

A Semi-model of Predictive Factors for Mixed Infidelity

Maria Nicoleta Turliuc¹, Elena Laura Scutaru¹

Initial receipt: 24.08.2013 Final revision received: 25.10.2013 Accepted: 30.10.2013

Abstract. Infidelity is the sign of a crisis in a relationship. The triangular theory of love (Sternberg, 1986), the interpersonal exchange model of sexual satisfaction or the Big Five model can be useful for understanding the dynamics of a couple's relationship. The differences observed after using these models are essential in the study of extramarital relationships. This present study intends to analyse the predictive factors of mixed infidelity. 470 persons participated in the study. The assessment scales for infidelity, sexual satisfaction, sexual communication, sexuality, attitude towards sexuality and the Big Five inventory were distributed to all the participants. Following the data analysis, significant correlations were identified between the variables of a relationship's dynamics, the variables of sexual compatibility, the variables of personality traits and mixed infidelity. The regression analysis showed that mixed infidelity increases together with the presence of extraversion, sexual self-esteem and a permissive attitude towards sexuality. On the other hand, regression analysis shows that commitment, intimacy, passion, depression, sexual satisfaction, sexual communication and agreeableness are significant negative predictors of mixed infidelity.

Key words: infidelity, passion, commitment, openness, extraversion

I. Introduction

Definition of infidelity

Infidelity is breaking the agreement of emotional and/ or sexual exclusivity in the couple's relationship (Weeks, Gambescia & Jenkins, 2003). The definition of infidelity involves sexual components (sexual relations with a person other than the partner), as well as emotional components (directing some "resources" outside the official relationship). The boundaries between these two dimensions are relatively difficult to establish (Eaves & Smith, 2007; Shackelford & Buss, 1997).

¹ Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Romania

Corresponding author email: laura_scutaru@yahoo.com

Brown (1991) analysed the concept of infidelity, which he defines as: a). a strategy of avoiding the obvious conflicts in the couple; b). a way to avoid intimacy; c). an impulse to end an “empty” relationship; d). a form of sexual addiction which involves reducing the “emotional scarcity” felt in the couple. Therapists place infidelity among the most serious problems of the couple. In many therapies, the recovery of the couple from an infidelity crisis is associated with overcoming trauma (Gordon & Baucom, 1999; Gordon & Baucom, 2003; Gordon, Baucom & Snyder, 2004). However, infidelity is an emotional solution to an emotional problem (Moultrup, 1990).

Theoretical framework of the study

In specialised literature there are a series of theories and models describing the determinants of infidelity. A person decides to engage in infidelity acts for certain reasons, which can be explained using the triangular theory of love (Sternberg, 1986), the interpersonal exchange model of sexual satisfaction (Lawrance & Byers, 1992, 1995) or the Big Five model (Goldberg 1990).

The triangular theory of love, developed by Sternberg (1986), explains different types of love by combining the following concepts: passion (the motivational side of love), intimacy (the emotional side of love) and commitment (the cognitive side of love). If the three dimensions are strong and equally present we witness complete, deep love and a stable couple relationship (Turliuc, 2004). Thus, a high degree of relational satisfaction implies a close relationship among the three components of love. Poor functioning of one or several dimensions of love will cause an imbalance in the couple's relationship or a low level of marital satisfaction, which can result in infidelity (Lemieux 1996). The results of the studies conducted by Drigotas & Safstrom (1999) confirmed the link between commitment and infidelity. Thus, in the first study conducted, the authors reported that the commitment level towards the current relationship in its first stage becomes a predictor for both emotional and/ or sexual infidelity. The persons that were more committed in the couple's relationship and had fewer alternatives show a lower infidelity rate. The results were supported and confirmed by a second study, where the authors tested the commitment level towards the partner, through the frequency and intensity of interactions with unknown persons of the opposite sex.

A low level of sexual satisfaction is associated with engagement in extramarital sexual and/or emotional acts. This idea is supported by the interpersonal exchange model of sexual satisfaction (Lawrance & Byers, 1992, 1995). The theorists of this model consider that individuals are constantly seeking relationships that satisfy their own personal interests (Turliuc, 2004). The model defines sexual satisfaction as an affective

