cultures instill different values among members, and as a result, different perceptions can arise regarding the same event or behaviour. The majority of studies that have assessed infidelity included samples that were predominantly white and the majority of studies were conducted in the US (e.g., Bingham & Piotrowski, 1996; Guitar et al., 2016; Hertlein & Piercy, 2006). A survey inquiring about moral acceptability conducted in 40 countries by the Pew Research Center found that while 78%

of participants indicated that extra-marital affairs (infidelity) are morally unacceptable, there were differences in responses given according to the participants' country of origin (Poushter, 2014). Participants from France, for example, were only 47% likely to rate infidelity as being morally unacceptable while participants in the US were 84% likely to rate it as morally unacceptable (Poushter, 2014; Wike, 2014). In a recent documentary series entitled "Sex and Love Around the World" (2018), journalist Christiane Amanpour travelled to different countries and showcased how cultures interpret sex differently, further demonstrating the notion of culture possibly leading to different perceptions of infidelity. For example, Japan was shown to be conservative about their level of openness regarding sexuality, and as a result, sexual activity and physical touch, even amongst couples, was not as salient as was seen in other countries. A married woman interviewed as part of the series described her marriage as sexless and although she had not told her husband, she discussed how, in order to fulfill her sexual needs, she had gotten a "boyfriend" to have sex with. The perception of infidelity within this context is still frowned upon, as shown by her reluctance to tell her husband, but this perception was very different than that seen in another country such as Accra. A Ghanaian woman who was interviewed, knew that the man she was currently seeing had a wife and proclaimed that it was seen as normal for men to have a wife, a mistress, and a girlfriend. A Ghanaian man was interviewed and offered a similar perspective towards relationships in this culture. It was revealed that if a man was rich enough, he could have a mistress in addition to his wife. In this scenario, both the man and woman admitted that it was cheating, but it was viewed as the norm in this society. Studies indicate that people of different ethnicities have different perceptions of infidelity and of its moral acceptability

that may affect the perceived prevalence of infidelity within a specific country/group (Gayet, et al., 2013; Maticka-Tyndale et al., 2016; Zanderbergen & Brown, 2015). Past research has indicated that sociosexual orientation (perceptions towards the acceptability of sexual behaviour without love and/or commitment) may affect both reactions toward infidelity as well as a willingness to commit infidelity (Mattingly et al, 2011; Rodrigues et al., 2017; Treger & Sprecher, 2011; Weiser et al., 2018; Weiser & Weigel, 2015) which could potentially explain cultural differences. Understanding cross cultural differences could have therapeutic and other implications; for example, impacting best practices of therapists/counsellors who work with people of a different cultural/ethnic background than their own and with interracial couples.

Present Study

One group in particular among whom little is known about perceptions of infidelity is people from the Caribbean and Central America. Although most Central American countries are considered to be Latin American countries, Belize is a country that is not only a part of the Caribbean commonwealth but is also considered to be a Caribbean nation. While Belize does share the experience of Spaniard colonization, it was for a limited time as the British colonized Belize shortly after and this is the main reason why Belizeans speak English as their primary language (Alford et al., 2020). Latin America is a country that shares experiences of Spaniard and Portuguese colonization and whose residents speak Spanish as their primary language (Kittleson et al., 2019). Most data regarding infidelity or sexual behaviour is fairly limited; not only due to the difference in statistical measures within different countries, but also because of the

propensity for Caribbean countries to be associated with Latin America. In Gayet et al.'s work (2013), even though the data collected was supposed to be representative of Latin America and of the Caribbean, it was instead just an overview of the general trends of the Latin American countries and there was little mention of the Caribbean (much less the non-Latin American country – Belize). Belize is an outlier in the sense that Belizeans speak English, not Spanish, as their first language and it is considered “a melting pot” because there are more people from other cultures than is seen in Belize's Central American counterparts (Travelbelize.org, 2019). Thus, comparing Belize to another multiethnic country such as Canada would not only be beneficial to understanding infidelity in a broader sense in relation to different cultural contexts within the same country, but also to expand the existing literature regarding perceptions in different geographic locations.

The present study was designed to assess cultural and gender differences in online infidelity and whether these perceptions vary according to the reason for which a person is using an online dating site. In order to do this, participants were asked to rate the acceptability of a series of behaviours previously associated with sexual and emotional infidelity. Based on the research presented, the following hypotheses were made:

1. Men and women would perceive the behaviours as less acceptable if a person was using the dating site to find a relationship than if the person was using the site for another reason. Consistent with Negash et al.'s findings (2013), infidelity is a main reason for relationship dissolution and thus is considered unacceptable in the context of a relationship, regardless of gender.

2. Consistent with Guitar et al.'s (2016) research, female participants reading scenarios about a man would judge the man most harshly when he committed what was perceived as emotional infidelity while male participants reading scenarios about a woman would judge the woman most harshly when she committed what was perceived as sexual infidelity.
3. Women would perceive more behaviours as constituting infidelity than men (as has been seen in past research) (Wilson et al., 2011).

Due to the paucity of research investigating differences in perceptions of online infidelity as a function of peer pressure, culture, or sociosexual orientation, analyses assessing these variables were exploratory in nature and no hypotheses were made.

Method

Participants

A convenience sample of 290 participants from Belize and Canada completed an online survey. There were 200 women ranging in age from 18-54 years ($M = 21.62$, $SD = 5.39$) and 83 men ranging in age from 18-32 years ($M = 21.60$, $SD = 2.88$). The remainder of the participants either omitted this question or identified as a gender other than male or female. Participants were recruited through a message shared on multiple Facebook pages and through the first-year psychology participant pool at Grenfell Campus, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Participants were asked to read an informed consent page before beginning the survey. All participants had to agree that they were at least 19 years old, unless they were a college or university student, in which case they were considered to be mature minors.

Materials

Scenarios: Eight fictitious scenarios were created for the purposes of the study. All eight scenarios described a young man/woman (four scenarios had a woman and four had a man) joining a dating app for either entertainment, sexual, relationship or status purposes. The individual was described as either deciding on his/her own to join the dating app or as being pressured by friends to join the dating app. In each scenario, the individual was said to have matched with someone, exchanged multiple messages with that person, and to have met up with the person on multiple occasions. In all cases, the matched couple had never discussed any commitment to one another, and the person

being described continued to talk to other people on the dating app. Appendix A shows the 16 possible scenarios.

Questionnaire: A questionnaire was designed based on the scenarios described above. The first 16 questions specifically assessed the perceived acceptability of behaviours previously associated with infidelity. Half of the questions described behaviours that are associated with emotional infidelity (e.g., time spent talking to someone or developing a deep emotional connection with someone other than the person the individual initially matched with) and half of the questions assessed behaviours associated with sexual infidelity (e.g., sharing a nude image of themselves or having intercourse with someone other than the person the individual initially matched with). The perceived acceptability of the behaviour questions were rated using a Likert scale (1 = *completely acceptable* to 7 = *completely unacceptable*).

The questionnaire then included seven demographic questions: participants' country of origin, the country they grew up in, age, level of education, preferred gender, ethnicity, and sociosexual orientation. Finally, a manipulation check question was included to see whether the respondents read the scenario and understood the reason the person in the scenario was using the dating site. Participants who received the scenarios with peer pressure were also asked to indicate their perception of the level of peer pressure experienced by the person in the scenario (see Appendix B).

Procedure

A survey regarding perceptions of infidelity in online dating was posted online. Participants were told they were answering questions about their perceptions of how the person they were reading about interacted with others on an online dating site. Those interested in participating were given a link to the online survey, at which point they saw the informed consent screen. By clicking next on the screen, consent was assumed, and participants were presented with the survey. Participants were told to read the scenario presented and to answer the questions that followed based on the scenarios. Figure 1 shows how the scenarios were set up.

Participants were assigned to two of the possible 16 scenarios, and they read and answered questions about the first scenario before they were presented with the second scenario. Participants saw either two men who were seeking women after deciding to join an online dating site, two men who were seeking women after being pressured by friends to join a dating site, two women who were seeking men after deciding to join an online dating site, or two women who were seeking men after being pressured by friends to join a dating site. The two scenarios presented to each participant were randomly assigned so that participants saw two of the four reasons participants might engage in online dating (i.e., entertainment, sexual, relationship, and status).

After reading each scenario, participants completed the questionnaire. The order in which questions were presented was randomized. Participants were then asked to answer the demographic questions, including the manipulation check(s). Finally, participants were thanked for their participation and led to a debriefing page that contained information about the study and contact information for the researchers

involved. Only the participants' responses to questions regarding the first scenario they saw were analyzed for the purposes of this thesis.

