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Te Perdon: Constructs that Influence Forgiveness of Infidelity in Latinx Romantic
Relationships

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty at Governors State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Luis San Roman

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Te Perdono: Constructs that Influence Forgiveness of Infidelity in Latinx Romantic Relationships

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to investigate the link between attachment style and acculturation on forgiveness after a sexual and/or emotional infidelity in Latinx Romantic Relationships using measures of attachment (attachment style (i.e. secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissing)), acculturation (level of acculturation (i.e. *machismo* and familism)), and dispositional forgiveness (i.e. revenge, avoidant, and benevolence). One hundred and thirteen Latinx participated in this study and completed an internet-based questionnaire. This study found that secure attachment and familism was a positive predictor of forgiveness. The study also found that fearful attachment and sexual infidelity was a positive predictor of revenge while *machismo* was a negative predictor of revenge in this sample. The study also found that dismissing attachment and sexual infidelity was a positive predictor of avoidance, while familism was a negative predictor of avoidance. Lastly, the study found that both secure attachment and *machismo* were positive predictors of benevolence in forgiveness. These findings suggest that secure attachment and *familism* are strong predictors of forgiveness in Latinx individuals.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Infidelity among intimate relationships is becoming more common in the last decade. However, it appears that statistics on the frequency of infidelity in couples vary. Some reports estimate 25% to over 50% of individuals reported engaging in extramarital relationships (Starrat, Weekes-Shackelford, & Shackelford, 2017; Weiser & Weigel, 2015). Prevalence is high in Western cultures, with research indicating that 30% to 75% of men and 20% to 68% of women report experience with some sort of infidelity (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994; Wiederman, 1997; Schmitt, 2004; Vangelisti & Gerstenberger, 2004; Whisman & Snyder, 2007; Tafoya & Spitzberg, 2007; Hall & Fincham, 2009).

The best information comes from large, national surveys (Peluso, 2019). At the end of the century, the National Health and Social Life Survey (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994) reported that around 25% of married men and 15% of married women engaged in infidelity in their lifetime. The University of Chicago conducted the general social survey, a survey that has sampled households in the United States every two years since 1972 (Peluso, 2019). The survey adds new participants to the study which represents a cross-section of the general adult population (i.e., adults 18 and older) and asks about relationship issues. Labrecque and Whisman (2017) examined over 13,000 responses from nine waves of the study from 2000 to 2016 to see how people's responses to questions related to extramarital sex and had changed, or remained the same, over the 16 years. Their analysis concluded that an overall 3% of married individuals in a given year will report having extramarital sex (Labrecque & Whisman, 2017). Labrecque and Whisman (2017) also concluded that lifetime rates of infidelity for married couples range from 22% to 25% of men and 11% to 15% of women.

Infidelity can significantly impact relationships and is one of the most reported reasons for divorce, not just in Western culture, but across many different cultures (Amato & Previti, 2003; Betzig, 1989; Lammers, Stoker, Jordan, Pollmann, & Stapel, 2011; Labrecque & Whisman, 2017). Several studies done in the United States have found that African Americans and Latinx commit sexual infidelity at higher rates than Caucasians (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Bauman & Berman, 2005; Choi, Catania, & Dolcini, 1994; Dolcini et al., 1993; Forste & Tanfer, 1996; Treas & Giesen, 2000; Wiederman, 1997). Choi et al. (1994) found that Latino men were far more likely to commit sexual infidelity than female Latinas, and at higher rates than those of Caucasians counterparts. The authors note how sexualized gender roles may impact these findings, particularly how Latino men are encouraged to have multiple sex partners, while Latina women are expected to be faithful.

Sexual and/or emotional infidelity represents a betrayal of commitment and exclusivity within a romantic relationship and can elicit harmful results for couples, affecting attributes within a relationship such as trust, emotional and physical intimacy, and communication. Extramarital involvement can cause trauma within the relationship and can often motivate couples to separate, divorce, or seek out counseling services (Fife, Weeks, & Gambescia, 2008; Hertlein, 2011). A survey of 122 marital therapists indicated that extramarital sex is one of the most commonly reported problems among couples seeking therapy (Previtti & Amato, 2004). In fact, people frequently reported engaging in extramarital sex with a close personal friend, neighbor, coworker, or long-term acquaintance (Labrecque & Whisman, 2017). A 2013 Gallup Poll found that 91% Americans reported that having an affair is morally wrong (Newport & Himelfarb, 2013). However, new research done in 2016 points that Americans who reported that

extramarital sex was always wrong significantly declined from 79.4% in 2000 to 75.8% in 2016 (Labrecque & Whisman, 2017).