response; this is formulated following the assessment of the positive/negative aspects of the couple's relationship (Ziherl & Masteni, 2010). The level of sexual satisfaction is high if the reward level of the relationship exceeds the cost level or if there is a balance in the cost-effectiveness ratio between the two partners. Generally, each person is motivated to maximise the benefits and minimise the cost of their interpersonal relationships (Turliuc, 2004). The level of sexual satisfaction is supposed to be strongly related to the quality level of a relationship (Sprecher, 2002; Bhugra 2004, apud Ziherl & Masteni, 2010). A decrease in the frequency of sexual acts in the couple's relationship increases the risk of infidelity (Wellings, Field, Johnson & Wadsworth, 1994, apud Jefferson, 2012). It is believed that, if the sexual desires of the partner are not fulfilled, s/he can fulfill his/her desire by other means, which certainly involves infidelity (Previti & Amato, 2004, apud Munsch, 2012). Sexual communication is associated with sexual satisfaction: a low level of communication and incompatibility in the sexual realm will become the main causes of instability in the couple and, implicitly, will lead to seeking another sexual partner (Cupach & Comstock, 1990, Randall & Byers, 2005). Engagement in an act of infidelity is supported by the sexuality level of the person. Generally, these persons with a sexuality level are good sexual partners, which grant them access to various alternatives (Brown & Moore, 2003). There is a link between personality traits and engagement in extramarital relationships. Personality plays a vital role in a couple's relationship, more specifically in the process of choosing a partner (Buss & Barnes, 1986; Little, Burt & Perrett, 2006). Personality traits also become a support for analysing the various types of emotional responses to jealousy (Botwin, Buss & Shackelford 1997); last but not least, they become an essential predictor for infidelity in the couple. Five main factors can describe the basic structure of personality which is called the Big-Five (Goldberg 1990): extraversion (directing the personality outwards, sociability and optimism), agreeableness (kindness, generosity and understanding), conscientiousness (responsibility and optimism), emotional stability (tension, strain, calmness) and culture (creativity, inventively and openness to experience). Knowing the personality implies, not only illustrating the traits, (as components) but also identifies the links and relations between them, integrating them in an indivisible whole (Țuțu, 2007).

Eysenck (1976) analysed for the first time the relationship between personality traits and infidelity indicators. The results of those studies confirm the fact that extraverts tend to have a favourable attitude towards infidelity much more frequently than introverts. Extraverts start their sexual life at an early age, have a large number of sexual partners and are concerned with the sexual side of a relationship (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975).

Neuroticism involves a series of feelings related to negative affection: anxiety, depression and fury (Costa & Widiger, 1994). Neuroticism has been associated with various traits in the sexuality realm, including sexual dissatisfaction and marital stress (Bradbury & Fincham, 1988; Gottman, 1994). Some studies discovered that persons who obtained high scores on the neuroticism dimension have a permissive attitude towards sexual life (Lameiras & Castro, 2003) and engage in occasional sexual acts (Schmitt, 2004). Several studies found direct connections between agreeableness, conscientiousness and engagement in extramarital sexual acts (Lameiras & Castro, 2003). Agreeableness and conscientiousness are predictors of infidelity. The low level of agreeableness and conscientiousness demonstrates an increase in the engagement in infidelity acts in the first four years of a relationship. In case of culture, the fifth factor of the Big Five model, there are studies confirming the presence of a connection between the level of culture and the divorce of a couple, a reason why we could relate this factor to infidelity (Drigotas & Safstrom, 1999; Orzeck & Lung, 2005)

In our study, an important reference point in the analysis of variables related to infidelity in couple and family relationships is the *Relationship and Risk Factors influencing the Infidelity Model (RRIM)*, designed by Jefferson (2012). The author conceived a model that embeds attitudes, perceptions and behaviours describing the quality of the couple's relationship. Jefferson (2012) checked a number of variables grouped in a series of categories (demographic variables, variables regarding the development of a relationship, variables related to the stability of a relationship, variables of a relationship's dynamics, sexual compatibility variables, variables regarding the problems of a relationship). The variables included in this model were assessed using simple questions. For example, in order to measure passion, he asked the participants the following question: "How involved in the current relationship do you feel?" (1-to a great extent, 5-to a small extent).