Results

Results are organized to first address which online infidelity behaviours were perceived as less acceptable and to show whether those behaviours were rated differently as a function of the gender of the perpetrator and the reason for using dating sites. The questions that assessed online infidelity were divided into two categories: those that assessed emotional and those that assessed sexual infidelity, and these were assessed separately using MANOVAs. Next, exploratory analyses assessing the possible effect of culture, peer pressure, and sociosexual orientation are presented. Analyses assessing the possible effects of participant gender are then given, including just Belizeans, as this was the only group to have a relatively balanced gender breakdown. Finally, direct comparisons between participants' perceptions of emotional versus sexual infidelity are presented, including an exploratory analysis looking at the possible role of the accuracy in perceiving why a person is using a dating site.

Perceptions of Infidelity as a Function of Gender and Reason for Using Dating Sites

Emotional Infidelity

A MANOVA was conducted using responses to the questions assessing emotional infidelity as the dependent variables and gender of the person in the scenario and reasons for using a dating site as between subjects factors. The MANOVA revealed significant main effects of both gender, Wilks' $\Lambda = .88$, $F(1, 274) = 4.42$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$ and reasons for using a dating site, Wilks' $\Lambda = .82$, $F(3, 274) = 2.22$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. Follow up ANOVAs with responses to the questions assessing emotional infidelity as the

dependent variables were then completed to assess where differences in perceptions existed.

There were significant effects of gender for the questions asking about spending time talking to another person, $F(1, 274) = 10.87, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .04$; complaining about work, $F(1, 274) = 5.69, p = .018, \eta_p^2 = .02$; complaining about the person first matched with, $F(1, 274) = 9.68, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .03$; and keeping the fact that that they are talking to another person a secret, $F(1, 274) = 4.15, p = .043, \eta_p^2 = .015$. Participants believed it was more unacceptable for men than for women to spend time talking to another person ($M = 2.58, SD = 1.75$ vs. $M = 1.95, SD = 1.55$, mean difference = 0.63, $p = .001$, 95% CI [0.25, 1.00]); complaining about work ($M = 2.96, SD = 1.74$ vs. $M = 2.47, SD = 1.65$, mean difference = 0.49, $p = .018$, 95% CI [0.09, 0.90]); complaining about the person they first matched with ($M = 5.57, SD = 1.63$ vs. $M = 4.90, SD = 1.93$, mean difference = 0.67, $p = .002$, 95% CI [0.25, 1.09]); and keeping the fact that they are taking to other people a secret ($M = 5.48, SD = 1.71$ vs. $M = 5.04, SD = 1.96$, mean difference = 0.44, $p = .043$, 95% CI [0.15, 0.87]).

Significant differences according to the reasons people were using dating sites were seen for the questions asking about spending time talking to others, $F(3, 274) = 8.89, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .09$; developing a deep emotional connection, $F(3, 274) = 3.99, p = .008, \eta_p^2 = .04$; and keeping it a secret that they are talking to another person, $F(3, 274) = 3.46, p = .017, \eta_p^2 = .04$. As seen in Table 1, participants believed it was more unacceptable for a person who was using the site to be in a relationship or for status to spend time talking and to develop a deep emotional connection with others than for someone who was using the site for entertainment or for sexual purposes. Participants

also believed it was more unacceptable for people who were using the site to be in a relationship to keep the fact that they are talking to other people a secret than for someone who was using the site for entertainment or for sexual purposes.

Sexual Infidelity

A MANOVA was conducted using responses to the questions assessing sexual infidelity as the dependent variables and gender of the person in the scenario and reasons for using a dating site as between subjects factors. The MANOVA revealed a significant main effect of reasons for using a dating site, Wilks' $\Lambda = .79$, $F(3, 280) = 2.88$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. Follow up ANOVAs with responses to the questions assessing sexual infidelity as the dependent variables were then completed to assess where differences in perceptions existed.

There were significant differences in perceptions according to the reasons for using different sites for the questions asking about sharing a nude picture, $F(3, 280) = 8.16$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$; flirtatious teasing, $F(3, 280) = 7.78$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$; masturbating over video chat, $F(3, 280) = 4.76$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$; masturbating over a phone call, $F(3, 280) = 6.37$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$; kissing, $F(3, 280) = 7.85$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$; having intercourse, $F(3, 280) = 6.49$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$; sending sexually explicit texts, $F(3, 280) = 5.94$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$; and having oral sex, $F(3, 280) = 6.46$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$ with another person. As seen in Table 2, participants believed it was more unacceptable for a person who was using the site to find a relationship or for status purposes to share a nude picture, to tease another person flirtatiously, or to kiss another person than for someone who was using the site for entertainment or for sexual purposes.

Similarly, it was seen as more unacceptable for a person who was using the site for entertainment purposes, to be in a relationship or for status purposes to masturbate with another person over video chat than for someone who was using the site for sexual purposes. Participants also felt it was more unacceptable for those using the site to find a relationship to masturbate over a phone call or to have intercourse with another person than for those using the sites for entertainment or for sexual purposes. Participants thought it was more unacceptable for those using the site for status purposes to masturbate over a phone call, to have intercourse, or to have oral sex with another person than for those using the sites for sexual purposes. Finally, participants believed it was more unacceptable for those using the site to be in a relationship to send sexually explicit texts or to have oral sex with another person than for those using the site for entertainment, sexual or status purposes.

Exploratory Analyses Regarding Perceptions of Infidelity

Culture and Peer Pressure

In order to assess the exploratory influences of culture and peer pressure, additional MANOVAs were completed with these variables added. These analyses were different from the original analyses in that they only included participants who identified themselves as either Belizean or Canadian (i.e., the cultures of interest). There were 110 Belizeans (42 men and 68 women) and 130 Canadians (28 men and 100 women) who completed the study. The analyses assessing emotional infidelity revealed that the main effects of gender and reasons stayed and there were no additional main effects or

interactions. The analyses assessing sexual infidelity revealed just the main effect of reasons and there were no additional main effects or interactions.

Sociosexual Orientation

In order to assess the possible role of sociosexual orientation, participants were labeled as having either a restricted or unrestricted sociosexual orientation based on their answer to the question: How acceptable do you think it is for a person to have sex with someone without having an emotional attachment?, on a scale from 1 (*very acceptable*) to 7 (*very unacceptable*). Those who selected 1, 2 or 3 were labelled as having an unrestricted orientation while those who selected 5, 6 or 7 were labelled as having a restricted orientation. There were 200 participants (58 men and 139 women) who were labelled as having an unrestricted orientation and 52 participants (13 men and 39 women) who were labelled as having a restricted orientation.

First, a MANOVA was conducted with the questions assessing emotional infidelity as the dependent variables and sociosexual orientation as a between subjects factor. The MANOVA revealed a significant main effect of sociosexual orientation, Wilks' $\Lambda = .87$, $F(1, 244) = 4.43$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$. Follow up ANOVAs with responses to the questions assessing emotional infidelity as the dependent variables were then completed to assess where differences in perceptions existed.

Differences according to sociosexual orientation were found for the questions asking about spending time talking to another person, $F(1, 244) = 19.74$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$; sharing details about the past, $F(1, 244) = 15.48$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$; sharing fears that would not be shared with anyone else, $F(1, 244) = 15.27$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$; complaining

about work, $F(1, 244) = 10.52, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .04$; and sharing a picture of an infant nephew, $F(1, 244) = 10.65, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .04$. Participants with a restricted orientation, compared to an unrestricted orientation, believed it was more unacceptable for the person described in the scenario to spend time talking ($M = 2.98, SD = 1.97$ vs. $M = 1.93, SD = 1.40$, mean difference = 1.05, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.57, 1.52]); share details about the past ($M = 4.23, SD = 1.83$ vs. $M = 3.14, SD = 1.75$, mean difference = 1.09, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.55, 1.64]); share fears they would never share ($M = 4.83, SD = 1.89$ vs. $M = 3.64, SD = 1.95$, mean difference = 1.19, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.59, 1.79]); complain about work ($M = 3.35, SD = 2.03$ vs. $M = 2.49, SD = 1.59$, mean difference = 0.86, $p = .001$, 95% CI [0.34, 1.39]); and share a picture of their infant nephew ($M = 4.37, SD = 1.98$ vs. $M = 3.34, SD = 2.03$, mean difference = 1.03, $p = .001$, 95% CI [0.41, 1.64]) with another person.

Next, a MANOVA was conducted with the questions assessing sexual infidelity as the dependent variables and sociosexual orientation as a between subjects factor. The MANOVA revealed a significant main effect of sociosexual orientation, Wilks' $\Lambda = .85$, $F(1, 250) = 5.33, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .15$. Follow up ANOVAs with responses to the questions assessing sexual infidelity as the dependent variables were then completed to assess where differences in perceptions existed.

Significant differences in perceptions according to sociosexual orientation were found for the questions asking about sharing a nude picture, $F(1, 250) = 19.28, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$; flirtatious teasing, $F(1, 250) = 9.69, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .04$; masturbating over video chat, $F(1, 250) = 21.14, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .08$; masturbating over a phone call, $F(1, 250) = 17.93, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$; kissing, $F(1, 250) = 19.78, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$; having intercourse, $F(1, 250) = 22.34, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .08$; sending sexually explicit texts, $F(1,$

250) = 34.50, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$; and having oral sex, $F(1, 250) = 27.33$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, with another person. As seen in Table 3, participants with a restricted orientation, compared to an unrestricted orientation, thought it was more unacceptable for the person in the scenario to share a nude picture, flirt, masturbate over video chat, masturbate over a phone call, kiss, have intercourse, send sexually explicit texts, and have oral sex with another person.