Along with infidelity comes the decision to forgive the transgressor, the one that betrayed the relationship by engaging in a sexual and/or emotional infidelity. An individual must decide whether he or she will forgive his or her partner's infidelity. If the couple decides to separate as a result of an extradyadic relationship, the experience with infidelity may impact how one approaches future relationships (Hall & Fincham, 2006). Men may have a harder time forgiving their partner for engaging in sexual infidelity, whereas women may have a harder time forgiving their partner for emotional infidelity (Harris, 2003; Urooj & Haque, 2015). For example, Urooj and Haque (2015) found that out of the 150 male participants in their study, 100 men perceived sexual infidelity to be the most distressing aspect of infidelity, whereas, of the 150 female participants, 118 women perceived emotional infidelity to be most distressing. Men might see extramarital sex as always wrong compared to women (Labrecque & Whisman, 2017). It also appears that men feel guiltier following sexual infidelity, whereas, women feel guiltier following emotional infidelity (Fisher, Rekkas, & Cox, 2008). Fisher, Rekkas, and Cox (2008) also concluded that both men and women believed that their partner would have a more difficult time forgiving sexual infidelity.

Noting how prevalent infidelity is and how difficult it is to forgive infidelity in romantic relationships, it is important to consider some constructs that influence forgiveness in the life of an individual. Research suggests attachment style influences forgiveness in an individual whose romantic partner has made a transgression against them (Kachadourian, Fincham, & Davila, 2004). Insecure individuals on the other hand are often less forgiving than securely attached individuals. For example, when a close partner hurts the other, individuals with insecure

attachment working models do not accommodate (Gaines et al., 1997; Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1995) and report lower levels of forgiveness (Kachadoutian, Dincham, & Davila, 2004, 2005). Paletia, Regalia, and Fichman (2005) have shown that forgiveness predicted concurrent marital quality and a reciprocal effect between forgiveness and marital quality over time. Other research has shown that spouses who forgive an offending partner have the most adaptive marital functioning; the more spouses forgive, the more they make positive marital assumptions, feel an equal balance of power in their marriages, and have close well-adjusted marital relations (Oranthinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2006). Oranthinkal and Vansteenwegen (2006) also suggested that forgiveness has a positive impact on marriage.

Although forgiveness is influenced by gender, current research has revealed that forgiveness is also influenced by the attachment style an individual has. For example, several studies (Ashy et al., 2010; Lawler-Row, Younger, Piferi & Jones, 2006; Webb, Call, Cheickering, Colburn & Heisler, 2006) concluded that individuals with secure attachment were more forgiving than individuals with an insecure attachment style. Studies have also concluded that individuals with an insecure attachment style would forgive a parent, but they were less likely to forgive a romantic partner or a friend (Lawler-Row et al., 2006). Individuals with an insecure attachment style were also more likely to avoid the offender and have a greater desire to act in revenge (Lawler-Row et al., 2006). Differences between all insecure attachment styles (e.g., anxious, avoidant) were not significant in forgiving a romantic partner (Lawler-Row et al., 2006). Religion also influences forgiveness for both securely and insecurely attached individuals. Individuals who were more religious forgave their romantic partner at a higher rate (Ashy et al., 2010).

Research on attachment styles and forgiveness suggests that attachment style may play a more proximal individual development role in facilitating forgiveness in a relationship. For example, Ashy, Meecurio, and Malley-Morrison (2010) concluded that securely attached individuals have been found to score higher on trait and state forgiveness than insecurely attached individuals, and are more likely to be forgiving of a personal offense. Ashy et al. (2010) concluded that securely attached individuals are more likely to forgive than individuals who have an avoidant and fearful attachment style. Webb, Call, Chickering, Colburn, and Heisler (2006) concluded that secure attachment was significantly positively correlated with forgiveness, compared to fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing attachment style individuals. Mikuliner and Shaver (2005) also suggest that when confronted with a partner's negative behaviors, securely attached individuals will often hold optimistic expectations about their partner's negative behaviors.