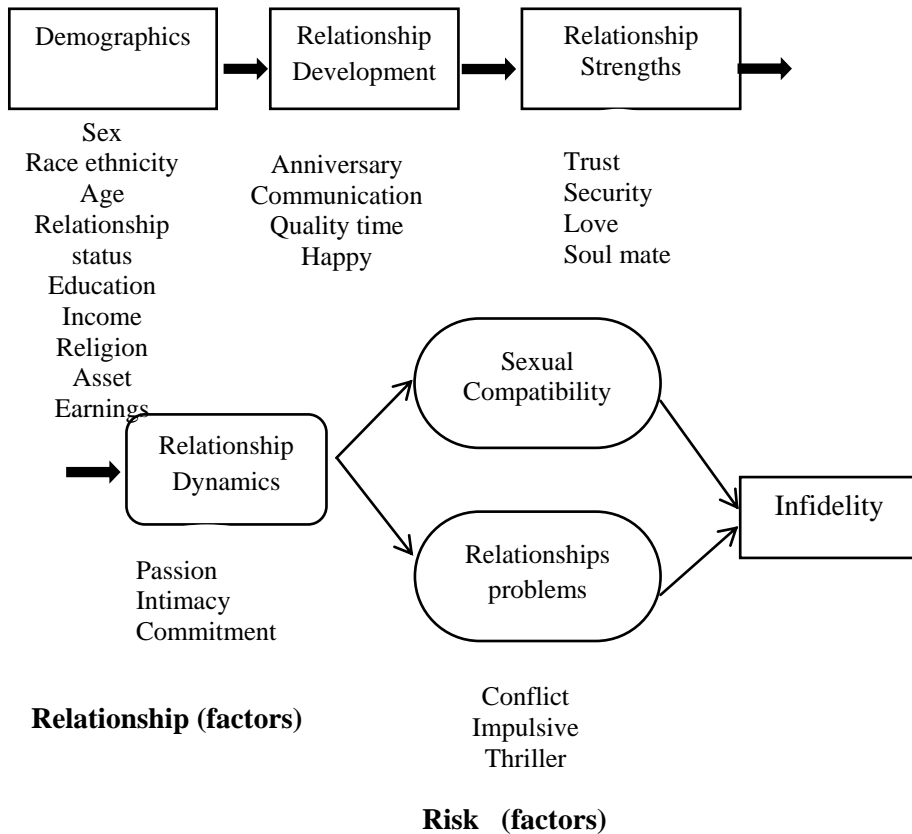


Figure 1 Conceptual Version of the Relationship and Risk factors influencing the Infidelity Model (Jefferson.2012, p.8)

The objective of this current study is to identify the predictive factors of mixed infidelity (emotional and sexual). Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the variables of a relationship’s dynamics, of sexual compatibility, of personality traits and the engagement in acts of mixed infidelity. It is obvious that we decided to use and keep two of the categories of variables proposed by the RRIM model and to add a new category. Choosing these variables and grouping them in these blocks stems from both theoretical and empirical considerations. Firstly, the triangular theory of love emphasises the fact that weak functioning of one of the sides of love (passion, intimacy and commitment) triggers some dysfunctions in the relationship, which seem to be related to engagement in infidelity acts. The results of some studies conducted by Drigotas & Safstrom (1999) confirmed the link between commitment and infidelity: a low level of

commitment implies an increase in infidelity. Secondly, the interpersonal exchange model of sexual satisfaction establishes a link between sexual satisfaction and the quality of a relationship: so, the lack of fulfilment in the current relationship is associated with infidelity. In this study, we have tried to improve and extend the sexual compatibility block from the RRIM model, through a complex assessment of the sides of sexual compatibility. Last but not least, we selected empirical data showing that the occurrence of infidelity is more prominent in extraverted persons than in introvert ones, in persons with a low level on the agreeableness and conscientiousness side compared to the persons with a high level on the agreeableness and conscientiousness side (Eysenck, 1976).

II. Method

Participants

This study was comprised of 470 participants (236 women and 234 men), with an average age of 32.17 years. Out of the total number of subjects, 239 are single (101 women, 138 men) and 231 are married (135 women and 96 men). All the subjects have had a stable relationship for at least 1 year ($M=7.14$, $SD=8.82$).

Instruments

The dependent variable, *mixed infidelity*, was measured using the *Infidelity Scale*, designed by Drigotas et al. (1999). This scale is formed of 11 items. The authors of the scale used a 8-step Likert scale: (0) no feeling/behaviour and (8) extreme or very strong feeling /behaviour in order to assess the intensity level of each feeling/behaviour specific to infidelity (Fricker, 2006). The analysis of the internal consistency of the 45 items indicates an Alpha Cronbach coefficient of 0.91.

In the block of variables corresponding to the *dynamics of a relationship* we included the following variables: intimacy, passion and commitment. Thus, the three variables were measured using *the triangular Love Scale*, designed by Sternberg (1988). The scale is comprised of 45 items grouped on three dimensions: passion, intimacy and commitment. The items are measured using a 9-step Likert-type scale (1- I totally disagree, 5- I neither agree nor disagree, 9- I totally agree). The analysis of the internal consistency of the 45 items indicates an Alpha Cronbach coefficient of 0.97. Analysing the internal consistency coefficient for each factor, we obtained the following coefficients: 0.96 (passion), 0.93 (intimacy), 0.96 (commitment).

The next block, *sexual compatibility*, includes the following variables: sexual satisfaction, sexual communication, the sexuality level (sexual

concern, sexual depression and sexual self-esteem), and the attitude towards sexuality. In principle, this block was created in order to describe the degree of sexual compatibility of the two partners, following a complex analysis. We used the following tools to measure these variables:

The *Index of Sexual Satisfaction* (ISS, Hudson, 1993). This scale is comprised of 25 items, assessed on a 7-step Likert scale (1-never, 7-always), which assesses sexual satisfaction. The analysis of the internal consistency of the 25 items indicates an Alpha Cronbach coefficient of 0.88.

