



Dating Infidelity in Turkish Couples: The Role of Attitudes and Intentions

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Studies on dating infidelity have mostly been carried out in individualistic, Western cultures and have tended to investigate either attitudes or intentions toward infidelity in isolation from each other. The current study therefore investigated dating infidelity in a more collectivist, predominantly Muslim culture. Informed by the theory of planned behavior, it tested intentions as a potential mechanism that might account for the association between attitudes toward infidelity and reported infidelity. In doing so, the role of gender and infidelity history was also investigated in regard to attitudes and intentions toward infidelity. A sample of 420 college students (292 women) completed the Turkish versions of the Attitudes Towards Infidelity Scale and the Intentions Towards Infidelity Scale. A 2 (gender) × 2 (infidelity history: yes, no) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) revealed main effects but no interaction effect. Men compared to women and cheaters compared to noncheaters reported more favorable attitudes and intentions toward infidelity. Moreover, intentions toward infidelity fully and partly mediated the association between attitudes toward infidelity and infidelity for women and men, respectively. Findings are interpreted in light of dating infidelity research, with a focus on universal and culturally specific aspects. Recommendations are made for future research.

Dating infidelity is increasingly common among young adults, particularly among emerging adults in Western cultures where it has been shown to be detrimental to the relationship and to both partners' well-being (see McAnulty & McAnulty, 2012). Moreover, actual and/or perceived threats of dating infidelity can result in further consequences, such as dating violence. Not surprisingly, it is a common presenting problem for dating and married couples entering therapy (Bischoff, 2003). Despite systematic research on dating infidelity, the potentially important role of two variables that might predict such behavior, attitudes toward infidelity and intentions to engage in infidelity, have not been fully explored. This oversight is emphasized by the fact that attitudes and intentions are two variables that are important components of arguably the most influential theory used to predict behavior, the theory of planned behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2005). In the theory of planned behavior, attitudes toward a behavior, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intentions shape an individual's behavior.

In addition to bringing the theory of planned behavior to bear on dating infidelity, the present research investigated infidelity in a non-Western cultural context. Doing so has important implications. For example, if attitudes and intentions emerge as predictors of infidelity in dating couples even when the culture is more morally restrictive than Western cultures, this would provide cross-cultural data on the key role of attitudes and intentions in predicting behavior. Therefore, the current study investigated dating infidelity in a Turkish sample of college students. Turkey offers a useful comparison culture because it is a predominantly Muslim country but unusual in its secular and democratic structure. Thus, it is a unique culture that presents the opportunity to explore both potentially universal and culturally specific characteristics of dating infidelity.¹

Infidelity is defined as

a sexual and/or emotional act engaged in by one person within a committed relationship, where such an act occurs outside of the primary relationship and constitutes a breach of trust and/or violation of agreed upon norms (overt and covert) by one or both individuals in that relationship in relation to romantic, emotional or sexual exclusivity. (Blow & Hartnett, 2005, p. 191)

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In today's society, the lack of clear rules or expectations (DeGenova & Rice, 2005) for dating relationships may make infidelity more acceptable than in the past, when clear rules existed for such relationships. Dating infidelity is widespread among contemporary college students (Allen & Baucom, 2004; Barta & Kiene, 2005; Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Hansen, 1987; Roscoe, Cavanaugh, & Kennedy, 1988; Wiederman & Hurd, 1999), and it may be more common than generally thought (Hall & Fincham, 2009). Hansen's (1987) study, one of the first on dating infidelity, revealed that 70.9% of the men and 54.4% of the women had engaged in extradyadic behaviors. Similarly, Wiederman and Hurd (1999) found that 75% of males and 68% of females reported extradyadic involvement in a serious dating relationship. Feldman and Cauffman (1999) found relatively lower rates, in that one-third of the participants had betrayed a partner (males 30%; females 34%). More recent studies reveal similar rates. Allen and Baucom (2004) reported rates among college students of 33% and 31% for males and females, respectively, whereas Hall and Fincham (2009) found 35% of college students reported infidelity in their current dating relationships. Of those who reported infidelity, 29% and 28% labeled it physical and emotional, respectively, with the remaining 43% labeling it physical and emotional. Research on dating infidelity among Turkish college students is scarce but not completely absent. Yeniçeri and Kökdemir (2006) found that 19.6% cheated on their partners, a rate that is lower than that typically reported in Western samples.

Gender comparisons of dating infidelity have mostly yielded no differences among dating college samples (i.e., Barta & Kiene, 2005; Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Negash, Veldorale-Brogan, Kimber, & Fincham, 2016; Wiederman & Hurd, 1999). However, some studies report that men are more likely to engage in dating infidelity compared to women (Fernandez, 2012; Martins et al., 2016). For example, Martins et al. (2016) found rates of dating infidelity were 15% and 24.4% for women and men, respectively. Other studies have found higher rates of infidelity for women (e.g., Brand, Markey, Mills, & Hodges, 2007; Shimberg, Josephs, & Grace, 2015).

