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Gender differences have been known to play a role in infidelity, and the stereotypes that come with it. So why do people cheat? This research was conducted to provide accurate understanding of why infidelity occurs and how it can be detrimental to relationships. In a study conducted by Jeanfreau, Jurich, and Mong (2014), showed that women who have cheated on their husbands were not shown much quality time, physical attention, or affection. The act of infidelity was caused by their own unhappiness. However, it has been shown that men commit their acts of infidelity due to physical attraction. This research has connected the dots in infidelity in heterosexual relationships, however, there is no physical proof that this research can support homosexual and bisexual relationships due to the lack of evidence linked in this research.

Introduction

In today's world, we see a lot more people becoming divorced and a lot less getting married. But why is that? Could our economy have something to do with it? Maybe our communities we are raised in? Or could infidelity be the problem? Today we will be examining infidelity, it has become very common in today's age and we want to figure out why. In recent news, Beyonce has released an album titled "Lemonade." The fans were unsure of if this was even going to be an album, since she claimed the project would be released on HBO. Come to find out, the album was a visual project released on HBO, and after it aired it was soon released on the music app Tidal. This album got women across the nation in an uproar because it revealed that Beyonce had experienced infidelity issues and fans quickly thought her husband Jay-Z had been cheating on her. No accurate proofs of how long ago this affair occurred or how long it lasted but the lyrics in these songs were very powerful.

According to a report by CNN's Lisa France (2016) there were many rumors and speculations of the couple going through infidelity after the elevator incident, which Beyonce's sister Solange physically assaulted Jay-Z, but again, there was still no actual proof any infidelity had occurred. So why did Beyonce feel a need to create an album like this? If she was not cheated on, couldn't she be labeled as a liar? She also could be labeled as a creative marketing genius because so many women can relate to the situations she expressed in this album. At the end of the visual, Beyonce, along with her husband and daughter were pictured as a happy

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family. Giving many hope that if this turmoil occurs, it can be mended and create for a happy ending.

Many of us have experienced and or seen infidelity take place in many relationships, but how do we talk about it? Some people may not look too deep into the situation and could think nothing of it. Others may know that infidelity is taking place, but are happy and comfortable in their relationships and do not want to argue and cause tension in the relationship, therefore they do not say anything about the possible affair. Some people may seek financial stability in a relationship. This could outweigh the pros and cons of infidelity. If one person is being taken care of financially and is very stable, maybe they don't mind if their partner cheats on them. These are all taken into consideration when affairs can start to occur. According to Fox News Magazine (2012) 70% of men admitted to cheating on their wives, and 2/3 women were unaware of the affair even occurring.

According to The Huffington Post (2013) the best sexual defense is a good sexual offense. If people are extremely satisfied sexually, are less likely to be tempted to venture off and have sexual affairs. What about the people who have mental problems with sex? The people who have extremely great sex and to have it all of the time but are never satisfied? This couldn't possibly be accurate for them. Today we are going to discover why people commit infidelity in their relationships and why. We will also examine how couples can overcome this act of

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infidelity, and how we can relate this to interpersonal communication. We are seeking help for those who have encountered or committed an act of infidelity. These findings will allow us to relate infidelity with jealousy, and how it can turn into uncertainty in relationships. We will be discussing and defining what infidelity is, how frequently it occurs, who commits infidelity, why it is committed, the risks it can create, and what applications can we use to prevent these situations.

The Nature of Infidelity

As we continue along, the author wants to discuss and define what infidelity is. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, infidelity is unfaithfulness to a moral obligation. It can also be the act of having a sexual or romantic relationship with someone other than your spouse or romantic partner. According to Weiser and Weigel (2014) infidelity can be anything that violates the commitment norms or rules of an exclusive romantic relationship. Now that we have the term defined, let's get into the different types of infidelity. Throughout my research I found 3 different types of infidelity. They are sexual infidelity, emotional infidelity, and cybersex infidelity. I will define these three types and give examples below.

Emotional Infidelity- this type of infidelity involves deep feelings and a deep bond for another person. This could involve lustful thoughts of that person. This could be a feeling of yearning or intimacy suggested by Jeanfreau, Jurich, and Mong (2014). An example of emotional infidelity

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could be sneaking around and lying to your partner or spouse about spending quality time with another man or woman. Enjoying their company and developing an emotional connection to that person.

Sexual Infidelity- according to Weiser and Weigel (2014) this type of infidelity involves a physical and sexual involvement with another person. Basically having sexual relations or engaging in the act of sex with someone other than your spouse or sexual partner.

Cybersex Infidelity- according to Schneider, Weiss, and Samenow (2016) this type of infidelity deals with partners being physically and emotionally attracted to people online. People who view porn websites and masturbate, flirting with other people online, and even having an online affair. This type of infidelity is fairly new and little research has been conducted on it, but it does show that even when sexual behaviors are limited online, partners can still lose trust in their partners or spouse.