Differences in Perceptions According to Participant Gender

It was originally hypothesized that there would be a gender difference in perceptions of infidelity. However, there were too few men in the Canadian sample or in the data set overall to analyze gender differences. Given the data collected from Belizeans had a more evenly distributed gender split, analyses were repeated to include gender as a variable with just that group of participants. First, a MANOVA was conducted with the questions assessing emotional infidelity as the dependent variables and the gender of the participants as the between subjects factor. No significant effect of gender was found, Wilks' $\Lambda = .86$, $F(1, 105) = 1.93$, $p = .064$, $\eta_p^2 = .14$.

A MANOVA was then conducted with the questions assessing sexual infidelity as the dependent variables and the gender of the participants as a between subjects factor. Gender had a significant effect on the ratings of sexual infidelity behaviours, Wilks' $\Lambda = .86$, $F(1, 107) = 3.48$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .22$. The follow up ANOVAs used to assess the gender of the participants across the sexual infidelity questions showed a significant gender difference for the questions about sharing a nude picture, $F(1, 107) = 5.45$, $p = .021$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$; masturbating over video chat, $F(1, 107) = 6.15$, $p = .015$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$; kissing,

$F(1, 107) = 9.75, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .08$; having intercourse, $F(1, 107) = 13.26, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .11$; sending sexually explicit texts, $F(1, 107) = 16.06, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .13$; and having oral sex, $F(1,107) = 16.48, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .13$, with another person. Women compared to men found it more unacceptable for a person to share a nude picture of himself/herself ($M = 5.62, SD = 1.89$ vs. $M = 4.73, SD = 1.98$, mean difference = 0.89, $p = .021$, 95% CI [0.13, 1.64]); to masturbate over video chat ($M = 5.32, SD = 1.90$ vs. $M = 4.37, SD = 2.09$, mean difference = 0.96, $p = .015$, 95% CI [0.19, 1.72]); kiss ($M = 4.13, SD = 2.20$ vs. $M = 2.85, SD = 1.84$, mean difference = 1.28, $p = .002$, 95% CI [0.47, 2.09]); have intercourse ($M = 4.84, SD = 2.07$ vs. $M = 3.34, SD = 2.10$, mean difference = 1.50, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.68, 2.31]); send sexually explicit texts ($M = 4.65, SD = 2.04$ vs. $M = 3.05, SD = 1.99$, mean difference = 1.60, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.81, 2.39]); and have oral sex ($M = 5.15, SD = 1.96$ vs. $M = 3.54, SD = 2.09$, mean difference = 1.61, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.82, 2.40]) with another person.

Comparing Perceptions for Emotional versus Sexual Infidelity

In order to determine whether there were differences in perceptions as a function of whether emotional or sexual infidelity was being described, responses to questions assessing each type of infidelity were averaged to compute an emotional infidelity and a sexual infidelity score. A 2 (infidelity: emotional vs sexual) x 2 (gender of the person in the scenario: man vs woman) x 4 (reason for using dating sites: entertainment, sexual, relationship, or status) mixed ANOVA was conducted with the type of infidelity as the within subjects variable and gender of the person in the scenario and reason for using dating sites as between subjects variables. Results showed a significant main effect of the

type of infidelity, $F(1, 273) = 30.47, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .10$ and a significant type of infidelity x reason for using a dating site interaction, $F(3, 273) = 6.75, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$. Pairwise comparisons indicated that participants saw sexual infidelity as being more unacceptable ($M = 4.18, SD = 1.87$) than emotional infidelity ($M = 3.71, SD = 1.18$), mean difference = 0.48, $p < .001, 95\% CI [0.31, 0.65]$). However, as seen when analyzing the interaction, this effect did not hold across all reasons for using a dating site.

Regardless of whether sexual or emotional infidelity was considered on its own, participants were less accepting of the behaviours described when the site was being used to find a relationship or for status purposes than they were when the site was being used for entertainment or sexual purposes. However, when paired sample *t*-tests were used to compare perceptions of sexual versus emotional infidelity for each relationship type, sexual infidelity continued to be viewed as more problematic than emotional infidelity when participants read about a person using the site for entertainment purposes ($M = 3.87, SD = 1.74$ vs. $M = 3.42, SD = 1.17, t(60) = 3.00, p = .004, r^2 = .13, 95\% CI [0.15, 0.76]$); to find a relationship ($M = 4.86, SD = 1.89$ vs. $M = 3.84, SD = 1.23, t(69) = 6.62, p < .001, r^2 = .39, 95\% CI [0.71, 1.32]$); or to use the site for status reasons ($M = 4.48, SD = 1.80$ vs. $M = 3.99, SD = 1.22, t(69) = 2.80, p = .007, r^2 = .11, 95\% CI [0.14, 0.84]$). In contrast, when participants read about a person using the site for sex, sexual infidelity ($M = 3.55, SD = 1.81$) and emotional infidelity ($M = 3.59, SD = 1.05$) were viewed similarly, $t(79) = -2.04, p = .839, r^2 = .05, 95\% CI [-0.42, 0.34]$.

Exploratory Analyses Assessing the Accuracy in Describing the Reason for Using a Dating Site

Given the negative perceptions of people using the dating sites for reasons other than to find a relationship, it was thought that one possible reason might be participants' failure to recognize the individuals' reason for using the site. It seemed possible, for example, that those who failed to recognize a person was using the dating site for entertainment purposes did not understand he/she was only interested in the initial person as a friend and might incorrectly judge the person's behaviour. To assess this possibility, participants were asked to indicate which one of the four reasons listed, they believed, was the reason a person was using in the scenario they were given. Table 4 shows the accuracy of participants' responses. A 2 (infidelity: emotional vs. sexual) x 2 (accuracy: right vs. wrong) mixed ANOVA was conducted with type of infidelity as the within subjects variable and accuracy as the between subjects variable. Consistent with previously reported analyses, results showed there was a significant main effect of the type of infidelity, $F(1, 279) = 32.31, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .10$, indicating sexual infidelity was perceived as being more unacceptable ($M = 4.26, SD = 1.87$) than emotional infidelity ($M = 3.74, SD = 1.18$), mean difference = 0.52, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.34, 0.70]. However, there was also a significant interaction between type of infidelity and accuracy, $F(1, 279) = 5.20, p = .023, \eta_p^2 = .02$.

When a follow-up ANOVA using just emotional infidelity was completed, there was no difference in perceptions of emotional infidelity as a function of whether participants correctly labelled the scenario they read. In contrast, when a follow-up ANOVA using just sexual infidelity was completed, there was a difference in perceptions

according to whether participants correctly labelled the scenario they read, $F(1, 286) = 6.98, p = .009, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Pairwise comparisons showed that those who were incorrect rated the sexual infidelity behaviours as being more unacceptable ($M = 4.55, SD = 1.83$) than those who were correct ($M = 3.95, SD = 1.86$), mean difference = 0.60, $p = .009$, 95% CI [0.15, 1.05].

Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to assess possible cultural and gender differences in perceptions of infidelity in an online dating environment. Perceptions were analyzed based on participants' ratings of emotional and sexual infidelity behaviours that were described as being committed by the person in the scenario they read. It is important to note that the majority of studies with which I am comparing my results assessed perceptions of offline infidelity. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, it was seen as less acceptable for those who sought a relationship on a dating site to engage in both emotional and sexual infidelity behaviours than those who were using the dating site for entertainment or sexual purposes. Participants were especially less accepting of those who were using the site for romantic purposes, spending time talking to another person, developing an emotional connection with another person, or keeping the fact that they are talking to other people a secret. They were also less accepting of those using the site for romantic purposes, flirting, sharing a nude picture, kissing, masturbating over video chat, masturbating over a phone call, having intercourse, sending sexually explicit texts or having oral sex with another person. Interestingly, participants were also less accepting of those using dating sites for status purposes engaging in both emotional and sexual infidelity behaviours than those using the site for entertainment or sexual purposes. Participants were less accepting of these individuals spending time talking to or developing an emotional connection with another person and with these individuals engaging in behaviours such as kissing or having intercourse with another person.

The consequences of infidelity include dissatisfaction in a relationship or even relationship dissolution (Moller & Vossler, 2015; Negash et al., 2013). Adults know this

and thus have a negative affinity towards infidelity because of the consequences and widespread disapproval. In the scenario with the person who was using the site to find a relationship, it was made clear that the person was looking for a romantic partner and that while he/she had not decided to be exclusive with the first individual he/she spoke with, they had talked about the possibility of being together in the future, exchanged heartfelt messages, and had been on a number of dates. What likely sets the entertainment and sexual reasons apart from this were that the people in those scenarios were either looking for a platonic companion (entertainment) or a person with whom to have casual sex. The relationship scenario was judged more harshly as it might signal betrayal, disloyalty and the tainting of the participants' ideas of a committed relationship.