These rates of infidelity are notable because the consequences of infidelity in dating relationships can be profound. Dating infidelity has negative impacts on the betrayed partner (Shackelford, LeBlanc, & Drass, 2000), the perpetrator (Hall & Fincham, 2009), and the relationship (Drigotas, Safstrom, & Gentilia, 1999; Hall & Fincham, 2006). The betrayed partner often experiences negative emotions, such as insecurity, hostility, depression, anxiety, blameworthiness, and humiliation (Shackelford et al., 2000). Hall and Fincham (2009) found that perpetrators, compared to nonperpetrators, reported higher levels of depressive and posttraumatic symptomatology, guilt, shame, and lower levels of general well-being and self-forgiveness. Relationship dissolution may occur following infidelity in dating relationships (Hall & Fincham, 2006). Whether they break up or not, infidelity is the most common presenting

problem for dating and married couples entering therapy (Bischoff, 2003; Glass & Wright, 1988). Furthermore, behavioral responses to dating infidelity can result in harmful outcomes. Indeed, the mere anticipation of partner infidelity has been linked to physical, sexual, and psychological dating violence and partner injury in a sample of college men in one study (Arnocky, Sunderani, Gomes, & Vaillancourt, 2015). In a qualitative study, jealousy, control, and infidelity were identified as antecedents of physical dating violence (Holland, Ehrenreich, Orpinas, & Reeves, 2013).

Some researchers suggest that dating and marital relationships share many similarities in terms of relationship dynamics (e.g., Fincham & Cui, 2011), including infidelity (Drigotas et al., 1999; Roscoe et al., 1988). However, available empirical investigations of dating infidelity have focused mostly on sex differences in prevalence, types of infidelity (emotional versus sexual), and reactions to infidelity. Causes/predictors have been less well investigated. Among those investigated, attitudes toward infidelity have attracted research attention and have been linked to actual infidelity.

One might expect that high rates of dating infidelity among college students is solely (or only) the consequence of their strong approval of infidelity. This is not the case, as research on attitudes toward infidelity has consistently demonstrated that college students strongly disapprove of it. Lieberman (1988), for instance, found that two-thirds of the college students held negative attitudes toward infidelity in dating relationships, regardless of gender. A very similar proportion in another study not only disapproved but also stated that they had terminated a relationship due to infidelity (Knox, Zusman, Kaluzny, & Sturdivant, 2000). College students clearly disapprove of infidelity whether it is physical or emotional/mental, such as thinking, dreaming, and fantasizing about a secondary partner (Feldman & Cauffman, 1999).

However, two factors appear to lessen the degree of disapproval and encourage a more permissive attitude toward dating infidelity: biological sex and infidelity history. Male college students, compared to their female counterparts, consistently hold more favorable attitudes toward infidelity (see Barta & Kiene, 2005; Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Hansen, 1987; Lieberman, 1988; Roscoe et al., 1988; Sheppard, Nelson, & Andreoli-Mathie, 1995; Shimberg et al., 2015; Tagler & Jeffers, 2013). Moreover, males continued to hold more permissive attitudes toward infidelity in all situations where behaviors were clearly identified as "ambiguous" (such as dancing or hugging), "deceptive" (such as withholding information or lying), and/or "explicit" (such as sexual intercourse or oral sex) (Wilson, Mattingly, Clark, Weidler, & Bequette, 2011). More permissive attitudes toward "ambiguous behaviors" predicted actual engagement in those behaviors later on (Hackathorn, Mattingly, Clark, & Mattingly, 2011). Finally, college students with a history of dating infidelity have more positive attitudes toward infidelity (Barta & Kiene, 2005; Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Jackman, 2015; Shimberg et al., 2015).

The only study on attitudes toward infidelity among Turkish college students revealed that men compared to women and cheaters compared to noncheaters had more permissive attitudes toward infidelity (Toplu-Demirtaş, Dolunay-Cug, & Tezer, 2014).

Because attitudes toward infidelity do not invariably predict dating infidelity, some researchers stress the importance of “intentions toward infidelity” (Jones, Olderbak, & Figueredo, 2011). The theory of reasoned action and its successor, the theory of planned behavior, arose to address the discrepancy between attitude and behavior and accorded intentions a pivotal role as the proximal cause of behavior (see Ajzen, 2012; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). Intentions toward infidelity have received limited attention, but have been shown to be associated with self-reported dating infidelity among college-aged samples (Jones, 2009). Moreover, intentions predicted later dating infidelity (Olderbak, 2008). Gender is also related to intentions toward infidelity. In a study with Turkish college students, Toplu-Demirtaş and Tezer (2013) found that males were more likely than females to engage in dating infidelity behaviors. However, they did not investigate whether intentions predicted infidelity or whether gender differences existed in regard to intentions predicting actual infidelity.

Further, there is growing evidence showing that attitudes toward infidelity and intentions toward infidelity are positively and strongly associated with each other in dating samples (Barta & Kiene, 2005; Hackathorn et al., 2011; Toplu-Demirtaş et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2011). Hackathorn et al. (2011) showed that attitudes were significant predictors of greater intentions to be unfaithful in a college sample, a finding consistent with those showing that attitudes toward infidelity are the key antecedent of intentions (Drake & McCabe, 2000; Jackman, 2015). Jackman (2015), for example, found that more favorable attitudes toward infidelity were the most important determinant of infidelity intentions in a predominantly dating sample. Informed by the theory of planned behavior, Drake and McCabe's (2000) study yielded similar findings using a non-college sample. In the only available Turkish study investigating the association between attitudes and intentions toward infidelity, Toplu-Demirtaş et al. (2014) found a strong correlation between them ($r = .48, p < .01$).