Sexual communication scale - Dyadic Satisfaction Scale (DSC, Catania, 1992). This tool is comprised of 13 items, assessed on a 6-step Likert scale (1- I totally disagree, 6- I totally agree), which measures the communication level in the couple. The scale contains reversed items: 1,2,3,4,5 and 6. The score varies between 0- 100 points, the higher score indicating a strong sexual uneasiness (Ross, 2010). The analysis of the internal consistency of the 13 items indicates an Alpha Cronbach coefficient of 0.84.

The Sexual Scale (SS) consists of 30 items, grouped in three dimensions: sexual concern, sexual depression and sexual self-esteem. The items are measured on a 4-step Likert scale (2 I totally disagree, 2- I totally agree). The total score is the sum of the points obtained for each item (Ross, 2010). The analysis of the internal consistency of the 30 items indicates an Alpha Cronbach coefficient of 0.89. Analysing the internal consistency coefficient for each factor, we obtained the following coefficients: 0.86 (sexual concern), 0.73 (sexual depression), 0.73 (sexual self-esteem).

The Sexual Attitude Scale (SAS, Hudson,1992) consists of 25 items whose purpose is to assess the permissive attitude vs. conservative attitude of the subjects towards sexuality. It is a frequently used tool, but its purpose is not to measure personal or social problems (Hudson & Murphy, 1990). The analysis of the internal consistency of the 25 items indicates an Alpha Cronbach coefficient of 0.86.

The last block created was that of individual personality traits, so the block is designed on the basis of the Big Five model. The personality traits were measured using the Big Five Inventory. The factors of the IPIP-NEO model described by Goldberg & Johnson (2005) stood at the basis of operating with the Big Five Plus questionnaire. The personality traits assessed within the Big Five model are: extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, culture. The analysis of the internal consistency of the 45 items indicates an Alpha Cronbach coefficient of 0.84.

Procedure

Before beginning the study, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their consent to take part in the research was

sought. They were ensured that the responses are anonymous and confidential and that the data provided will be used solely for research purposes. All the participants received a set of tools: the Triangular Love Scale, the Sexual Satisfaction Scale, the Sexual Communication Scale, the Sexuality Scale and the Big Five Inventory, to be filled in on paper. The tools were inserted in an envelope. Each participant was instructed on the way to fill in the set received in order to prevent any misunderstandings. Subsequently, the subjects filled in the questionnaires individually and returned the sealed envelope.

III. Results

In order to analyse the link between a series of variables of a relationship's dynamics, sexual compatibility variables, individual trait variables and variables of engagement in an extramarital relationship; the Pearson correlation was used.

The relationship between the variables of a relationship's dynamics block and mixed infidelity

Analysing the results, we notice that mixed infidelity is negatively and significantly correlated with intimacy ($r_{(470)}=-.39$, $p<0.001$), passion ($r_{(470)}=-.35$, $p<0.001$) and commitment ($r_{(470)}=-.50$, $p<0.001$). The results are presented in table 1.

	1	2	3	4
1. Infidelity	1			
2. Intimacy	-,39**	1		
3. Passion	-,35**	,54**	1	
4. Commitment	-,50**	,53**	,45**	1
Average	79,64	78,65	74,81	69.20
Standard deviation	13,92	20,26	19,48	19.87

Table 1. The correlation matrix for the link between mixed infidelity and the variables of a relationship's dynamics; N-470; **p < .001;

The relationship between the variables of the sexual compatibility block and mixed infidelity

Analysing the data, we noticed that engagement in a mixed extramarital relationship is negatively and significantly correlated with marital satisfaction ($r_{(470)}=-.52$, $p<0.001$), sexual communication ($r_{(470)}=-.35$, $p<0.001$), sexual depression ($r_{(470)}=-.57$, $p<0.001$). We also encountered a significant positive correlation between mixed infidelity and sexual concern ($r_{(470)}=.32$, $p<0.001$), sexual self-esteem ($r_{(470)}=.52$, $p<0.001$) and the attitude towards sexuality ($r_{(470)}=.44$, $p<0.001$) The results are shown in table 2.

Predictive Factors for Mixed Infidelity

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Infidelity	1						
2. Sexual satisfaction	-,52**	1					
3. Sexual communication	-,35**	,31**	1				
4. Sexual concern	,32**	-,29*	-,15**	1			
5. Sexual depression	-,57**	,44**	,28**	-,23**	1		
6. Sexual self-esteem	,52**	-,47**	-,25**	,17**	-,36**	1	
7. Attitude towards sexuality	,44**	-,38**	-,21**	,37**	-,42**	,49**	1
Average	79,64	103,88	44,25	33,98	33,24	36,18	26,04
Standard deviation	13,92	18,46	11,46	7,16	8,45	7,50	3,69

Table 2. The correlation matrix for the link between mixed infidelity and the variables of sexual compatibility N-470; ** p < .001; * p < .05.