This may be an issue of moral judgement in the context of those who are viewed as disloyal and morally impure. Selterman et al. (2018) conducted a study that primarily investigated participants' moral judgment of characters' actions towards their relationship partners and how the participants judged the characters as either being morally ethical or unethical in a relational or sexual context. Judgements passed on the characters were based on how loyal (allegiance to a certain person) and pure (promotion of fidelity and preventing perceived depravity) the person being judged acted or seemed to be acting in the situation. People who were using the site for relationship purposes in this study, may have similarly been viewed as disloyal or impure (in the cases of the sexual infidelity behaviours), and were thus judged more harshly than participants using the sites for entertainment or sexual purposes. Those in the entertainment and sexual scenarios may have been perceived as being people who were in no way attached to the person with whom they had first matched. Participants may have been less judgmental of these

individuals engaging in the behaviours described because in their minds, these individuals were free to do what they wanted since they were not looking for a relationship.

Status, in the context of the present study, referred to the use of an attractive partner to boost one's own social standing in his/her peer group. Participants may believe that in looking for more attractive alternatives, those using the site for status purposes are being dishonest about their reason for using the site, not telling people they are meeting on these sites that they are open to replacing them with a more attractive alternative. Not only does this signal disloyalty towards the person, as the current partner may be dropped for a more attractive alternative, but it could also signal disgust towards the person engaging in these actions. Even the motivation may seem impure given that the people in these scenarios were not looking to enhance their love lives (as those in the relationships were), but instead to enhance their perceived status in society. In the status scenario, the person was jealous of his/her co-worker having an attractive partner and wanted to prove that he/she too could get an attractive partner. Once finding that attractive partner, the individual described only met him/her in public, attending work functions (which may be seen as seemingly trying to beat their co-worker), and there were never any situations where the two individuals met alone. Participants may have saw the person in the scenario as shallow, petty, envious, and manipulative which made that person's motivation for using the dating site impure, and as a result, any actions taken were judged harshly.

There was a difference in participants' perceptions of the scenarios based on the gender of the person they read about. It is important to note that infidelity was seen as unacceptable for people of both genders, but it was seen as more unacceptable for men to

engage in some emotional infidelity behaviours than it was for women. More than two-thirds of the survey participants were women and it is possible that this skewed the results. Given the uneven gender split, it was impossible to assess how men versus women viewed the interactions of those of the opposite sex, using the entire sample (Hypothesis 2). However, when the entire sample was considered, men were judged more harshly than women for spending time talking to another person, complaining about work, complaining about the person they first matched with, and for keeping the fact that they were talking to another person a secret. Luo et al. (2010) and Martins et al. (2015) propose that people sometimes believe that emotional infidelity is a steppingstone to sexual infidelity. This could be a reason why heterosexual men are judged more harshly in this study. Men may believe there is a need to appeal to a woman's emotional side in order to get her to become sexually intimate with them. Both men and women may see the emotional infidelity behaviours as the men's attempt to appeal to these women with the intent of later engaging in a sexual relationship (Luo et al., 2010; Martins et al., 2015).

Both Leeker and Carlozzi (2012) and Chividjian (2016) posit that men are more likely to engage in sexual infidelity in order to ensure that their lineage is secured, and that the success of this is enhanced by multiple sexual partners. These authors reason that women are more upset with emotional infidelity as this signals a withdrawal and loss of resources from men, as they consider moving on to a potential alternative. Emotional infidelity could signal that the men are no longer interested in their partners, hinting at a lack of commitment, which paints men committing infidelity, in an even worse light. This

disloyalty can cause emotional pain, deplete financial resources, and leave women to raise children themselves without the help of their children's fathers.

If these results were explained by the high number of women versus men who completed the study, what could also be occurring is intergroup bias proposed by Hackathorn and Harvey (2010). They examined how men versus women perceived infidelity when the genders were switched. According to their theory, people of one gender may judge those of the opposite gender more harshly as those of the opposite gender may be seen as members of an outgroup. Therefore, feelings of jealousy and defensiveness may be evoked when the infidelity is committed by members of the outgroup, but for members of the ingroup, it is easier to justify those people's behaviours.

The only direct assessment of the second and third hypotheses, comes from the gender comparisons done with just the Belizean sample. Supporting Hypothesis 3, Belizean women who completed the study perceived behaviours meant to constitute sexual infidelity, specifically a person sharing a nude picture of himself/herself, masturbating over video chat, kissing, having intercourse, sending sexually explicit texts, and having oral sex with another person, as less acceptable than men did. However, there were no gender differences in perceptions of emotional infidelity and there was no gender of the participant x gender of the person in the scenario interaction that would support the specific direction predicted by Hypothesis 2. Kruger et al. (2013) and Wilson et al. (2011) also found that women perceived outward sexual behaviours as being more indicative of infidelity. Kruger et al. (2015) revealed that both men's and women's distress were better predicted by sexual infidelity than by emotional infidelity. They reason that actually engaging in the activity rather than thinking about another person or potentially doing it,

is worse, and makes sexual infidelity more difficult to forgive than emotional infidelity.

However, given that women judged the behaviour as less acceptable than men, it could be possible that women are less tolerable of sexual infidelity because it could lead to relationship dissolution.

As previously mentioned, only the Belizean sample was used for this comparison and thus, it is also possible that results could be due to culture. Martins et al. (2015) reason that men are more likely to engage in sexual infidelity than women because men are allowed to be more sexually permissive while women would be more heavily scrutinized if they engaged in the same behaviours. Belizean women are encouraged to only engage in the act of sex for the sake of “love” and it is seen as unacceptable for them to have sex without a formal relationship with a partner. This could be due in part to religion, as it is an essential part of society for many Caribbean countries, including Belize, whose population practices Christianity, with the majority practicing Roman Catholicism (Adventure life, 2020). In Caribbean countries, sex is not discussed openly, especially with young women, and if it is talked about, it is usually in terms of religious disapproval of the act (Kempadoo, 2003, 2009).

Furthermore, Kempadoo (2003) reveals that a major theme in Caribbean sexuality seems to be women’s fidelity and men’s hypersexuality. It is viewed as okay for men to be seen as being sexually promiscuous, but women are viewed as being pure and are encouraged to stay faithful to their men. Perhaps, women raised from this perspective, see the behaviours described as unacceptable for both women and men. These women may be tired of men’s hypersexuality and may want men to align with their views towards fidelity. If so, this present finding would be consistent with Zandbergen and Brown

(2015), whose research suggested that jealousy as it pertains to sexual infidelity behaviours, was better predicted by culture than it was by gender. The small sample of Belizeans participants may be part of the reason a significant interaction between the gender of the participant and the gender of the person in the scenario that was hypothesized based on past research was not found.

Although the lack of male participants made it difficult to assess gender differences, when all participants were considered, sexual infidelity was seen as more unacceptable than emotional infidelity. Interestingly, this effect did not hold across all reasons for using a dating site. Sexual infidelity was viewed as less acceptable than emotional infidelity when participants read about a person using the site for entertainment purposes, to find a relationship or to use the site to elevate his/her status. In contrast, when participants read about a person using the site for sex, sexual infidelity and emotional infidelity were viewed similarly. If people are using the site for a relationship purpose, they are expressing an interest in wanting to have a relationship. If these people then engage in infidelity behaviour, this causes a contradiction between the actions and the motivation and can thus explain why it is viewed negatively by participants. The persons that these individuals match with may develop genuine feelings for them. However, after experiencing a partner's infidelity, they will most likely feel deceived and begin doubting their ability to recognize how others feel about them. Any behaviours engaged in by the people using the site for status purposes seemed to be viewed negatively, likely because of the intention and the action taken by the person in the scenario, being viewed as negative (i.e., just wanting an attractive partner to brag about essentially, only using that person to be seen in public but never seeing that person alone).

Although, it is possible that these people had discussed with their matches that they may be replaced, this seems unlikely. The perception may have been that the people they matched with would experience devastation at being exchanged for someone who looks better than them. When the perceptions of those who used the site for entertainment purposes are considered, perhaps participants were upset by the people's misuse of the dating site. The assumed intention was that these people just wanted to hang out but engaging in sexual behaviours with others who saw that same profile, could surely reveal a contradiction. Perhaps, participants saw these people as using this profile as a trap to lure other matches into letting down their guard and lying to them about their true intention, which would be to have sex. This is emphasized by the fact that sexual infidelity was seen as more upsetting than emotional infidelity among people using these sites for each of these reasons.