Possibly because of the high prevalence rates and negative impacts on the betrayed partner, perpetrator, and the relationship, attempts have been made to identify predictors of dating infidelity that might hold promise for prevention efforts. To date, most research on dating infidelity has focused on gender and self-reported infidelity differences in attitudes toward infidelity. Intentions toward infidelity have been less widely investigated, again with a focus on gender and self-reported infidelity differences. Interestingly, the associations among gender, attitudes, intentions, and infidelity have not been fully explored in dating samples. Most of the studies on dating infidelity either focused on attitudes or intentions toward infidelity, not both.

Moreover, the vast majority of research on dating infidelity has been carried out in Western societies, with Caucasian participants, which limits understanding to individualistic cultures. On the individualism–collectivism dimension, Turkey is neither purely collectivistic nor purely individualistic but a synthesis of both (Göregenli, 1995; Imamoğlu, 1998), though it is seen as being closer to collectivism (Hofstede, 2001). This observation combined with the fact that Turkey has a majority Muslim (98% to 99%) population makes it an interesting non-Western context in which to study infidelity. In Turkish culture, family honor is extremely important and is equated with the preservation of female virginity and the purity of women (Sev'er & Yurdakul, 2001). Premarital sexuality can have serious consequences for women, such as involuntary virginity examinations, physical abuse, and honor killings (Sakallı-Uğurlu & Glick, 2003). In fact, the rate of femicide in Turkey has increased 1400% (Cetin, 2015) over the past 15 years as the culture becomes increasingly conservative with its traditional and masculine interpretation of Islam (Glick, Sakallı-Uğurlu, Akbaş, Metin-Orta, & Ceylan, 2016).

Lest it appear otherwise, however, it must be noted that Turkey is not a typical Muslim country. For example, alcohol consumption is strictly prohibited in Islam, but is not illegal in Turkey. However, alcohol consumption among college students is less common and less socially accepted than in Western countries (Özgür-İlhan, Yıldırım, Demirbaş, & Doğan, 2008). Thus, dating infidelity may occur more often than would be assumed in more traditional Islamic cultures. Turkey therefore not only provides an interesting comparison for traditional Western cultures but merits scholarly attention because it is a unique and complex culture in its own right. Thus, we believe that dating infidelity among college students in Turkey is worthy of further examination.

In turning to dating infidelity in Turkey, it is important to note that psychological aggression is widespread among dating college students and often takes the form of restrictive engulfment, which includes the acts of isolating, restricting, monitoring, and controlling as a means of possessiveness and jealousy (Toplu-Demirtaş, 2015; Toplu-Demirtaş, Murray, & Hatipoğlu Sümer, 2017). To illustrate, 85.2% ($N = 706$) and 80.3% ($N = 304$) of college women and men, respectively, reported experiences of restrictive engulfment (Toplu-Demirtaş, 2015). Moreover, Turkish college students do not perceive jealousy as abusive (Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu-Sümer, & Fincham, 2017). Given the relationships among jealousy, control, infidelity, and dating violence in dating samples (see Holland et al., 2013), a closer look at dating infidelity in a different culture seems necessary and valuable for advancing understanding.

The current study had three purposes. The first was to investigate whether the findings of gender differences in extra-dyadic behavior among dating college students in Western samples would be replicated in a Turkish (non-Western) sample. Based on prior research, it was hypothesized that men will show higher rates of infidelity than women (hypothesis 1). The second

purpose examined the role of gender and infidelity history in regard to attitudes and intentions toward infidelity among dating college students. It was hypothesized that males and dating college students who reported (past/current) infidelity would have more permissive attitudes toward infidelity and show greater intention of engaging in dating infidelity (hypothesis 2). The third and primary purpose was to investigate intentions toward infidelity as a potential mechanism linking attitudes toward infidelity and dating infidelity among college students. It was hypothesized that intentions toward dating infidelity would mediate the association between attitudes toward infidelity and actual infidelity behavior (hypothesis 3).

Method

Participants

College students ($n = 420$; 292 female, 69.5%) enrolled at a major state university in a midwestern city in Turkey participated in the survey. The sample was composed of both previously and currently dating students. Participants were not dating one another. The sample ranged in age from 18 to 28 years with a mean age of 21.63 ($SD = 1.77$) and included two freshmen (.05%), 167 (39.8%) sophomores, 120 (28.6%) juniors, and 130 (31.0%) seniors. One case was missing data for grade level (.02%). To increase the heterogeneity of the sample, data were collected from mandatory/compulsory courses (e.g., Turkish; History of Turkish Reevaluation) that undergraduates from different departments are required to take. At the beginning of data collection, 475 students were willing to participate in the study. Of the 475 students, 420 (88.4%) filled in the questionnaires and were included in the analyses. The remaining 55 questionnaires (11.6%) were left unanswered.

