

Personality Differences between Unfaithful and Faithful Persons in Romantic Relationships

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The infidelity in romantic relationship is a phenomenon that happen in the most diverse cultures around the world. There are several forms of infidelity, from sexual infidelity until infidelity by social network. One could suppose that the infidelity are related to individual characteristic differences. Some of those individual differences can be assessed from the Big Five Factors perspective. Then, one could suppose that individuals who had been unfaithful in their relationship show differences in Big Five traits compared who never had been unfaithful. The factors of the Big Five are interpreted as referring to continuum that include: extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism , openness.

Aim

The aim of this study was to investigate the differences in personality characteristic between who was unfaithful and who was faithful last commitment loving relationship.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 322 Brazilians in committed relationships, mean age of 27.7 years (*SD* = 8.06), 74% women. 40,7% undergraduate students, 58,4% were from the South of Brazil.

Instrument

An online questionnaire, available in an internet address, with the following question:

- Have you ever had been unfaithful to your partner in your last relationship?

The questionnaire also contained the following scale:

- *Short Form Scale of Descriptors of the Five Personality Factors - Red5* (Natividade & Hutz, 2015) – a measure of 20 items to access the five personality factors.

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Results

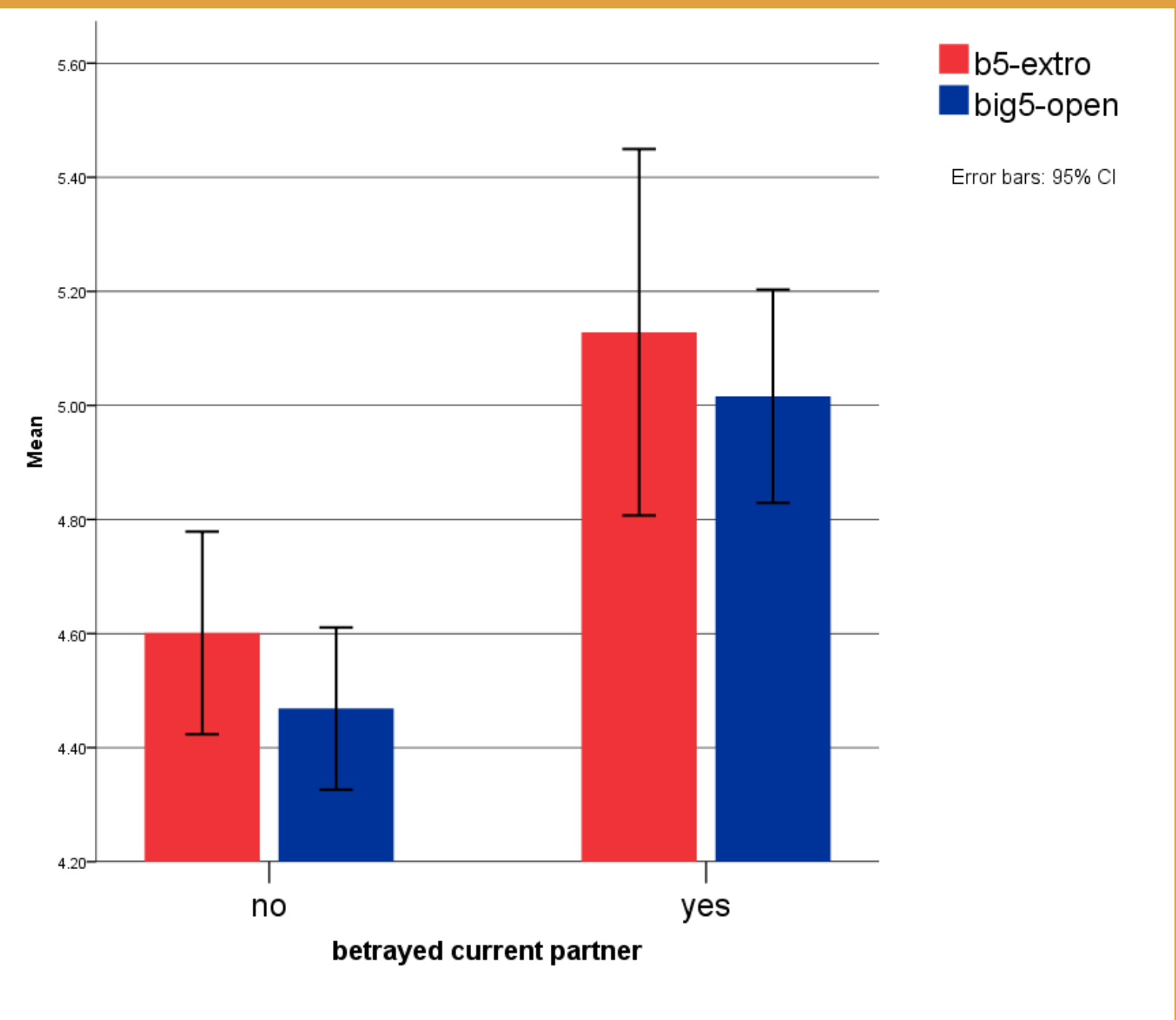
We found significant differences between the people who were unfaithful and those that were not unfaithful in the last relationship for two personality traits: Extroversion, and openness to experiences. No sex interaction were found, *Lambda's Wilks* = .99, *p* = .53.

People who reported that they had been unfaithful in their relationships had higher levels of both factors. Extroversion is characterized by positive emotions and the tendency to seek stimulation and the company of others. This trait is marked by deep involvement with the outside world. Extroverts enjoy being with people. Openness to experience is characterized by interest in art, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, imagination, curiosity, and variety of experience. This trait distinguishes imaginative conventional people. People with high openness are intellectually curious, appreciative of art, and sensitive to beauty. They tend to be compared to people "closed" more creative, to pay more attention to your feelings and have unconventional opinions.

Table 1
Mean Differences in the Big Five Factors between Who Was Unfaithful and Who Was Faithful in the Last Commitment Relationship

	Yes		No		<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Extroversion *	4.60	1.41	5.13	1.42	-0.37
Agreeableness	5.82	0.93	5.97	0.95	-0.16
Conscientiousness	5.40	1.06	5.43	1.00	-0.03
Neuroticism	3.97	1.19	3.83	1.14	0.12
Openness *	4.47	1.13	5.02	0.83	-0.56

Note. * *p* < .05



Procedures

We apply a questionnaire containing an instrument to access the big five personality factors and questions about love relationships. Participants were trough invitations e-mails and invitations in social networks.

Conclusion

The infidelity levels found in extroversion, and openness to experiences are probably due to extroverts can meet more people for the occurrence of infidelity and people open to experiences are more curious for this kind of infidelity situation.

References

Natividade, J. C., & Hutz, C. S. (2015). Short Form Scale of Descriptors of the Five Personality Factors: Pros and Cons. *Psico*, 46(1), 79-89.