Ranzini and Lutz (2016) studied the motives that single and non-single Tinder users had for using the site and the differences in self-representation on the dating app. They found that people admitted to lying on their profile, whether it was about academic achievement, height, personal belief or intention, in order to attract more sexual partners. For example, a womanizer who knows women do not like womanizers designs his profile as looking for a relationship, which he thinks women want, when in actuality he is looking to have sex. Not only did people lie about their intentions, but they acted in a way that was deemed unacceptable. It could be argued that people's use of the site in the present study was seen as impure – both the deception regarding their actual intentions and the act of engaging in infidelity behaviours – and that this then affected the moral judgement of the participants in a way that was similar to what Selterman et al. (2018)

revealed. In contrast to the other reasons for using the site, those who acknowledged using it to find a sexual partner, were viewed similarly when they engaged in sexual infidelity and emotional infidelity behaviours because in these scenarios, their actual intention was clear.

In addition to assessing the hypotheses, other exploratory analyses were completed. Analyses were first conducted to determine whether culture and peer pressure affected perceptions of infidelity. When the Canadian and Belizean participants were compared, contrary to Zandbergen and Brown's (2015) results, culture did not have an effect on perceptions of infidelity. However, as highlighted above, the gender differences seen could possibly be related to culture and this could be better examined with a larger sample size overall and more Canadian male participants. As well, if ethnicity were highlighted, perhaps a difference might have been seen. Maticka-Tyndale et al. (2016) suggested that African youth of both Christian and Muslim religions (who grew up in Canada) were distinctly different in their sexual experiences than Canadian youth of comparable ages and from Black- and Caribbean-Christian youth. Black and Caribbean-Christian youth in this same study, were found to be comparable to Canadian youth. A noted limitation of this study was the question of generalizability given all of these children grew up in Canada. Maticka-Tyndale et al. (2016) indicated that this was not representative of the African and Caribbean countries themselves. It may be possible however, that culture does not influence perceptions of infidelity given that infidelity is regarded as widely unacceptable across multiple countries and as a result across multiple cultures (Poushter, 2014; Shindel, 2014). If this is the case, it would explain why, even

when culture was included as a variable, the effects discussed throughout this study stayed consistent.

Peer pressure also had no effect on perceptions of infidelity. This appears to be contrary to Ong et al. (2014) who found that if a member of the participants' peer group were to engage in infidelity behaviours, then the likelihood existed that the participant might also engage in infidelity. Similarly, O'Fallon and Butterfield (2011) suggested that social learning occurs when people observe their peers and internalize the information for future action. One possible reason the current findings seem to contradict this is that while the friends were presented as pressuring the person in the scenario to go on a dating app, there was no information given about whether the friends were pressuring the person to engage in the infidelity behaviours. This would likely change participants' perceptions of the scenario and more specifically, their view towards the role of peer pressure.

The potential role of sociosexual orientation was also examined through exploratory analyses. This is defined as an orientation where the notion of having sex without an emotional attachment to another person is viewed critically (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008). Those with an unrestricted orientation believe it is acceptable for people to have sex with another person without having an emotional attachment while those with a restricted orientation believe it is unacceptable (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008). Participants in the present study with a restricted orientation believed that the emotional infidelity behaviours were more unacceptable for the person described in the scenario than those with an unrestricted orientation did. Behaviours these individuals classified as being more problematic than their unrestricted peers included spending time, sharing details about the past, sharing fears they would never share, complaining about work, and

sharing a picture of their infant nephew with another person. This finding is consistent with Treger and Sprecher's (2011) research assessing the influence of sociosexuality and attachment style on reactions to emotional versus sexual infidelity. These authors found that those measured as having a lower sociosexuality (restricted orientation) found emotional infidelity as more distressing. This likely relates to the threat it represents to the goal of being in a committed relationship with someone. Although these behaviours were not sexual in nature, restricted individuals may feel that a sexual relationship would not exist without trust and this likely led to them questioning the sanctity of relationships that would build in meaning over time.

Participants with a restricted orientation also thought sexual infidelity behaviours were more unacceptable for the person in the scenario than those with an unrestricted orientation. Behaviours that were seen as more problematic included sharing a nude picture, flirting, masturbating over video chat, masturbating over a phone call, kissing, having intercourse, sending sexually explicit texts, and having oral sex with another person. In past research, those with an unrestricted orientation were found to be more likely to be the "other person" in an affair, to engage in sexual infidelity, and to use mobile dating apps for casual sex (Mattingly et al., 2011; Sevi et al., 2018; Weiser et al., 2018; Weiser & Weigel, 2015). Rodrigues et al. (2017) also found sociosexual orientation differences regarding which behaviours were perceived to be indicative of infidelity. Those who committed sexual infidelity were thought to have unrestricted desire, lesser commitment, and more permissive perceptions of infidelity than those who had not committed infidelity. Those who had engaged in infidelity also perceived certain sexual behaviours as less indicative of infidelity and had more permissive perceptions of sexual

infidelity. For example, having sexual intercourse with another person was not always viewed as more unacceptable in the eyes of someone with an unrestricted orientation. It is important to recognize that those with a restricted orientation have differing attitudes towards sex in general and so differences in opinions regarding those behaviours may speak more to their general attitude towards these behaviours than towards their perception of them as constituting infidelity. In contrast, those with an unrestricted orientation may be more permissive of these actions because they do not see sex as needing to include an emotional connection and thus may see the situation as less problematic. As well, perhaps those with an unrestricted orientation can relate to the person in the scenario.

Given the differences in judgements according to the reason the person was using dating sites in the scenario, it seemed possible that one explanation could be that participants did not understand why the person in the scenario was using the dating site and this might have then unfairly influenced their perceptions. As noted in the introduction, if couples are mismatched in their perceptions of the intentions of one another, then it is more likely that they will perceive behaviours engaged in, in a negative way. In this study, accuracy affected perceptions of sexual infidelity. Participants who were incorrect in their answer to the question asking why the person in the scenario was using the dating site were less accepting of sexual infidelity behaviours than those who were correct. When misunderstanding as to why the person was using the dating site occurred, it is possible that the individual reading the scenario viewed it the way they would view it if they were the person to whom the individual in the scenario was first matched. For example, participants might have read the entertainment scenario and

thought that the things that were being done in the scenario sounded similar to the way they would see things happening if someone were pursuing a relationship. If they reasoned that it was a relationship, then they would hold that person to the same standard that they would someone who was actually pursuing a relationship. Since sexual infidelity is bad for a relationship, the person would then be rated more harshly. Supporting this, nearly 30% of the people who read the scenarios describing someone using the site for entertainment reasons, incorrectly assumed that the people in those scenarios were pursuing a relationship.

This could also be a result of the actor-observer bias. Thompson and O'Sullivan (2017) found that participants judged their partners more harshly for infidelity behaviours than they judged themselves after engaging in the same behaviours. Participants attributed their partners' infidelity to their character or an internal or personal attribute, while they attributed their own infidelity to external or situational factors. This was especially the case for sexual/explicit situations. It was theorized that cognitive dissonance occurred whereby, the more discomfort or guilt produced by a behaviour, the more likely it was that people would justify that behaviour, in order to decrease the guilt produced. Sexual infidelity behaviours are viewed as being the most indicative of infidelity and, as a result, they likely cause the most guilt. Because the people reading the scenarios could not directly relate to any guilt the person in the scenario would be feeling, it would be easier for them to blame the person than to see the behaviours as fitting for the situation.

Limitations

While this study adds to the existing literature about infidelity, there are limitations. First, the study focused solely on heterosexual relationships. Past research has shown that gender differences in perceptions have been found mostly with heterosexual couples, but that sexual orientation can affect perceptions of infidelity even more so than gender (Carpenter, 2012; Fedrick & Fales, 2014; Leeker & Carlozzi, 2012; Ybarr & Mitchell, 2016). Other demographic variables such as religion, relationship status, and age have also been found to affect perceptions of infidelity (Luo et al., 2010; Vossler, 2016; Wilson et al., 2011), but they were not assessed in this study.

There were a small number of men compared to women who completed the study which directly affects the generalizability of the results, especially when it comes to gender differences in the Canadian culture and to comparisons between the Canadian and Belizean cultures. Perhaps Canadian men might have answered differently than Belizean men or when comparing the results of both cultures, there may have been differences in perceptions of emotional and sexual infidelity. Although cultural comparisons were made, there were not enough participants in the study to assess the possible role of ethnicity, which can shape individuals differently, despite them coexisting in the same country (Maticka-Tyndale et al., 2016; William & Hickle, 2011). The sample was also predominantly white in the case of the Canadian sample and thus, results cannot be generalized to the Canadian population as a whole.

The way that sociosexual orientation was measured is also somewhat problematic as it is difficult to measure the construct with just one item. Peer pressure could have also been measured differently. For example, participants could have been asked whether they

or a friend had engaged in infidelity and about their perceptions of it. In the scenarios, the peer pressure should have focused less on getting the person to go on the dating app, and more on encouraging the person to commit infidelity.