Half of the sample (50.2%) reported having had a dating relationship in the past but were not now dating ($n = 211$), and 181 had a dating relationship at the time of data collection (43.1%). The rest of the sample defined their relationships as engaged (23 students, 5.5%). Five students did not indicate their relationship status (1.2%). Regarding infidelity history, 58 of the 420 participants (14%) said that they had cheated on a partner.

Procedure

The Human Subjects Ethics Committee provided approval, after which data were obtained through use of a survey during the spring semester of the 2013–2014 academic years. E-mails were sent to class instructors explaining the purpose and procedure of the study and asking permission to recruit students from their classes. In classes, students were told that the survey was voluntary and pertained to heterosexuals previously or currently dating. Students who were ineligible or who did not wish to participate left the room. Potential participants were then reminded that participation was voluntary and that

responses would be given anonymously and remain confidential. To ensure independence of observations, they were instructed not to participate if their partner had done so and to inform their partners not to do so if the partner had not yet participated. However, we cannot know if all participants indeed asked their partners about their participation and, more importantly, they might have been unwilling to disclose their participation to their partners. The survey took approximately 5 to 10 minutes for the participants to complete. No incentives were given for participation.

Measures

Demographic information form (DIF). Questions were asked to ascertain the sex, age, and college year of participants, as well as their current relationship status.

Dating infidelity (DI). To measure dating infidelity, participants were provided with the definition of infidelity offered by Blow and Hartnett (2005):

a sexual and/or emotional act engaged in by one person within a committed relationship, where such an act occurs outside of the primary relationship and constitutes a breach of trust and/or violation of agreed upon norms (overt and covert) by one or both individuals in that relationship in relation to romantic, emotional or sexual exclusivity. (p. 191)

They were then asked if they had ever cheated on their partner in their current and/or a previous dating relationship.

Attitudes Toward Infidelity Scale (ATIS). To assess attitudes toward infidelity, a Turkish version of the ATIS (Whatley, 2008), a 12-item unidimensional self-report measure, was used. It includes items such as “I would have an affair if I knew my significant other would never find out,” “Infidelity is acceptable for retaliation of infidelity,” and “Infidelity is morally wrong in all circumstances regardless of the situation.” The items make use of a 7-point Likert-type scale with 1 indicating *Disagree strongly* and 7 indicating *Agree strongly*. The total score is the sum of all items after six items are reversed-coded. The scores ranged between 12 and 84. Higher scores indicate greater endorsement of positive attitudes toward infidelity. Toplu-Demirtaş et al. (2014) adapted and evaluated the validity of Turkish version of the ATIS and concluded that it had adequate psychometrics. In the present study, Cronbach’s alpha was .81.

Intentions Towards Infidelity Scale (ITIS). To gauge intentions toward infidelity, a Turkish version of the ITIS (Jones et al., 2011) was used. This is a 7-item unidimensional self-report measure that includes such items as “How likely would you be to be unfaithful to a partner if you knew you wouldn’t get caught?” and “How likely would you be to lie to a partner about being unfaithful to him or her?”

Participants coded their responses using a 7-point Likert-type scale from *Not at all likely* to *Extremely likely*. Before scoring, a single item was reverse-coded (item 3). A total intention score ranging from 7 to 49 was obtained by summing item responses, with higher scores reflecting stronger intention to engage in infidelity. Toplu-Demirtaş and Tezer (2013) adapted the ITIS into Turkish and confirmed that it showed a single-factor structure. The internal consistency and test-retest reliability coefficients were computed as .82 and .85, respectively. Cronbach’s alpha was .83 in the current study.

Results

The first hypothesis predicted that men would report higher rates of infidelity than women. This hypothesis was not supported. Of the 292 women in the sample, 38 (13.2%) reported cheating on a partner; of the 128 men in the sample, 20 (15.7%) reported cheating on a partner. Although the proportion of men who cheated was slightly higher compared to women, the difference was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(1, n = 415) = .29, p = .59, \phi = -.03$.

To test the second hypothesis—that males and students who reported (past/current) infidelity would have more permissive attitudes toward infidelity and show greater intention of engaging in dating infidelity—a two-way MANOVA (gender \times infidelity history) was conducted. As the assumption of equality of variances was not met, a more conservative alpha (.01 instead of .05) was used (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). To handle a violation of multivariate normality, Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggest a more robust statistic (Pillai’s trace) be reported for comparison. However, the statistics are identical in situations in which there are two groups (gender = male/female; infidelity history = yes/no) as in the current analysis. Consequently, Wilks’s lambda was reported.

As illustrated in Table 2, the results of the two-way MANOVA indicated no interaction effect, $F(2, 410) = 1.68, p = .18$, Wilks’s lambda = .99, $\eta^2 = .00$, but did show main effects. Males and females significantly differed on the combined dependent variables, $F(2, 410) = 15.08, p = .00$, Wilks’s lambda = .93, $\eta^2 = .07$.