Relationship between the block of personality traits and mixed infidelity

Among the variables corresponding to personality traits, we notice that mixed infidelity is positively and significantly correlated with the presence of extraversion ($r_{(470)}=.61$, $p<0.001$). We also encountered negative and significant correlations between mixed infidelity and the presence of agreeableness ($r_{(470)}=-.54$, $p<0.001$), conscientiousness ($r_{(470)}=-.46$, $p<0.001$). We noticed that the values of the correlation coefficients are high, which suggests how powerful the link between variables is. The results are shown in table 3.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Infidelity	1					
Big Five						
2. Extraversion	,61**	1				
3. Agreeableness	-,54**	-,48	1			
4. Conscientiousness	,46**	-,44**	,49**	1		
5. Neuroticism	,04	,06	-,04	-,04	1	
6. Culture	-,02	,02*	-,03	-,06	,34**	1
Average	79.64	28.98	28.21	27.85	26.34	33.35
Standard deviation	13.92	4.52	6.6	5.59	3.18	4.34

Table 3. The correlation matrix for the link between mixed infidelity and the variables of personality traits N-470; ** p < .001; * p < .05.

In order to identify the predictors of mixed infidelity, regression analysis was used, inserting the relationship dynamic variables in the first stage (intimacy, passion, commitment), the sexual compatibility variables in the second stage (sexual satisfaction, sexual communication, sexual concern, sexual depression, sexual self-esteem) and the personality trait variables in the third stage (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness). Because of

the high number of variables in the regression analysis we only used the variables that significantly correlated with mixed infidelity, identified according to the analyses presented above. The results indicate the fact that sexual self-esteem ($\beta=0.29$), extraversion ($\beta=0.20$) and the attitude towards sexuality ($\beta=0.08$) are significant positive predictors of mixed infidelity. Thus, the engagement in an extramarital relationship increases the more extraverted a person is. This is if the person has a high level of self-esteem and has a permissive attitude towards sexuality. On the other hand, regression analyses indicate the fact that commitment ($\beta=-0.39$), sexual depression ($\beta=-0.29$), sexual satisfaction ($\beta=-0.14$), intimacy ($\beta=-0.12$), passion ($\beta=-0.11$), agreeableness ($\beta=-0.12$) and sexual communication ($\beta=-0.09$) are significant negative predictors of mixed infidelity. In other words, engagement in an extramarital relationship decreases when the person shows a high level of commitment, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, passion and sexual communication within the couple's relationship. Also, the engagement in an extramarital relationship decreases when the person has a high level of agreeableness and sexual depression. The non-standardised and standardised regression coefficients and the indicators of the extent of effects are presented in table 4.

<i>Criterion variables</i>	<i>Predictor variable – mixed infidelity</i>					
	B	SB	β	R^2_{aj}	Rch	F(466)
Stage 1				,279	,284	61,61
1. Intimacy	-,084	,035	-,122*			
2. Passion	-,079	,034	-,111*			
3. Commitment	-,273	,033	-,390**			
Stage 2				,525	,251	41,27
4. Sexual satisfaction	-,108	,020	-,143**			
5. Sexual communication	-,109	,042	-,093**			
6. Sexual concern	-,115	,085	,053			
7. Depression	-,479	,063	-,291**			
8. Sexual self-esteem	-,291	,092	,157**			
9. Attitude towards sexuality	-,079	,034	,082*			
Stage 3				,545	,002	7,73
10. Extraversion	,542	,116	,201**			
11. Agreeableness	-,251	,087	-,119*			
12. Conscientiousness	-,118	,095	-,048			

Table 4. Regression coefficients for the prediction of mixed infidelity on the basis of variables related to relationship dynamics, sexual compatibility and personality traits, N-470; **p < .001; *p < .05.

IV. Discussion

Within this study we aimed to identify the predictive variables of mixed infidelity. Regarding the variables of a relationship's dynamics, they are negatively correlated with mixed infidelity. The commitment level plays an essential role in showing proneness to infidelity. A low level of commitment and/or a high level of the quality of alternatives can lead to infidelity despite satisfaction with the current relationship, while big investments and/ or lack of an attractive alternative may inhibit infidelity even if satisfaction is low. The results of our study have corresponded with previous studies conducted by Drigotas & Safstrom (1999).

After processing the data, we also established the presence of a negative correlation between intimacy, passion and mixed infidelity. The intimacy level can influence sexual satisfaction in the couple's relationship, a low level of intimacy defines an unstable relationship where the satisfaction level is low (Mashek & Sherman, 2004). Thus, an increase in the intimacy level predicts a higher level of passion in the couple's relationship, associated with a high level of sexual satisfaction (Rubin & Campbell, 2012). Therefore, the fear of intimacy contributes to the emergence of dysfunctionalities in the couple's relationship, followed by the risk of engaging in acts of infidelity.

Among the variables of sexual compatibility, we noticed that infidelity is positively and significantly correlated with the concern for sexuality, sexual self-esteem and the attitude towards sexuality. There are also negative and significant correlations between infidelity and sexual satisfaction, sexual communication and sexual depression.