Conclusion

As previously mentioned, dating apps and sites are becoming more popular and could quickly become the “normal” way of dating. While there are mass amounts of research on types of infidelity, jealousy, and the modality of infidelity (whether it was done online or offline), no research at the time that this study was conducted focused on infidelity in a relationship that was formed primarily online via a dating app or site. The present study focused on perceptions of sexual and emotional infidelity in the context of online dating, and on the differences in perceptions seen according to the gender of the person being judged, gender of the participants, culture, peer pressure, reasons for using a dating site, sociosexual orientation, and the accuracy in judging a person’s reason for using a dating site. Future research should investigate which/whether other demographic variables affect perceptions including relationship status, attachment style, sexual orientation, and religion. In addition, an investigation of how an individual’s peer group can influence their decisions about committing infidelity could potentially yield different results. The present study adds to the existing literature assessing infidelity in the context of online dating and highlights the importance of differences in the perception of both emotional and sexual infidelity, according to gender, sociosexual orientation, and the reasons for which a person may use a dating site. The study also highlights the importance of communicating the goals of using a dating site in order to prevent any

misunderstanding that may occur in online dating relationships. This information could be utilized in a clinical setting by helping therapists understand the complex nature of infidelity and how it may be perceived by clients. For those who make the decision to use online dating sites, the age-old adage remains – be careful of the people you are talking to online, they may not have the same intentions as you do. Keep in mind that you are using the platform to talk to multiple people at the same time and they are too. The people to whom you are speaking may or may not be on the site for the same reasons as you are. You are not attached to anyone on the site, unless you both agree (in person after multiple meet ups) that you will become an exclusive couple, in which case that would mean that there is no need to use the site anymore, and use of the site afterwards could indicate infidelity.

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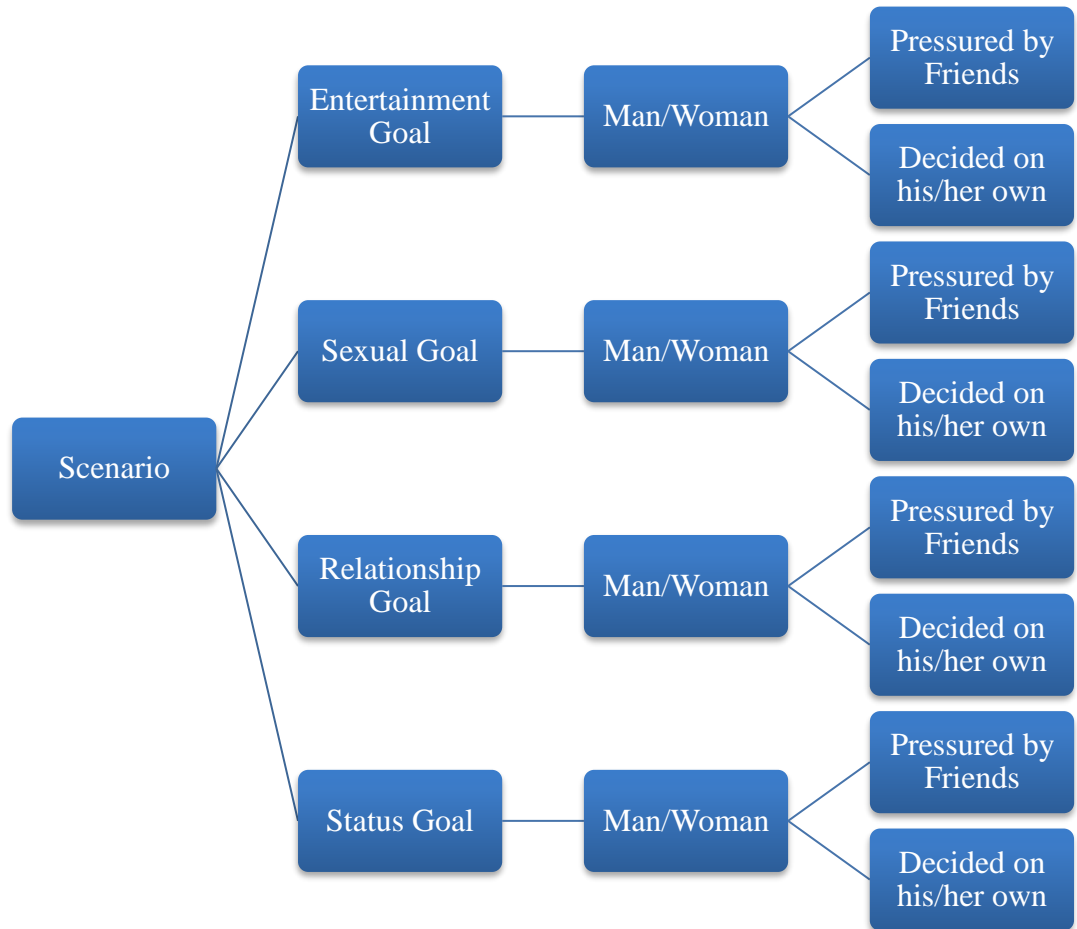
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Figure 1

The Conditions to Which Participants Could be Assigned



Note. Participants saw two of the four reasons for which participants might engage in online dating (i.e., entertainment, sexual, relationship, status). This included either two men or two women, both of whom either were or were not pressured by friend.

Table 1

Differences in Perceptions of Emotional Infidelity According to the Reason a Person Was Using a Dating Site

Behaviour		<i>M (SD)</i>	Mean Difference	<i>p</i>	95% Confidence Interval
Reason one versus reason two					
Spend time talking	Relationship	2.75 (1.82)			
	Entertainment	1.95 (1.10)	1.21	<.001	[0.67, 1.76]
	Sex	2.05 (1.40)	0.70	.007	[0.19, 1.21]
	Status	2.72 (1.94)			
	Entertainment	--	1.18	<.001	[0.63, 1.73]
	Sex	--	0.67	.010	[0.16, 1.18]
Develop a deep emotional connection	Relationship	3.92 (2.06)			
	Entertainment	2.98 (1.81)	0.94	.006	[0.27, 1.61]
	Sex	3.00 (1.81)	0.85	.008	[0.23, 1.48]
	Status	3.92 (2.00)			
	Entertainment	--	0.74	.032	[0.06, 1.41]
	Sex	--	0.66	.041	[0.03, 1.29]
To keep the fact they are talking to other people a secret	Relationship	5.76 (1.73)			
	Entertainment	4.88 (1.84)	.006	.006	[0.26, 1.50]
	Sex	4.99 (1.96)	.009	.009	[0.19, 1.36]

Note. Means and *SDs* represent participants' perceptions when asked how acceptable they believed specific behaviours constituting emotional infidelity were on a scale from 1 (*completely acceptable*) to 7 (*completely unacceptable*). Pairwise comparisons were calculated using least significant difference (LSD). Only significant differences are provided.

Table 2*Differences in Perceptions of Sexual Infidelity According to the Reason a Person Was Using a Dating Site*

Behaviour		<i>M (SD)</i>	Mean Difference	<i>p</i>	95% Confidence Interval
	Reason one versus reason two				
Share a nude picture	Relationship	5.50 (1.94)			
	Entertainment	4.75 (2.18)	0.75	.032	[0.70, 1.44]
	Sex	4.23 (2.05)	1.27	<.001	[0.62, 1.91]
	Status	5.64 (1.87)			
	Entertainment	--	0.89	.011	[0.21, 1.57]
	Sex	--	1.40	<.001	[0.76, 2.04]
Tease flirtatiously	Relationship	4.23 (2.05)			
	Entertainment	2.95 (1.71)	1.28	<.001	[0.64, 1.92]
	Sex	3.09 (1.79)	1.14	<.001	[0.53, 1.74]
	Status	3.93 (1.90)			
	Entertainment	--	0.98	.003	[0.34, 1.61]
	Sex	--	0.83	.006	[0.24, 1.43]
Masturbate over video chat	Sex	4.17 (2.17)			
	Entertainment	4.88 (2.20)	0.71	.044	[0.02, 1.41]
	Relationship	5.43 (1.90)	1.27	.001	[0.59, 1.94]
	Status	4.97 (2.10)	0.81	.018	[0.14, 1.47]
Masturbate over telephone	Relationship	5.24 (1.95)			
	Entertainment	4.50 (2.16)	0.74	.040	[0.04, 1.45]
	Sex	3.86 (2.04)	1.39	<.001	[0.72, 2.05]
	Status	4.93 (2.15)			
	Sex	--	1.07	.002	[0.41, 1.73]

Behaviour		<i>M (SD)</i>	Mean Difference	<i>p</i>	95% Confidence Interval
	Reason one versus reason two				
Kiss another person	Relationship	4.21 (2.25)			
	Entertainment	2.83 (1.76)	1.38	<.001	[0.67, 2.08]
	Sex	2.79 (1.99)	1.42	<.001	[0.76, 2.08]
Have intercourse	Status	3.64 (2.17)			
	Entertainment	--	0.81	.024	[0.12, 1.51]
	Sex	--	0.85	.011	[0.19, 1.51]
Send sexually explicit texts	Relationship	4.67 (2.26)			
	Entertainment	3.52 (2.07)	1.15	.003	[0.40, 1.89]
	Sex	3.25 (2.13)	1.42	<.001	[0.72, 2.12]
Have oral sex	Status	3.64 (2.21)			
	Sex	--	0.98	.006	[0.28, 1.67]
	Relationship	4.72 (2.21)			
Have oral sex	Entertainment	3.47 (2.04)	1.25	.001	[0.53, 1.97]
	Sex	3.41 (2.02)	1.31	<.001	[0.64, 1.99]
	Status	3.99 (2.11)	0.73	.040	[0.03, 1.42]
Have oral sex	Relationship	4.92 (2.20)			
	Entertainment	3.82 (2.09)	1.10	.004	[0.35, 1.84]
	Sex	3.48 (2.22)	1.44	<.001	[0.74, 2.14]
Have oral sex	Status	4.47 (2.17)			
	Sex	--	0.99	.005	[0.29, 1.68]

Note. Means and *SDs* represent participants' perceptions when asked how acceptable they believed specific behaviours constituting sexual infidelity were on a scale from 1 (*completely acceptable*) to 7 (*completely unacceptable*). Pairwise comparisons were calculated using least significant difference (LSD). Only significant differences are provided.