Table 1. Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Measures of Attitudes and Intentions Toward Dating Infidelity as a Function of Gender and Infidelity History

Group	Attitudes Toward Infidelity		Intentions Toward Infidelity	
	M	SD	M	SD
Females				
With infidelity	30.48	11.38	26.44	8.11
Without infidelity	20.96	8.84	13.74	6.51
Total	22.23	9.75	15.42	7.98
Males				
With infidelity	41.03	13.34	29.85	8.72
Without infidelity	26.23	10.37	16.34	7.44
Total	24.16	10.91	18.47	9.08
Total				
With infidelity	34.12	13.00	27.62	8.41
Without infidelity	22.55	9.62	14.53	6.90
Total	24.16	10.91	16.35	8.44

Note. Infidelity = Infidelity history. Total N is 415.

Gender accounted for 7% of the multivariate variance. Univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs; Table 2) indicated that males and females differed both on the attitudes toward infidelity, $F(1, 411) = 29.34, p = .00, \eta^2 = .07$, and intentions toward infidelity $F(1, 411) = 8.13, p = .00, \eta^2 = .02$. As in Table 1, males ($M = 24.16, SD = 10.91$) had more favorable attitudes toward dating infidelity than females ($M = 22.23, SD = 9.75$). The attitudes toward infidelity were consistent with intentions. Males ($M = 18.47, SD = 9.08$) were more likely to intend to engage in infidelity behaviors than females ($M = 15.42, SD = 7.98$).

Like gender, infidelity history yielded a statistically significant difference in the combined dependent variables, $F(2, 410) = 85.68, p = .00$, Wilks’s lambda = .71, $\eta^2 = .30$, accounting for 30% of multivariate variance. The results of univariate ANOVAs revealed differences both in attitudes, $F(1, 411) = 69.40, p = .00, \eta^2 = .14$, and intentions toward dating infidelity, $F(1, 411) = 155.04, p = .00, \eta^2 = .27$. College students who reported having engaged in infidelity ($M = 34.12, SD = 13.00$) had more positive attitudes toward dating infidelity compared to college students with no history of infidelity ($M = 22.55, SD = 9.62$). Likewise, cheaters ($M = 27.62,$

Table 2. Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance for Attitudes and Intentions Toward Dating Infidelity

Source	Multivariate				Univariate					
	Wilks’ Lambda	F ^a	p	η^2	Attitudes Toward Infidelity			Intentions Toward Infidelity		
					F ^b	p	η^2	F ^b	p	η^2
Gender	.93	15.08	.00	.07	29.34	.00	.07	8.13	.00	.02
Infidelity	.71	85.68	.00	.30	69.40	.00	.14	155.04	.00	.27
Gender \times Infidelity	.99	1.68	.18	.00	3.28	.07	.00	.15	.70	.00

Note. Infidelity = Infidelity history. Total N is 415.

^aMultivariate $df = 2,410$.

^bUnivariate $df = 1,41$.

SD = 8.41) compared to noncheaters (*M* = 14.53, *SD* = 6.90) reported greater intentions toward dating infidelity.

Because both gender and infidelity history were found to be significantly associated with attitudes and intentions toward infidelity, separate mediation analyses were performed to determine whether intentions mediated the relationship between attitudes and infidelity behavior for each gender (hypothesis 3). Zero-order correlations with regard to gender are presented in Table 3. Both for males and females, dating infidelity, attitudes toward infidelity, and intentions toward infidelity showed positive correlations. Mediation analyses were performed via PROCESS (Version 2.041), an add-on macro to SPSS written by Hayes (2013) that uses bootstrapping. Bootstrapping (Preacher & Hayes, 2004) is a nonparametric test and thus does not require the normality assumption. Plus, PROCESS allows testing mediation with dichotomous outcome variables (infidelity behavior, in this case).

For females, attitudes toward infidelity was a significant predictor of intentions toward infidelity, *b* = .443, *SE* = .040, *p* < .001, and intentions toward infidelity was a significant predictor of dating infidelity behavior, *b* = .195, *SE* = .033 *p* < .001. These results supported the mediational hypothesis. Attitudes toward infidelity was no longer a significant predictor of dating infidelity after intentions toward infidelity was controlled, *b* = .004, *SE* = .024, *n.s.*, consistent with full mediation, and 29% and 42% of the variance in intentions toward infidelity and infidelity, respectively, was accounted for by the predictors (*R*² = .310; Nagelkerke *R*² = .424). The indirect effect was tested using a bootstrapping estimation with 5,000 samples (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). As shown in Table 4, the indirect effect was significant, *b* = .086, *SE* = .023, 95% *CI* = .0499; .1368. Having positive attitudes toward infidelity was associated with infidelity as mediated by intentions to engage in infidelity.

The results for males demonstrated that attitudes toward infidelity significantly predicted intentions toward infidelity, *b* = .296, *SE* = .061, *p* < .001, and intentions toward infidelity significantly predicted dating infidelity, *b* = .158, *SE* = .038 *p* < .001. After controlling for intentions toward infidelity, attitudes toward infidelity was still a significant predictor of infidelity with a decreased *b*, *b* = .076,

Table 3. Cronbach's Alphas and Intercorrelations Among Study Variables

	Infidelity	Attitudes	Intentions	Female	Male
				<i>α</i>	<i>α</i>
Infidelity	1	.33*	.54*	—	—
Attitudes	.45*	1	.52*	.78	.80
Intentions	.54*	.39*	1	.83	.82

Note. Infidelity = Infidelity history. Intercorrelations for female participants are presented above the diagonal; intercorrelations for males are presented below the diagonal.