The sexuality dimension is relatively important in the couple's relationship, so more and more emphasis is placed on a high level of sexual satisfaction, which would favour maintaining a stable relationship over time. Conversely, the partners who recognise the worth of their relationship, but do not have a high level of sexual satisfaction, are more likely to engage in acts of sexual and/or emotional infidelity (Buss & Shackelford, 1997). Infidelity is a consequence of the fact that one of the partners is not sexually satisfied in the intimate relationship, our data being convergent with that obtained by Lalasz & Weigel (2011). Moreover, sexual reciprocity, whereby both partners gave and received pleasure in a rather mutual way, proved to be an important factor in maintaining sexual satisfaction. In the relationships where sexual reciprocity was not attained, there was a high probability to feel a low level of sexual satisfaction. Moreover, the partners who had the initiative of a sexual relationship reported higher levels of sexual satisfaction (Sprecher, 1988).

There are fewer studies on sexual communication; generally, sexual communication is associated with sexual satisfaction or the quality of a

relationship. A low level of communication, as well as sexual incompatibility, will become the main causes of instability in the couple's relationship and, implicitly, will lead to seeking another sexual partner. Sexual communication seems to directly influence the "sexual health of the couple". The ability to talk openly and assertively about the sexual needs of the couple is, most of the time, a common feature of serious relationships. (Wingood & DiClemente, 2000).

The sexuality level is a guide of sexual behaviour (Anderson & Cryanowski, 1999). Each person has a view of their own sexuality, associated either with high self-esteem or, on the contrary, with low self-esteem and the desire to avoid persons of the opposite sex. The persons with a high sexuality level show an exaggerated trust in the partner and refuse the idea that they might be left for another person. Individuals with a high sexuality level are much more affected, disappointed, furious when faced with the infidelity of the partner, and this infidelity act may favour "the dissolution of the couple" (Hall, Stewart & Fincham, 2008).

Usually, a permissive attitude towards sexuality implies a risk behaviour associated with mixed infidelity. The data of some studies (Hansen, 1987; Pris, Buunk & VanYperen, 1993) shows that persons with a permissive attitude are open to sexual acts with unknown partners, while conservative individuals feel offended by casual sexual relationships. The results of our study confirm these results, and this is why the permissive attitude becomes a predictor for mixed infidelity.

Among the personality traits, it should be pointed out that extraversion is positive correlated with mixed infidelity acts. Also, agreeableness and conscientiousness are negatively correlated with mixed infidelity acts. Extraversion is related to cheating, our results corresponding with the results of the study conducted by Buss & Shackelford (1997) and the one conducted by Schmitt (2004). Persons with a low level on the agreeableness and conscientiousness side show a high risk of infidelity, have a large number of sexual partners and engage in unprotected sexual acts (Shackelford, Besser & Goetz, 2008). In this current study, two of the personality traits, neuroticism and culture, are not related to mixed infidelity, which is why they were not included in the category of predictive factors for infidelity.

Conclusions

A semi-model of the predictive factors for mixed infidelity

Finally, a semi-model was designed, by inserting, in several stages, the variables significantly associated with the dependent variable „mixed infidelity". Thus, the infidelity increases more in an extraverted person, if that person has a high level of self-esteem and a permissive attitude towards sexuality. Also, the infidelity decreases when the person has a high level of

commitment, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, passion and sexual communication in the current relationship. At the same time, the infidelity decreases when there is a high level of agreeableness and sexual depression.

Strengths, limitations and direction for future research

There are important strengths in the design and methodological approach of our study (using appropriate statistical analysis for the purposes of this study: the Pearson Correlations, linear regression and sample size), which increases our confidence in the results. Our results show that there are a series of variables that can contribute to the infidelity acts; these variables refer to the dynamics of a relationship, sexual compatibility or individual personality traits.

This current study comprises a number of limitations, including the cross-sectional design and self-report measures sample size. Future research should include longitudinal research and/or experimental designs as well as some cognitive factors and beliefs that moderate/mediate the relationships between the used clusters of variables and the infidelity. A larger array of predictive factors for infidelity can be analysed in future studies. Moreover, we consider that it is relevant to study the predictive factors for infidelity in cases of persons who had been engaged in acts of infidelity, which should be taken into account in further studies. Studying the predictive factors for emotional infidelity and the predictive factors for sexual infidelity would contribute to a better understanding of their impact in the couple's life (Turliuc, 2009). Despite these limitations, the sample size and regression analysis support the generalisation of our results on the Romanian population.