Table 3*Differences in Perceptions of Sexual Infidelity According to Sociosexual Orientation*

Behaviour	Restricted <i>M (SD)</i>	Unrestricted <i>M (SD)</i>	Mean Difference	<i>p</i>	95% Confidence Interval
Share a nude picture	6.00 (1.78)	4.60 (2.12)	1.41	<.001	[0.78, 2.04]
Tease flirtatiously	4.23 (2.06)	3.29 (1.91)	0.94	.002	[0.35, 1.54]
Masturbate over video chat	5.92 (1.62)	4.42 (2.22)	1.51	<.001	[0.86, 2.15]
Masturbate over telephone	5.60 (1.80)	4.21 (2.18)	1.39	<.001	[0.74, 2.03]
Kiss another person	4.39 (2.28)	2.97 (1.99)	1.42	<.001	[0.79, 2.05]
Have intercourse with another person	5.06 (2.15)	3.46 (2.19)	1.60	<.001	[0.94, 2.27]
Send sexually explicit texts	5.21 (2.06)	3.34 (2.05)	1.87	<.001	[1.24, 2.50]
Have oral sex with another person	5.44 (2.03)	3.68 (2.20)	1.76	<.001	[1.10, 2.43]

Note. Means and *SDs* represent participants' perceptions when asked how acceptable they believed specific behaviours constituting sexual infidelity were on a scale from 1 (*completely acceptable*) to 7 (*completely unacceptable*). Pairwise comparisons were calculated using least significant difference (LSD). Only significant differences are provided.

Table 4

The Accuracy of Perceptions Regarding Why the Individuals Presented in the Scenarios Were Using Dating Sites

Actual reason	Reason provided by participants				Proportion correct
	Entertainment	Sexual	Relationship	Status	
Entertainment	38	4	20	2	.59
Sexual	1	65	7	8	.80
Relationship	16	21	28	7	.39
Status	6	7	6	54	.74

Note. The numbers represent the number of participants providing each response compared to the reason the person in a specific scenario was using the dating site. Proportions were calculated using the number of participants who were accurate in their assessment, relative to the number of people who received a given scenario.

Appendix A Scenarios

Scenario 1: Men who pursued entertainment goal on their own: “Kristian, aged twenty-four, is single but sometimes feeling bored, he has decided to join the new dating app everyone is talking about. Tired of his situation, he sets up his account and starts swiping. He matches with a girl that he really likes, they exchange messages and have met up on multiple occasions to do things they both have in common. They have never kissed or discussed a possible romantic relationship. Kristian is still chatting with this girl and with other girls on the app.

Scenario 2: Men who pursued sexual goal on their own: “Isaac, aged twenty-four, is single and looking to hook up. In order to find possible matches, he has decided to try online dating. He sets up his account and starts swiping. He matches with a girl that he really likes, they start sexting – exchanging both nude images and messages. They meet up for dinner and a movie and later have sex but do not discuss committing to a romantic relationship. Despite continuing to talk to this girl, Isaac is still messaging other girls on the app.

Scenario 3: Men who pursued relational goal on their own: “Eric, aged twenty-four, is single and feeling like he is always alone. Really wanting to meet someone, he decides to go online. He sets up an account on a popular dating site and starts swiping. He matches with a girl he sees as a potential romantic partner, they exchange heartfelt messages and go on a number of dates. Despite commenting they have similar thoughts about a possible future together, they have never discussed being exclusive. Eric is still talking to this girl but also with other girls on the app.

Scenario 4: Men who pursued status goal on their own: “Deon, aged twenty-four, is single and feeling jealous of his co-worker’s really attractive girlfriend. Wanting to prove attractive women like him too, he signs up for internet dating and starts swiping. He matches with a girl resembling a famous model, they start talking and she attends a number of work functions as his date. Deon and this woman have only gone out in public, never spending any time alone or discussing the future. Deon continues to use the app to talk to this girl, but is looking for attractive alternatives.

Scenario 5: Women who pursued entertainment goal on their own: “Jada, aged twenty-four, is single but sometimes feeling bored, she has decided to join the new dating app everyone is talking about. Tired of her situation, she sets up her account and starts swiping. She matches with a guy that she really likes, they exchange messages and have met up on multiple occasions to do things they both have in common. They have never kissed or discussed a possible romantic relationship. Jada is still chatting with this

guy and with other guys on the app.

Scenario 6: Women who pursued sexual goal on their own: “Abigail, aged twenty-four, is single and looking to hook up. In order to find possible matches, she has decided to try online dating. She sets up her account and starts swiping. She matches with a guy that she really likes, they start sexting – exchanging both nude images and messages. They meet up for dinner and a movie and later have sex but do not discuss committing to a romantic relationship. Despite continuing to talk to this guy, Abigail is still messaging other guys on the app.

Scenario 7: Women who pursued relational goal on their own: “Ashley, aged twenty-four, is single and feeling like she is always alone. Really wanting to meet someone, she decides to go online. She sets up an account on a popular dating site and starts swiping. She matches with a guy she sees as a potential romantic partner, they exchange heartfelt messages and go on a number of dates. Despite commenting they have similar thoughts about a possible future together, they have never discussed being exclusive. Ashley is still talking to this guy but also with other guys on the app.

Scenario 8: Women who pursued status goal on their own: “Jenna, aged twenty-four, is single and feeling jealous of her co-worker’s really attractive boyfriend. Wanting to prove attractive men like her too, she signs up for internet dating and starts swiping. She matches with a guy resembling a famous model, they start talking and he attends a number of work functions as her date. Jenna and this man have only gone out in public, never spending any time alone or discussing the future. Jenna continues to use the app to talk to this guy, but is looking for attractive alternatives.

Scenario 9: Men pressured by friends to pursue entertainment goal: “Kristian, aged twenty-four, is single and noticing he complains of being bored, his friends pressure him to join the new dating app everyone is talking about. Tired of the pressure, he sets up his account and starts swiping. He matches with a girl that he really likes, they exchange messages and have met up on multiple occasions to do things they both have in common. They have never kissed or discussed a possible romantic relationship. Kristian is still chatting with this girl and with other girls on the app.

Scenario 10: Men pressured by friends to pursue sexual goal: “Isaac, aged twenty-four, is single and his friends keep joking that he just needs to hook up. They suggest that he try online dating and sick of their comments, he sets up his account and starts swiping. He matches with a girl that he really likes, they start sexting – exchanging both nude images and messages. They meet for dinner and later have sex but do not discuss committing to a romantic relationship. Despite continuing to talk to this girl, Isaac is still messaging other girls on the app.

Scenario 11: Men pressured by friends to pursue relational goal: “Eric, aged twenty-four, is single and always complaining of being alone. His friends tell him to go online, citing success stories. He sets up an account on a popular dating site and starts swiping. He matches with a girl he sees as a potential romantic partner, they exchange heartfelt messages and go on a number of dates. Despite commenting they have similar thoughts about a possible future together, they have never discussed being exclusive. Eric is still talking to this girl but also with other girls on the app.

Scenario 12: Men pressured by friends to pursue status goal: “Deon, aged twenty-four, is single and feeling jealous of his co-worker’s really attractive girlfriend. His friends claim the internet is rampant with attractive women. So, he signs up for internet dating and starts swiping. He matches with a girl resembling a famous model, they start talking and she attends a number of work functions as his date. Deon and this woman have only gone out in public, never spending any time alone or discussing the future. Deon continues to use the app to talk to this girl, but is looking for attractive alternatives.

Scenario 13: Women pressured by friends to pursue entertainment goal: “Jada, aged twenty-four, is single and noticing she complains of being bored, her friends pressure her to join the new dating app everyone is talking about. Tired of the pressure, she sets up her account and starts swiping. She matches with a guy that she really likes, they exchange messages and have met up on multiple occasions to do things they both have in common. They have never kissed or discussed a possible romantic relationship. Jada is still chatting with this guy and with other guys on the app.