Infidelity Intentions

After defining these types of infidelity, the author decided to do research on how infidelity comes about. Why does happen? Many people felt their relationships lacking something. In a study done by Jeanfreau, Jurich, and Mong (2014) it used a qualitative approach to understand why four different women decided to have an affair on their husbands. All the information was gathered, audio recorded, and analyzed by the transcendental phenomenological

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model. Results showed that all of these women were lacking quality time from their husbands. Prior to the affairs, all of these women expressed that they were unable to solve conflicts in their marriage. Two of the women said that their husbands were willing to work on their issues but never did. All of these women agreed that if they were shown more quality time, physical attention, or affection, they never would have committed the affair. Reading this article, the author found that these prior issues in their marriages were the cause of infidelity. But why did these women decide to stay with their husbands? They easily could've divorced them and created their own happiness without an affair but decided not to. The women in this study showed that they truly love their husbands and want them to become better partners, but decided to commit an act of infidelity due to their own unhappiness.

Researching more into infidelity, the author wants to see why people have such a different opinion on infidelity, and if it is okay to happen. According to Jackman (2015) attitudes of individuals helped determine infidelity intentions, which in turn were influenced by gender, religion, and encounters of infidelity. Jackman (2015) suggests that although infidelity is frowned upon in many cultures and is considered to be unfaithful behavior, many individuals engage in this behavior. In a meta-analysis conducted by Tafoya and Spitzberg (2007) 34% of men and 24% of women have engaged in extramarital sexual relations. This study showed that those who have favorable attitudes towards infidelity have a higher chance of being unfaithful to their partner or spouse, and those who have engaged in unfaithful behaviors in the past are also

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more prone to engage in the act of infidelity again. So after looking through this study, we can say according to the data that those who are more favorable to cheat do not mean that they actually will. They are being held at a higher level of cheating expectancy because some feel that it is okay to commit this act or already have. But again, that does not mean that they will cheat, or do it again.

Frequency of Infidelity

We understand that infidelity occurs, but how often? How can we measure this on a large scale? It is hard to do because people are not that open to admit to committing an act of infidelity. This can potentially damage their current relationship, or create uncertainty between the couple. According to Statistic Brain (2015) these were the statistics on infidelity in marriages and romantic relationships in the U.S.

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Marriage Infidelity Statistics	Data
Percent of marriages where one or both spouses admit to infidelity, either physical or emotional	41 %
Percent of men who admit to committing infidelity in any relationship they've had	57 %
Percentage of women who admit to committing infidelity in any relationship they've had	54 %
Percent of married men who have strayed at least once during their married lives	22 %
Percent of married women who have strayed at least once during their married lives	14 %
Percentage of men and women who admit to having an affair with a co-	36 %

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worker	
Percentage of men and women who admit to infidelity on business trips	35%
Percentage of men and women who admit to infidelity with a brother-in-law or sister-in-law	17 %
Average length of an affair	2 years
Percentage of marriages that last after an affair has been admitted to or discovered	31 %
Percentage of men who say they would have an affair if they knew they would never get caught	74 %
Percentage of women who say they would have an affair if they knew they would never get caught	68 %
Percent of children who are the product of infidelity	2.5 %

Looking at this data it is easy to say that men are more probable to cheat on their spouse or partner, but why is that so? Earlier we discussed how the four women cheated on their husbands because they were lacking quality time and intimacy in their marriage. Could that be possibly the same reason why men cheat? Next we are going to look at the differences in me, if there is any, and why they commit infidelity.

Why Do Men Cheat?

Common knowledge in our society shows that men are more so expected to cheat than women are. When men cheat we see it as being more normal, and that women who cheat should be ashamed of themselves because women should not commit such acts. Through research, it has come about that men can be forgiven more than women, according to Hunyady, Josephs, and Jost (2008). This allows us to think of men as being less monogamous than women, and that we

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should be okay with it. Golomb, Fava, Abraham, and Rosenbaum (1995) suggest that numerous studies have proven that men are more likely to possess a narcissistic character structure than women do. This particular gender difference can possibly be related to the act that narcissism is more consistent with male stereotypes and gender role expectations. This research concludes that the societal double standard exists in regard to sexual infidelity, and appears to reflect men's narcissistic sense of entitlement to being unfaithful, Hunyady, Josephs, and Jost (2008). This is a complete difference than what the women in the first study showed. Their lack of needs in their marriage eventually forced them to cheat on their spouse, but this study shows that the narcissistic characteristic of the human male species is what in turn forces them to cheat. This study says that men can cheat without any emotional attachment at all and that even though it is considered an unfaithful act, women should be more accepting of it. This will lead us to the next topic, which will discuss the perception of men and women on infidelity.