**p* < .01.

Table 4. Summary of Mediation Effect of Attitudes Toward Dating Infidelity on Infidelity Behavior Through Intentions Toward Dating Infidelity

	Point Estimate	Product of Coefficients		Bootstrapping BC 95% CI	
		SE	<i>z</i>	Lower	Upper
Females					
Total	.0784	.0165	4.7470*	.0460	.1107
Indirect	.0869	.0231	5.1322*	.0499	.1368
Males					
Total	.0975	.0235	4.1478*	.0514	.1436
Indirect	.0469	.0169	3.0820**	.0214	.0833

Note. Reported BC intervals are the bias-corrected 95% CI of estimates resulting from bootstrap analysis; 5,000 bootstrapped samples. Total *N* is 410. *N*_{females} = 288, *N*_{males} = 127. 5 cases deleted due to missing data.

p* < .001; *p* < .002.

SE = .025, *p* < .002, consistent with partial mediation. Here, 16% and 53% of the variance in intentions toward infidelity and infidelity, respectively, was accounted for by the predictors (*R*² = .155; Nagelkerke *R*² = .525). The indirect effect was tested using a bootstrapping estimation with 5,000 samples (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). As seen in Table 4, the indirect effect was significant, *b* = .046, *SE* = .016, 95% *CI* = .0214; .0833. Holding positive attitudes toward infidelity was associated with infidelity as mediated by intentions toward infidelity.

Discussion

Research on the associations among attitudes toward infidelity, intentions toward infidelity, and infidelity is limited. In addition, the vast majority of research on extradyadic behavior among college students has taken place in the context of Western, individualistic cultures. The current study therefore investigated these associations in a dating sample in a more collectivist, predominantly Muslim culture. The purpose of the current study was threefold. First, it examined whether the findings of gender differences in extradyadic behavior would emerge in a Turkish sample. Second, it examined whether gender and infidelity history were related to attitudes toward infidelity and intentions to engage in infidelity. Finally, it investigated the role played by intentions toward infidelity in the association between attitudes toward infidelity and dating infidelity. The current study both supported previous findings in the literature and offered unique findings that may reflect characteristics of Turkish culture.

The first hypothesis concerned possible gender differences in infidelity. We found that even though men (15.7%) reported a slightly higher rate of infidelity than women (13.2%), this difference was not statistically significant, and thus our first hypothesis was not supported. In this

regard it is worth noting that compared to their Western counterparts (Allen & Baucom, 2004; Barta & Kiene, 2005; Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Hansen, 1987; Roscoe et al., 1988; Wiederman & Hurd, 1999), Turkish college students reported a lower incidence of dating infidelity. It is possible that the absence of gender differences may therefore reflect a floor effect. However, it should be noted that our low prevalence rate is consistent with a few studies using Western samples (e.g., Barta & Kiene, 2005; Negash et al., 2016). This finding was also in line with the existing Turkish literature. In an earlier study, Yeniçeri and Kökdemir (2006) found a rate of 19.6% by asking participants if they “had ever been unfaithful to their partners.” In the current study, providing a specific definition of infidelity, which included both sexual and emotional attraction to another person, might be responsible for yielding a slightly lower rate of infidelity. First, premarital sex is still taboo in Turkey, and women who have engaged in premarital sex are perceived as less preferable marriage partners (Sakallı-Uğurlu & Glick, 2003) even among the more educated segments of Turkish society (Cok & Gray, 2007). Thus, few of the dating college students—both men and women—may have experienced premarital sex, or even if they do have such experiences, they may be unwilling to report them. Thus, underreporting might also be a plausible explanation for the lower rate found in this study, especially given participants’ strong disapproval of infidelity.

Second, the lower incidence of dating infidelity may also be a consequence of the dating college students’ relationship history. Considering that they were possibly not allowed to have a romantic relationship before college, the number of romantic relationships (committed or casual) of college students in this study may be relatively low compared to their Western counterparts. The potentially lower rate of prior relationship experiences may affect commitment and stability in college students’ dating relationships. In such a context, monogamy may be highly valued. Indeed, in a study with a similar sample ($N = 280$, $M_{age} = 22.22$), 79.6% of dating college students perceived their relationships as “stable” and “serious,” and 26.1% indicated that the relationship was their first one. A large percentage (55.4%) planned to get married to their current partner (Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu-Sümer, et al., 2017). This relatively greater emotional commitment among Turkish couples may also partly account for the lower rates of infidelity that fall within the domain of emotional infidelity. Finally, one study revealed that participants are sensitive to social environment (conservative or permissive) when reporting on extradyadic involvement (Fisher, 2009). As the participants completed their surveys in the classroom, which afforded little privacy in this study, this also could have resulted in underreporting of infidelity.