Reference List

- Amato, P.R., & DeBoer, D.D. (2003). The transmission of marital instability across generations: Relationship skills or commitment to marriage? *Journal of Marriage & the Family*, 63:1038–1051.
- Amato, P. R., & Previti, D. (2003). People's reasons for divorcing: Gender, social class, the life course, and adjustment. *Journal of Family Issues*, 24, 602-626.
- Andersen, B. L., Cyranowski, J. M., & Espindle, D. (1999). Men's sexual self-schema. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76, 645–661.
- Barta, W.D., & Kiene, S.M. (2005). Motivations for Infidelity in Heterosexual Dating Couples: The Roles of Gender, Personality Differences and Sociosexual Orientation. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 22: 339–60.
- Botwin, M. D., Buss, D. M., & Shackelford, T. K. (1997). Personality and mate preferences: Five factors in mate selection and marital satisfaction. *Journal of Personality*, 65: 107-136.

- Bradbury, T. N., & Fincham, F. D. (1988). Individual difference variables in close relationships: A contextual model of marriage as an integrative framework. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 713–721
- Brown, E. M. (1991). *Patterns of infidelity and their treatment*. New York: Brunner/Mazel
- Brown, W. M., and Moore, C. (2003). Fluctuating asymmetry and romantic jealousy. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 24, 113-117.
- Buss, D. M., & Barnes, M. (1986). Preferences in human mate selection. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 50, 559–570.
- Costa, P.T.Jr., & Widiger, T. A. (1994). Personality disorders and the five-factor model of personality. Washington, DC: *American Psychological Association*.
- Crowell, J.A., Treboux, D., & Brockmeyer, S. (2009). Parental divorce and adult children's attachment representations and marital status. *Attachment & Human Development*, 11(1), 87-101.
- Cupach, W. R., & Comstock, J. (1990). Satisfaction with sexual communication in marriage: Links to sexual satisfaction and dyadic adjustment. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 7,179-186.
- Drigotas, S., C., & Safstrom, A (1999). An Investment Model Prediction of Dating Infidelity, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 77, 509- 524
- Eaves, S. H., & Smith, R., M. (2007). The relationship between self-worth and marital infidelity: A pilot study. *The Family Journal*, 15, 382-386. doi:10.1177/1066480707305468
- Eysenck, H. J. (1976). *Sex and personality*. London: Open Books.
- Eysenck, H. J., & Eysenck, S.B.G. (1975). *Eysenck Personality Questionnaire manual*. San Diego, CA: Educational and Industrial Testing Services
- Fricke, J. (2006). *Predicting Infidelity: The role of Attachment styles, Love styles and Investment Model*. Melbourne: Swinburne University of Technology.
- Goldberg, L. R. (1990). An Alternative Description of Personality. The Big-Five Factor Structure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59, 1216–1229.
- Gordon, K.C., & Baucom, D.H. (1999). A forgiveness-based intervention for addressing extramarital affairs. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 6, 382–399
- Gordon, K.C., & Baucom, D.H. (2003). Forgiveness and marriage: Preliminary support for synthesized model of recovery from a marital betrayal. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 31, 179–199.
- Gordon, K.C., Baucom, D.H., & Snyder, D.K. (2004). An integrative intervention for promoting recovery from extramarital affairs. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 30, 213–231.
- Gottman, J. M. (1994). *What predicts divorce? The relationship between marital processes marital outcomes*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Hall, J., H., Stewart, W., & Frank D. Fincham (2008). Risky Sexual Behavior Among Married Alcoholic Men.. *Journal of Family Psychology* 22: 287–92
- Hall, J., H., & Fincham F., D., (2006). Relationship Dissolution Following Infidelity: The Roles of Attributions and Forgiveness. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 25(5), 508-522. doi: 10.1521/jscp.2006.25.5.508

- Hansen, G. L. (1987). Extradyadic relations during courtship. *Journal of Sex Research*, 23, 382-390.
- Haselton, M. G., Buss, D. M., Oubaid, V., & Angleitner, A., (2005). Sex, Lies, and Strategic Interference: The Psychology of Deception Between the Sexes. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31, 3-23.
- Jefferson, S. (2012). *What's Sex got do with it? Relationship and Risk Factors influencing Infidelity in Young Couples*. A thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of science, Kansas State University.
- Jones D., Figueredo A.J., Dicke E.D., & Jacobs W.J.(2007). Relations Among Individual Differences in Reproductive Strategies, Sexual Attractiveness, Affective and Punitive Intentions, and Imagine and Sexual or Emotional Infidelity. *Evolutionary Psychology* 5(2), 387- 410
- Lalasz, C., B., & Weigel D., J. (2011). Understanding the Relationship Between Gender and Extradyadic Relations. The Mediating Role of Sensation Seeking on Intentions to Engage in Sexual Infidelity. *Personality and Individual Differences* 50: 1079–83.
- Lansford, J. E. (2009). Parental divorce and children's adjustment. *Perspectives on Psychosocial Science*, 4 (2), 140-152. DOI: 10.1111/j. 1745-6924.2009.011114.x.
- Lameiras F., M., & Castro, R., Y. (2003). The Big Five and sexual attitudes in Spanish students. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 31, 357–362.
- Lawrance, K., & Byers, E. S. (1992). Development of the Interpersonal Exchange Model of Sexual Satisfaction in long-term relationships. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*,1, 123-128.
- Lawrance, K., & Byers, E. S. (1995). Sexual satisfaction in long-term heterosexual relationships: the interpersonal exchange model of sexual satisfaction. *Personal Relationships*, 2, 267-285
- Lemieux, R. (1996). Behavioral indicators of intimacy, passion, and commitment in young versus mature romantic relationships: A test of the triangular theory of love. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences Vol. 57(3-A)*, (UMI No. 9624062).
- Little, A.C., Burt, D. M., & Perrett, D. I. (2006). Assortative mating for perceived personality traits. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 40: 973-984.
- Mashek, D. J., & Sherman, M. D. (2004). Desiring less closeness with intimate others. *Handbook of closeness and intimacy* (pp. 343–356). Mahwah: Erlbaum.
- McAlister, A.R., Pachana, N.,& Jackson,C. J. (2005). Predictors of young dating adults' inclination to engage in extradyadic sexual activities: A multi-perspective study. *British Journal of Psychology*, 96, 331–350
- Moultrup, D. J. (1990). *Husbands, wives, and lovers: The emotional system of the extramarital affair*. New York: Guilford Press
- Munsch, C., L., (2012). The Effect of Unemployment and Relative Income Disparity on Infidelity for Men and Women. Proceedings of the *American Sociological Association*, 16 August 2010, Atlanta, GA.