Perceptions of Infidelity

According to Kato (2014) studies show that using a forced-choice paradigm, males are more upset over their female partner or spouse committing sexual infidelity, and women are more upset of their male spouse or partner committing emotional infidelity. This study shows that the male imagination of his female partner being sexually active with someone else would be hard to get over because in their minds, women are not supposed to cheat. The men in this

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study felt as if their women are their property and that they belong to them in a sense. Being in the possession of another man is very hard for them to comprehend and understand. Although in a study conducted by Urooj, Haque, and Anjum (2015) men perceived sexual and emotional dissatisfaction as a means to cheat. Women are more so concerned with the act of emotional infidelity. As previously mentioned, women are more likely to forgive their male partner for committing sexual infidelity, but when emotions get involved they get even more concerned. Some women see physical affairs as just that, men can sleep with multiple women and have no emotions for any of them but her. When his emotions become involved with another woman it can be a means to a disaster. Women in this study imagined all of the emotions they go through with their partner, and do not want their spouse going through that with someone else. It becomes very upsetting to a woman. This leads us into a discussion of jealousy after an affair has already occurred in the relationship.

Jealousy

As we have researched, affairs are very common and can happen to almost anyone. When this act occurs how will the partner react? Many emotions can flow out of infidelity. People can become mad, angry, sad, and emotionally distraught. Some people can shut down and will just leave, and some may want to still work it out and keep the relationship going. But, those who stick with their partner after the affair may feel a sense of jealousy, or may become jealous of

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other men or women. According to Guerrero and Andersen (1998) in the case of romantic jealousy, people fear losing the love or exclusivity that they share in their relationship. Although jealousy is not exclusive to romantic partners, that will be our focus. After the affair, jealousy can result in many negative consequences. Jealousy can increase the fear of a partner, in that they could be scared to trust or love the person who committed infidelity again. Throughout this chapter they discuss the effects of fear anger and sadness that come with jealousy.

Fear- jealousy fear is more common than envious fear. This comes from fear of abandonment and relational loss and also the uncertainty about the relationship.

Anger- According to Guerrero and Andersen (1998) this is a powerful part of the jealousy experience. This includes a feeling of anger at the partner and the rival. This results in a feeling of being betrayed and disappointment in the partner. The feeling of revenge is strong through anger.

Sadness- sadness is also a common response when experiencing jealousy. This stems from a potential loss of a valued relationship. This is an emotion that may well be muted.

Those who go through infidelity in a relationship can be very tough, because giving that person all of your trust is a big step in a relationship. If they cheat or commit an act of adultery, it seems as if your trust means nothing to them. Jealousy could potentially become dangerous and life threatening. George and Pam (whose names have been changed due to confidential reasons)

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went through an act of infidelity in their relationship. George had been cheating on Pam for more than six months when she found out about it, and she was very hurt and upset. She found out who the woman he was cheating with was via Twitter and proceeded to tweet her and start an argument. Of course this was a terrible idea because not only does everyone on Twitter know their business, she was not conducting herself as a lady. Saying that she was going to fight the girl. Eventually that is exactly what ended up happening. The two women ended up physically hurting one another when all of this could have been prevented. Of course George no longer wanted to be in the picture with either of the women and moved on, so where did that leave Pam and the mistress? They fought each other for no reason but jealousy which is sad. They could have easily killed each other with this type of behavior. Luckily that did not happen. Jealousy can be a very dangerous emotion and needs to be taken into consideration before acting out in bad ways. This leads me to uncertainty that can be caused by infidelity and jealousy.

Uncertainty

Many people would be distraught after finding out about an affair, and this can potentially cause uncertainty in the relationship, or future relationships. Again, this goes back to a lack of trust. If you trust someone to be committed to you and only you and they break that trust, you are left feeling hurt and uncertain. Many things may arise in your mind about the affair, and can possibly lead you to thinking even when your partner is telling the truth, they are

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lying. Trust allows us to predict the actions of our partner. When this is broken it can lead to possible snooping in the relationship. We want to know what is going on and the truth. According to Derby, Knox, and Easterling (2012) a study was done on college students who had reported a total 65% of participants were snooping through their partner's belongings due to anger and curiosity. This all occurred after these couples established a monogamous relationship. But does everyone believe in monogamous relationships? This should be something you ask your partner right away when the relationships start. Some people have no clue what monogamy even means, so it is better to lay down some ground rules for the relationship before this infidelity occurs. Though infidelity is common, let's go over the risks that both partners can endure.