Scenario 14: Women pressured by friends to pursue sexual goal: “Abigail, aged twenty-four, is single and her friends keep joking that she just needs to hook up. They suggest that he try online dating and sick of their comments, she sets up her account and starts swiping. She matches with a guy that she really likes, they start sexting – exchanging both nude images and messages. They meet up for dinner and a movie and later have sex but do not discuss committing to a romantic relationship. Despite continuing to talk to this guy, Abigail is still messaging other guys on the app.

Scenario 15: Women pressured by friends to pursue relational goal: “Ashley, aged twenty-four, is single and always complaining of being alone. Her friends tell her to go online citing success stories. She sets up an account on a popular dating site and starts swiping. She matches with a guy she sees as a potential romantic partner, they exchange heartfelt messages and go on a number of dates. Despite commenting they have similar thoughts about a possible future together, they have never discussed being exclusive. Ashley is still talking to this guy but also with other guys on the app.

Scenario 16: Women pressured by friends to pursue status goal: “Jenna, aged twenty-four, is single and feeling jealous of her co-worker’s really attractive boyfriend. Her

friends claim the internet is rampant with attractive men. So, she signs up for internet dating and starts swiping. She matches with a guy resembling a famous model, they start talking and he attends a number of work functions as her date. Jenna and this man have only gone out in public, never spending any time alone or discussing the future. Jenna continues to use the app to talk to this guy, but is looking for attractive alternatives.

Appendix B
Online Survey

Informed Consent Form
Perceptions of Online Dating Interactions

The purpose of this Informed Consent Form is to ensure you understand the nature of this study and your involvement in it. This consent form will provide information about the study, giving you the opportunity to decide if you want to participate.

Researchers: This study is being conducted by Jose Hoare as part of the course requirements for Psychology 4959. I am under the supervision of Dr. Kelly Warren.

Purpose: The study is designed to investigate the perception of online dating interactions. The results will be used to write an honours thesis. The study may also be used in a larger research project and may be published in the future.

Task Requirements: You will be asked to complete a short survey. There are no right or wrong answers to the attitude statements; we are only interested in your opinions. You may omit any questions you do not wish to answer.

Duration The questionnaire survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Risks and Benefits: There are no obvious risks or benefits involved with your participation in this study.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: Please do not put any identifying marks on any section of the questionnaire. IP addresses are not being collected. All information will be analyzed and reported on a group basis. Thus, individual responses cannot be identified by the researcher. The survey company, Qualtrics, hosts the study and the data on private Canadian servers. In keeping with Memorial University's policy on data storage, all data will be kept in a secure location for a minimum of five years.

Right to Withdraw: Your participation in this research is totally voluntary and you are free to stop participating at any time. However, once you complete this survey and click submit, your data cannot be removed because we are not collecting any identifying information and therefore we cannot link data to individual responses.

Contact Information: If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact me at jahoare@grenfell.mun.ca or my supervisor, Dr. Kelly Warren at kwarren@grenfell.mun.ca. As well, if you are interested in knowing the results of the study, please contact me or Dr. Kelly Warren after May 2020. Results will also be presented at the student undergraduate conference in late March or early April.

This study has been approved by an ethics review process in the psychology program at Grenfell Campus, Memorial University of Newfoundland and has been found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy.

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By proceeding to the next page, consent is implied. You are also saying that you are at least 19 years of age or a college/ university student.

Thinking about the brief scenario that you just read, to what extent do you believe that it is acceptable for XXXXX to do the following with someone else from the same site:

1. Spend time talking

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Acceptable	Moderately Acceptable	Slightly Acceptable	Neither Acceptable Nor Unacceptable	Slightly Unacceptable	Moderately Unacceptable	Very Unacceptable

2. Share details about his/her past that he/she does not typically share

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Acceptable	Moderately Acceptable	Slightly Acceptable	Neither Acceptable Nor Unacceptable	Slightly Unacceptable	Moderately Unacceptable	Very Unacceptable

3. Discuss his/her deepest fears which have never been shared with anyone else

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Acceptable	Moderately Acceptable	Slightly Acceptable	Neither Acceptable Nor Unacceptable	Slightly Unacceptable	Moderately Unacceptable	Very Unacceptable

4. Complain about problems from work

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Acceptable	Moderately Acceptable	Slightly Acceptable	Neither Acceptable Nor Unacceptable	Slightly Unacceptable	Moderately Unacceptable	Very Unacceptable

5. Develop a deep emotional connection

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Acceptable	Moderately Acceptable	Slightly Acceptable	Neither Acceptable Nor Unacceptable	Slightly Unacceptable	Moderately Unacceptable	Very Unacceptable

6. Share pictures of himself/herself holding his/her infant nephew

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Acceptable	Moderately Acceptable	Slightly Acceptable	Neither Acceptable Nor Unacceptable	Slightly Unacceptable	Moderately Unacceptable	Very Unacceptable

7. Complain to this person about the man/woman he/she first matched with in the scenario

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very	Moderately	Slightly	Neither	Slightly	Moderately	Very
Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable
			Nor			
			Unacceptable			

8. Keeping the fact that he/she is talking to other people a secret

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very	Moderately	Slightly	Neither	Slightly	Moderately	Very
Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable
			Nor			
			Unacceptable			

9. Share a nude picture of himself/herself

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very	Moderately	Slightly	Neither	Slightly	Moderately	Very
Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable
			Nor			
			Unacceptable			

10. Flirtatious teasing

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very	Moderately	Slightly	Neither	Slightly	Moderately	Very
Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable
			Nor			
			Unacceptable			

11. Masturbating together during a video chat

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very	Moderately	Slightly	Neither	Slightly	Moderately	Very
Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable
			Nor			
			Unacceptable			

12. Masturbating together while talking on the phone

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very	Moderately	Slightly	Neither	Slightly	Moderately	Very
Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable
			Nor			
			Unacceptable			

13. Kissing

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very	Moderately	Slightly	Neither	Slightly	Moderately	Very
Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable
			Nor			
			Unacceptable			

14. Having intercourse

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Acceptable	Moderately Acceptable	Slightly Acceptable	Neither Acceptable Nor Unacceptable	Slightly Unacceptable	Moderately Unacceptable	Very Unacceptable

15. Sending sexually explicit text messages

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Acceptable	Moderately Acceptable	Slightly Acceptable	Neither Acceptable Nor Unacceptable	Slightly Unacceptable	Moderately Unacceptable	Very Unacceptable

16. Having oral sex

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Acceptable	Moderately Acceptable	Slightly Acceptable	Neither Acceptable Nor Unacceptable	Slightly Unacceptable	Moderately Unacceptable	Very Unacceptable

Demographics

17. What is your age? _____

18. Which gender do you personally identify as?

- 1) Male
- 2) Female
- 3) Another gender

19. What is your highest level of education?

- 1) Less than high school
- 2) High School
- 3) Some College or University
- 4) College diploma or University degree
- 5) Post graduate studies

20. What country were you originally born in (e.g., Canada, Belize)?

21. Is this the country you grew up in?

22. If no, in which country did you grow up?

23. Which ethnicity do you identify as (e.g., Caucasian, Afro-Canadian, Indigenous, Mestizo, Creole, Garinagu)?

24. How acceptable do you think it is for a person to have sex with someone without having an emotional attachment?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Acceptabl e	Moderatel y Acceptable	Slightly Acceptabl e	Neither Acceptable Nor Unacceptabl e	Slightly Unacceptabl e	Moderately Unacceptabl e	Very Unacceptabl e

25. Which of the following best describes the motivation of XXXX?

1. The person is looking for a relationship
2. The person wants to hang out
3. The person wants to have sex
4. The person wants to impress others

26. Which of the following best describes the motivation of XXXX?

1. The person is looking for a relationship
2. The person wants to hang out
3. The person wants to have sex
4. The person wants to impress others

27. How much pressure do you think was used by the friends in the scenario with XXXXX? (if given pressured by friends condition)

1	2	3	4
None	Low	Moderate	High

28. How much pressure do you think was used by the friends in the scenario with XXXXX? (if given pressured by friends condition)

1	2	3	4
None	Low	Moderate	High

Debriefing Form

Thank you for participating in this study. It is being conducted to assess people's perceptions of the acceptability of talking to multiple people at the same time in the context of online relationships. The scenarios included in the questionnaire were designed for the purposes of this study and are not real. Please feel free to share the link for this study with people who may be willing to participate. If you have any questions or concerns, or if you are interested in learning more about this study, please contact me or Kelly Warren at jahoare@grenfell.mun.ca or kwarren@grenfell.mun.ca respectively. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the review board through the Grenfell research office (gethics@grenfell.mun.ca) or by calling (709) 639 - 2399. If you are interested in knowing the results of this study, please attend the Psychology Undergraduate Student Research Conference later this semester or contact my supervisor after May 2020.

Thank you for your participation