Turning to the second hypothesis, we found that males and those who reported (past/current) infidelity had more permissive attitudes toward infidelity and greater intention of engaging in dating infidelity. Thus, the second hypothesis was supported. In this regard, it is worth noting that even

males with self-reported infidelity scored below the midpoint in attitudes toward infidelity, indicating that they disapproved of it. The average score, suggesting a very negative view of dating infidelity, was lower than that obtained in Whatley’s (2008) original study in which the scale was developed. This finding was not unexpected, as an unfavorable attitude toward infidelity has been repeatedly found even among Western college students (Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Lieberman, 1988). However, considering the lower incidence of dating infidelity, the discrepancy between attitudes toward infidelity and dating infidelity behavior, which has explicitly been emphasized in the literature (i.e., Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; McAnulty & Brineman, 2007), was not found in the current study. The aforementioned cultural and methodological explanations (definition of dating infidelity, taboo of premarital sexuality, social desirability, and relationship characteristics) appear to account for the lack of discrepancy. As with attitudes, Turkish college students, on average, tended to have relatively low intentions to engage in infidelity as compared to studies using Western samples (e.g., Jackman, 2015; Jones et al., 2011).

Though college students in Turkey tended to display more negative attitudes toward infidelity, men were more accepting of infidelity, which serves as evidence for a possible pancultural, or perhaps even universal, male perspective (Barta & Kiene, 2005; Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Hansen, 1987; Roscoe et al., 1988; Sheppard et al., 1995; Shimberg et al., 2015; Tagler & Jeffers, 2013; Whitty, 2003). Similarly, we found that college students with previous infidelity experiences held more liberal attitudes toward infidelity, a finding that is again consistent with results reported in the literature (i.e., Barta & Kiene, 2005; Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Jackman, 2015; Rodrigues, Lopes, & Pereira, 2016; Shimberg et al., 2015); there appears to be cross-cultural similarity in the role of previous experiences in attitudes toward infidelity. Likewise, men compared to women and college students with a prior history of dating infidelity showed greater intentions to engage in infidelity (Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Martins et al., 2016).

Though preliminary, the present findings suggest that gender and infidelity history are distinct/separate factors relating to attitudes and intentions toward infidelity. Broadly speaking, infidelity history accounted for more variance (30%) than gender (7%) when attitudes and intentions were considered together. The pattern was also evident in a univariate context, as infidelity history explained more variance in attitudes (14%) and intentions (27%) than gender (7% and 2% for attitudes and intentions, respectively). This may be seen as providing some support for the adage “Once a cheater, always a cheater.” Also striking is the relatively larger discrepancy between the role of gender (2%) and infidelity history (27%) for intentions toward infidelity than for attitudes. These findings are consistent with the view that intentions rather than attitudes are the proximal cause of behavior (see

Ajzen, 2012; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005) and that the infidelity gap between genders is getting narrower among younger and dating college samples (Fincham & May, 2017; Negash et al., 2016).

The findings pertaining to our third hypothesis are consistent with the theory of planned behavior. This hypothesis stated that intentions toward dating infidelity would mediate the association between attitudes toward infidelity and reported infidelity behavior. Data pertaining to both women and men supported this hypothesis. For women, the inclusion of intentions led to a nonsignificant relationship between attitudes and dating infidelity, whereas a weaker yet significant relationship remained for men. Attitudes may not lead directly to cheating for college women but for college men, attitudes may play a direct, albeit weak, role in their extradyadic behavior. Perhaps attitudes toward infidelity remained a predictor of infidelity for men even after controlling for intentions toward infidelity because there was more variability in attitudes of men compared to women, a possibility worthy of future exploration. The lack of research on the associations among attitudes, intentions, and dating infidelity in Turkey and in the broader literature precludes comparisons with prior findings.

However, the association between attitudes and intentions is consistent with prior findings, as it has been shown that college students with more favorable attitudes toward infidelity tended to have greater infidelity intentions (Drake & McCabe, 2000; Hackathorn et al., 2011; Jackman, 2015; Jones et al., 2011; Toplu-Demirtaş et al., 2014; Watkins & Boon, 2016; Wilson et al., 2011). This provides further support for the theory of planned behavior. The attitude–behavior (Feldman & Cauffman, 1999) and intention–behavior associations were moderately strong as evident in the literature.

Implications for Future Research

Future work on the association between attitudes and intentions toward infidelity might consider the role of justifications for infidelity. For example, justifications for infidelity might mediate the relationship between attitudes and intentions toward infidelity. Yeniçeri and Kökdemir (2006) found that men and women were more inclined to see “seduction” (being seduced by another person; the other person was beautiful/handsome) and “social background” (marrying young; having an arranged marriage) as the causes of infidelity, respectively. It is also the case that college students who are more prone to engage in infidelity show a greater tendency to offer reasons to justify it (Toplu-Demirtaş & Tezer, 2013).