Infidelity Risks

As we previously covered in this paper, emotional risks have a huge factor in committing acts of adultery. But let's go into the physical risks one can possibly endure. Today we are a lot more aware of sexual transmitted infections and viruses that may not have any cure. When committing an act of infidelity, it is important to take these facts into consideration. You could potentially endanger yourself, your partner, and even your friends and family. It is possible that you can possibly attract a sexually transmitted infection or virus and not even know it. According to Macaуда, Erickson, Singer, and Santelices (2011) shows that African Americans and Puerto

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Rican young adults who lived in the projects were more prone to have multiple sexual partners and were at a greater risk factor to catch sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. The results of this study also showed that people in committed relationships are less tolerable of multiple sexual partners, but very few of these relationships are considered committed. So where does this leave us? It brings us back to monogamy. According to Kanazawa and Still (1999), if there are minor glitches in the marriage market, people consider being more open and free with their relationships. In other words, if the person you are attracted to or in a relationship with is lacking something you desire, cheating or polygamy can possibly occur. This is why it is important to have that talk with your partner. Be specific and point out what this relationship requires. This leads us into the discussion of our findings.

Discussion

Throughout the research conducted, it is found that infidelity occurs both in men and women. These people are particularly lacking some type of desire in their relationship and find it elsewhere. This does not mean that the relationship can't continue, but once the other partner finds out about the infidelity it will be a hard road to recover from. Insecurities can take over which could lead to jealousy and anger. This can be potentially damaging, because the person affected the most by the cheating could lose trust, and then carry on these feelings to their next relationship. Before cheating consider the risks of the affair. The partner will become

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emotionally distraught, and the physical health of both people in the relationship can be possibly damaged by sexual transmitted infections or HIV/AIDS. Discussions of monogamy should occur when the relationship becomes solidified, and the ground rules of that relationship should be established as well. Looking further into how this can affect the interpersonal communication of both people involved in the relationship, let's apply some theories to this research.

Applications

The Uncertainty Reduction Theory is the first that comes to mind. According to Guerrero, Andersen, and Afifi (2014) this is defined as the inability to predict or explain someone's attitude or behavior in a relationship. So this theory is saying when we know what to expect from our partner we are able to predict their behaviors, but when we do not know what to expect we become uncertain of their behaviors. So, when one experiences an affair, but did not think it would happen because your partner portrayed themselves as faithful; one is confused and uncertain of how to handle the particular situation. Questions will arise from this uncertainty and could potentially danger this relationship. Using active or interactive strategies when uncertainty occurs can help one become more certain. Active strategies would be hiring a private investigator to spy on your partner. Interactive strategies would be to involve direct contact between the information seeker and the target. This would involve a direct conversation between both people of the relationship about the affair.

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Another interpersonal theory that could be applied to this topic is Social Exchange Theory. According to Braithwaite and Schrodt (2015) this theory weighs the benefits and costs of a relationship. An example of this would be if a woman was a stay at home wife, and her husband was an NFL player, if he cheats on her she may be upset and even jealous, but her odds are more prone to stay with him since he supports her life financially. When one is going through an affair, use this theory to outweigh the benefits and costs of the relationship. If it is more beneficial to stay, then seek help to resolve the relational conflict.

The last theory that can be applied to this topic is Expectancy Violations Theory. This theory focuses on how communicators assess behaviors that violate our expectations and how they respond to communicatively, Braithwaite and Schrodt (2015). The behavior you anticipate from your relational partner is not to cheat if that is what is established. So when this happens it violates one's expectancies and in return creates uncertainty in the relationship. This proposes that when someone does violate our expectancies, we need to make sense of why this occurred. This shows that we are trying to understand why the infidelity occurred and why.

Conclusion

In conclusion to this research, it is understood that this type of behavior can occur within any relationship. It is found that infidelity comes with many emotions and that it has the power to either end your relationship or mend it. In fact it seems as if those who do commit an act of

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infidelity change for the better of the relationship. Knowing that love outweighs all is enough for some people to have the desire to change and create a new foundation. Research and statistics shows that men are more prone to cheat than women are, and are less likely to take a woman back after committing sexual infidelity. Women become more upset when the affair with their mate is emotional. Throughout this research, it only explains the nature of infidelity in relationships on a hetero sexual scale. There was no research done to determine if these results would be different if the participants were gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Research showed that infidelity definitely violates expectancies, which in return create uncertainty, and could potentially create jealousy. This can create tension within the relationship, and leave the partner with the uncertainty of not knowing why this happened. Consider physical health before committing an affair, this could lead to potentially life threatening viruses or diseases for you and your partner. Using the applications above, one is able to understand how to get through this type or violation. All in all, if the relationship is monogamous, keep it that way. If one is unhappy with their partner, discuss your issues with that person before deciding to commit infidelity. It will save you a heck of a headache.

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