The research suggests that individuals with a secure attachment style have a strong tendency to maintain and enhance relationship quality, look after their partner's welfare, overcome obstacles, restore relationship stability in difficult times, and are more likely to encourage their partner's personal growth (Mikulinger & Shaver, 2005). Hazan and Shaver (1987) revealed that, compared to adults with insecure attachment styles, individuals with a secure attachment believed that romantic love can be sustained over time; they also held more positive attitudes about their partner. Research also suggests that individuals with a secure attachment style have high self-esteem and trust (Baron & Branscombe, 2012; Shaver & Brennan, 1992). Several studies reported that, compared to people with secure attachment styles, those with an insecure and anxious attachment style tend to have low self-esteem and trust in their romantic relationship (Erber & Erber, 2011). Previous research has concluded that

individuals with a secure attachment are more forgiving than insecure attachment individuals (Ashy, Mercurio & Malley-Morrison, 2010; Lawler-Row, Younger, Piferi & Jones, 2006; Webb, Call, Cheickering, Colburn & Heisler, 2006), but previous research has not looked at attachment style and forgiveness in the context of infidelity.

Another construct that might influence forgiveness after infidelity in a romantic relationship is acculturation. Acculturation is described as involving cultural and psychological change due to contact between two cultural groups (Berry, 2005). The extent to which a person is able to retain an old culture and adopt a new one may occur in one of the following four types of acculturation processes: Integration is a process of accepting the old culture and accepting a new culture (Berry, 1997; Berry, 2003). Assimilation is the process of rejecting the old culture and accepting the new culture (Berry, 1997; Berry, 2003). Separation is the process of accepting the old culture and rejecting the new culture (Berry, 1997; Berry, 2003). Marginalization occurs when the old culture is rejected as well as the new culture (Berry, 1997; Berry, 2003; Izumi, 2007). Previous research has demonstrated that the less acculturated a Latinx is, the more likely they will follow strict gender norms (de Rios, 2001). Cultural beliefs and traditions about the roles of men and women are additional factors that are likely to shape experiences and consequences of adaptation to the U.S. culture (Grzywacz et al., 2007). Some studies have suggested that Latino men are more likely to forgive infidelity when they are higher acculturated (i.e., less likely to hold the cultural beliefs and follow strict gender norms) and Latina women are less likely to forgive (Deardoff, Tschann, & Flores 2008; Marin, 2003; Phinney & Flores, 2002).

Infidelity is a serious threat to relationships and trust. Trust is connected to attachment style, which can influence forgiveness. Because not much research has been done regarding attachment style, forgiveness, and infidelity, this current study will help understand whether

individuals with a secure attachment are more likely to forgive when their partner engages in infidelity.

Justification for This Study

Although the literature has concluded that individuals with a secure attachment style are more likely to forgive a personal transgression, many of these studies have been done on the Caucasian population and not much has been done on the Latinx population. There are 50.5 million people in the United States who identify themselves as Latinx (Rodríguez, 2011). According to the 2010 census, the population of the United States grew by 27.3 million people, or 9.7%, between 2000 and 2010. By contrast, the Latinx population grew by 43%, rising from 35.3 million in 2000 to 50.5 million in 2010 (Rodríguez, 2011). This is an increase of 15.2 million Latinx, which accounted for more than half of the total populations' increase (Rodríguez, 2011). Experts in population projections estimate that the rapid growth of the Latinx population will continue throughout the first half of the twenty-first century (Rodríguez, 2011). It is expected that, by the year 2050, Latinx will make up 29% of the United States' total population (Rodríguez, 2011).

While sexuality in Latinx populations has been widely studied, infidelity in Latinx populations has been ignored, even as contradictions to the current literature of contributing and protecting factors of infidelity exists. Most of the current literature on contributing and protective factors has focused on general populations and/or HIV in Latinx. Because most studies on infidelity have been limited to homogenous, college-based Caucasian samples, their results may not be generalizable to Latinx populations. Therefore, it is important that research continues taking into account the Latinx population, as it is very likely that counselors will eventually work with someone who is of Latinx background. This study investigated whether

Latinx who have a secure attachment are more willing to forgive an infidelity compared to individuals who have an insecure attachment style. The researcher investigated if Latinx who are highly acculturated are less or more likely to forgive infidelity of their spouse. This study provides an opportunity for a better understanding of couples experiencing infidelity, as well as clinical implications when working with the Latinx population who have endured sexual and/or emotional infidelity in their romantic relationship.

Statement of Problem

Because attachment style gets carried into adulthood (Fraley, 2002), it is important that we understand the importance of a secure attachment style, forgiveness, and acculturation in the Latinx population. Currently, Latinx couples are having children at a faster rate than any other ethnic couple in the United States (Child Trends, 2016), and the Latinx population is becoming the fastest growing population in the United States (Flores, 2017). Therefore, it is important that research considers the Latinx population in research studies. With this in mind, the researcher hopes to provide insight to the following questions.