A more complete understanding, however, is likely to emerge from research guided by broader theories, such as the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 2012; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005), which encapsulates the associations among attitudes, intentions, and behaviors. However, other antecedents of behavior in this theory need to be considered

in future research, such as subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. In a similar vein, attempts to incorporate attachment theory to build new models with the aforementioned variables would be useful. Feldman and Cauffman (1999) and Shimberg et al. (2015) have argued that increasing rates of dating infidelity among college students, especially for women, may be a function of insecure attachment and not an increased sense of sexual agency. Finally, future work is likely to benefit from distinguishing between sexual and emotional infidelity. Barta and Kiene (2005), for example, found that college women tended to engage in emotional infidelity more than men. In this regard, it behooves us to recall the “double-shot hypothesis”—that women’s sexual infidelity also implies emotional infidelity (DeSteno & Salovey, 1996). In any event, greater conceptual clarity regarding the nature of infidelity is needed for an informative and cumulative literature to emerge.

Research on dating infidelity is still in its infancy in Turkey. Given the predominantly collectivistic and conservative nature of Turkish culture, the applicability of findings from Western samples needs to be evaluated. For example, the strong negative attitude toward women’s premarital sex in Turkey (Sakallı-Uğurlu & Glick, 2003), the experienced decrease in family support of college women who report having had sexual intercourse compared to those who do not (Yağın, Arıcıoğlu, & Malkoç, 2012), and phenomena such as honor killings suggest that to understand more fully Turkish dating relationships future research needs to investigate the associations among jealousy, controlling behaviors, dating infidelity, and dating violence. Congruent with this line of cultural reasoning, strong associations between gender, partners’ imagined infidelity, trust, and jealousy were found among married Turkish individuals (Kemer, Bulgan, & Çetinkaya-Yıldız, 2016).

Limitations

The current study represents a first attempt to investigate the mediating role of intentions toward infidelity in the relationship between attitudes toward infidelity and dating infidelity in Turkey. The results should be interpreted in light of several study limitations. First, dating infidelity was assessed by asking participants if they had ever cheated, using Blow and Hartnett’s (2005) definition of dating infidelity, which includes both emotional and sexual infidelity. Such an approach, though widely used in the literature (i.e., Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Hansen, 1987), may be problematic if the participants do not agree with the definition of infidelity. In addition, a “yes” response might represent, for example, one occasion when a young woman felt emotionally attracted to a fellow student in her study group, or it might represent multiple occasions when a young man was sexually involved with another student or sexually involved with several different friends. Therefore, replicating the current research with a valid and reliable measure of the actual

frequency of infidelity behaviors (both sexual and emotional) might be more revealing. Drigotas et al.'s (1999) Infidelity Scale might be one possible behavioral measure of dating infidelity. Although Ciarocco, Echevarria, and Lewandowski (2012) reported a significant positive association between self-report and behavioral measures, it is important to investigate both. In addition, it will be important to use separate assessments of emotional and sexual infidelity in future research to advance understanding of their predictors, correlates, and consequences. Finally, some researchers challenge this bidimensional view of infidelity and assert that infidelity is multidimensional (Mattingly, Wilson, Clark, Bequette, & Weidler, 2010). This multidimensionality may further contribute to our understanding of the dynamics among attitudes toward infidelity, intentions toward infidelity, and dating infidelity.

Second, we used a sample of dating college students from a more liberal university in the capital city, and a majority of participants were women, all of which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Women's overrepresentation may be most probably due to their greater willingness to participate in surveys about relationships, as they are more relationship oriented (Hortaçsu, 2015). Replication of the research with larger, more diverse, and random college and noncollege dating samples would be optimal. In regard to diversity, we suggest collecting demographic information in samples that include variations in ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. One of the contributions of the current investigation is the presence of similarity and difference between a predominantly Muslim and collectivistic culture and the Western cultures typically used in infidelity research. It should not be forgotten that Western cultures are also ethnically and religiously diverse, with varying degrees of assimilation into the culture (e.g., both parents recently immigrated to the new country or all previous generations were native born; the family holds a strong tradition of its religious roots such as Jewish, Muslim, or Christian faith, or is very secular in its tradition). We believe that a comprehensive understanding of the role of attitudes and intentions in dating (and marital) infidelity will be more likely developed when the cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds of all samples are collected and used as control variables in the analyses.

Third, the correlational design of the study precludes causal inferences. To develop a deeper understanding of infidelity and to test fully the theory of planned behavior, longitudinal research will be helpful. Finally, self-report and retrospective data were used. Thus, monomethod (Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1992) and social desirability biases may be of concern. Moreover, having a questionnaire on infidelity administered in a relatively nonprivate setting (in classrooms) might lead to a substantial underreporting of socially undesirable infidelity variables. To overcome monomethod bias, supplementing self-report with behavioral measures would be particularly

beneficial. To address social desirability bias, social desirability measures might be routinely used as a control variable. Online administration of infidelity measures might be more appropriate to afford more perceived anonymity.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding its limitations, this study provides much-needed information on infidelity among dating college students in a non-Western context. The theory of planned behavior seems to offer an alternative framework for understanding the driving forces behind college students' extradyadic involvement in their dating relationships. In particular, college students who have positive attitudes toward infidelity combined with higher levels of intentions to engage in infidelity, regardless of gender, appear to be at a higher risk for committing dating infidelity. We believe that future research will benefit from exploring other influences on these associations. However, current findings suggest mental health professionals at colleges address the need for attitude- and intention-based interventions to help dating college students develop healthy relationships that are free from infidelity.

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