- Nogales A., & Bellotti L. G., (2009). *Parents who cheat: How children and adults are affected when their parents are unfaithful*. Editura Health Communications.
- Orzeck, T., & Lung, E. (2005). Big-Five Personality Differences of Cheaters and Non-Cheaters. *Current Psychology* 24: 274–87
- Prins, K.S., Buunk, B.P., & Van Yperen, N.W. (1993). Equity, normative disapproval and extramarital relationship, *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 10, 39-53.
- Randall, H. E., & Byers, E. S. (2003). What is sex? Students' definitions of having sex, sexual partner, and unfaithful sexual behavior. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, 12, 87-96.
- Ross, E., M., (2010). *A Study of the Relationship between Feminist Attitudes and Female Sexual Well-Being through structural Equation Modeling*. A dissertation in Marriage and Family Therapy. Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Texas Tech University in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
- Rubin, H., & Campbell, L. (2012). Day-to-Day Changes in Intimacy Predict Heightened Relationship Passion, Sexual Occurrence, and Sexual Satisfaction. A Dyadic Diary Analysis. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 3, 224–231.
- Schmitt, D., (2004). The Big Five Related to Risky Sexual Behaviour Across 10 World Regions Differential Personality Association of Sexual Promiscuity and Relationship Infidelity *European Journal of Personality* 18: 301–319 (2004) Published online in Wiley Inter Science (www.interscience.wiley.com). DOI: 10.1002/per.520
- Shackelford T.K., Besser A., & Goetz A. T. (2008). Personality, Marital Satisfaction, and Probability of Marital Infidelity. *Individual Differences Research*, Vol. 6 No 1 .13- 25.
- Shackelford, T.K., & Buss, D.M. (1997). Anticipation of marital dissolution as a consequence of spousal infidelity. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 14(6), 793-808.
- Sheppard, V. J., Nelson, E. S., & Andreoli -Mathie, V. (1995). Dating relationships and infidelity: Attitudes and behaviors. *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*, 21, 202-212.
- Sori, C. F. (2007). An affair to remember: Infidelity and its impact on children. In P. R. Peluso (Ed.), *Infidelity: A practitioner's guide to working with couples in crisis*. (247-276). New York, NY, US: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Sprecher, S. (1988). Investment Model, Equity, and Social Support Determinants of Relationship Commitment. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 51: 318–28
- Turliuc, M.N., (2009). Infidelitatea emoțională versus infidelitatea sexuală. *Revista de Psihologie Socială*. Buletinul Laboratorului Psihologia câmpului sociala, 23, 77-94.
- Turliuc, M. N., (2004), *Psihologia cuplului și a familiei*, Iași: Editura Performantica.
- Țuțu M., C., (2007). *Psihologia personalității*, București Editura Fundația Române de Mâine

- Ziherl, S., Masteni R., (2010). Differences in predictors of sexual satisfaction and in sexual satisfaction between female and male. *Psychiatria Danubina*; Vol. 22, No.3, 425-429
- Wang E. (2004). *Social Exchange Theory Applied to Romantic Relationship*, 9.00 Paper III: Rewriting the Textbook
- Weeks, G. R., Gambescia, N., Jenkins, R. E. (2003). *Treating infidelity*. New York: Norton.
- Wingood, G.M. & DiClemente, R.J. (2000). Application of the theory of gender and power to examine HIV-related exposures, risk factors, and effective intervention for women. *Health Education & Behavior*, 27(5), 539-565