



# Who's Cheating Who? Perceptions of Infidelity Across Gender and Sexual Orientation

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## INTRODUCTION

How do you define infidelity?

- Infidelity is a complex issue for which the lines may not be as clear as we like to think.
- Previous research found that men rated infidelity significantly more acceptable in both marriage and dating relationships (Sheppard, Nelson and Andreou-Mathie 1995).
- Wiederman and LaMar (1998) found that men were significantly less upset in same sex infidelity whereas women were significantly more upset with same sex infidelity.

Hypotheses:

- We predict a main effect of scenario given in that the mixed group will be much more acceptable than the other two.
- We predict a main effect of gender in that males will be less severe in their ratings toward infidelity.
- We also predict an interaction between gender and scenario, specifically in that males given the mixed group will be the most accepting.

## METHODS

PARTICIPANTS:

- We surveyed 281 volunteers
- 188 male
- 93 female
- Age ranged from 17-29 years old

DESIGN

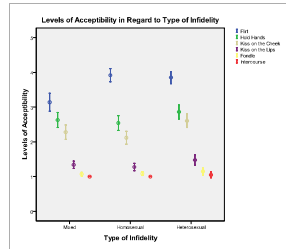
- The study was a 2x3 between-subjects design
- The independent variables were participant gender (male vs. female) and the type of infidelity (heterosexual, homosexual, and mixed).
- The dependent variables were perception of different levels of infidelity (flirting, holding hands, kissing cheeks, kissing lips, fondling, and intercourse)

MATERIALS AND PROCEDURE:

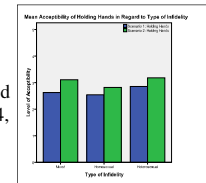
- A Qualtrics survey was conducted for six consecutive days
- It contained four sections including:
  - Demographics
  - Scenarios
  - Personal thoughts
  - General survey questions

## RESULTS

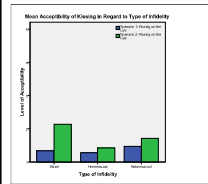
### Type of Infidelity



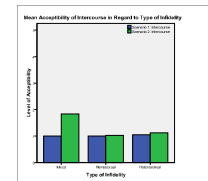
There is a main effect of Type of Infidelity on Level of Acceptability.



Type of infidelity in regard to holding hands in scenario 2 proved to be significant  $F(1,281) = 3.39, p=.035$ , with a partial  $\eta^2 = .024$ , indicating a small effect size.

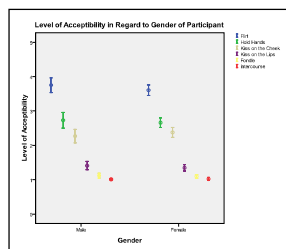


Type of infidelity in regard to kissing on the lips in scenario 2 proved to be significant  $F(1,281) = 5.26, p=.006$  with a partial  $\eta^2 = .04$ , again indicating a small effect size.



Type of infidelity in regard to intercourse in scenario 2 proved to be significant  $F(1, 281) = 12.86, p < .001$  (Figure 3f) with a partial  $\eta^2 = .086$ , again indicating a small effect size.

### Gender



There is not a main effect of gender on level of acceptability. Error bars indicate that women tend to agree more than men on acceptability of various acts of infidelity.

	Mean scores for Men	Mean scores for Women	t	significance
Flirting	3.65	3.82	-3.505	<.001
Holding Hands	2.68	3.04	-7.087	<.000
Kissing on the Cheek	2.34	2.67	-5.489	<.000
Kissing on the Lips	1.37	1.75	-6.227	<.000
Fondling	1.1	1.43	-5.509	<.000
Intercourse	1.02	1.31	-4.801	<.000

From the paired sample T-tests, women engaging in different acts that could be considered intimate were judged less severely than men engaging in those same acts.

## DISCUSSION

- The hypothesis that there would be a main effect for gender was not confirmed by the findings of this study.
- The hypothesis that there would be an interaction between gender of participant and type of infidelity was also refuted by this study.
- There was a main effect of type of infidelity
  - Suggests that people have different perceptions of infidelity dependent on the situation, more specifically it is less acceptable when people engage in potential intimate actions with a person opposite of the typical gender they are attracted to.

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