Research Questions

1. Does secure attachment lead to forgiveness of infidelity for Latinx individuals?
2. What role does acculturation play in attachment and forgiveness for Latinx individuals who have experienced infidelity?
3. Does acculturation play a role in forgiveness of infidelity for Latinx individuals?
4. What is the influence of gender in relation to level of acculturation and forgiveness of infidelity?

Hypothesis

Based on the literature and the study question, it is hypothesized that:

1. Hypothesis 1: The degree of secure attachment and acculturation will predict the level of forgiveness in couples who have experience infidelity, i.e.,:
 - a. Higher attachment in both male and female participants and higher acculturation in men but not women will lead to higher tendency to forgive the partner who has engaged in infidelity.
2. Hypothesis 2: The degree of attachment, acculturation and gender will predict revenge in forgiveness, i.e.,:
 - a. Higher attachment in male and female participants and higher acculturation in women but not men will lead to greater revenge in forgiveness after infidelity in Latinx romantic relationships.
3. Hypothesis 3: The degree of attachment, acculturation and gender will predict avoidance in forgiveness i.e.,:
 - a. Higher attachment in both male and female participants and higher acculturation in men but not women will lead to greater avoidance in forgiveness after infidelity in Latinx romantic relationship.
4. Hypothesis 4: The degree of attachment, acculturation and gender will predict benevolence in forgiveness, i.e.,:
 - a. Higher attachment in both genders and higher acculturation in women but not men will lead to greater benevolence in forgiveness after infidelity in Latinx romantic relationships.

Purpose of the Study

Prevalence of infidelity is high in Western cultures, with research indicating that 30% to 75% of men and 20% to 68% of women report experience with some sort of infidelity (Hall &

Fincham, 2009; Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994; Schmitt, 2004; Vangelisti & Gerstenberger, 2004; Whisman & Snyder, 2007; Wiederman, 1997). This study aimed to add literature to three different topics of research attachment, infidelity, and forgiveness in the Latinx population from a cultural lens of acculturation of Latinx living in the United States. In other words, the study contributes on how acculturation impacts forgiveness after a personal transgression has occurred in a romantic relationship. There are currently no studies published on forgiveness in Latinx populations, and only three studies were found discussing Latinx and attachment style. This study can also benefit couples, as not all relationships have to end in a divorce after infidelity happens. Individuals can learn that attachment style does influence forgiveness and therefore analyze their relationship and take the necessary steps to forgive his or her romantic partner.

Assumptions and Limitations

There are a number of assumptions, limitations, and constraints to the current study, which may limit its generalizability or the scope or validity of the results. These must be acknowledged before consideration of implantation of the study.

Language issues. Recent studies found that 62% of all Latinx in the United States were born in the United States (Rodríguez, 2011). Another study revealed that approximately 61% are English language dominant and 35% are bilingual. Most importantly, English is the preferred language among 1.5 (i.e., individuals who were brought to the United States at a young age) generation and second-generation Latinx (Rodríguez, 2011). The study used questionnaires in English, limiting this study to those Latinx that read and understand English, leaving out recent immigrants and those that might be first generation Latinx in the United States.

Culture. In addition to language, another potential difference contributing to the differences in Latinx cultures, Mexicans are by far the largest group, comprising almost two-thirds of the Latinx population, followed by Puerto Ricans and Cubans (Zayas, 2011; Giddens, Duneier, & Appelbaum, 2007). Central Americans and South Americans account for 8.7 percent and 5.9 percent of the Latinx population (Rodríguez, 2011). Gathering data from different Latinx cultures might lead to an increase in within-group error methodologically and in the statistical analyses of the findings.

Limitations of measures. Two of the instruments in this research study have been used mainly with Caucasian participants. Although good validity and reliability has been established, their application with non-Caucasian populations is not known.

Other limitations. In 2006, there were 9.9 million Latinx family households in the United States (Zayas, 2011). Of these households, 62% included children under 18 years of age, and 67% were comprised of married couples (Zayas, 2011). Chong (2002) noted that the median age for the Latinx population is 25.9 years of age. In fact, of Latinx under the age of 18, nearly 90% are U.S. citizens by birth (Rodríguez, 2011). This may mean that the researcher might be collecting data from a very young sample, and this might affect the results.

Statistical Assumptions

A multiple regression statistic was used to analyze the data. The relationship between attachment style and forgiveness was analyzed in detail, as well as how acculturation impacts forgiveness in romantic relationships after a sexual and/or emotional infidelity in Latinx romantic relationships. The researcher will measure attachment style, acculturation, and forgiveness. The Relationship Scale Questionnaire (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994) will be used to determine which attachment style the participant falls under. It is assumed that there will be a

positive correlation between forgiveness and secure attachment style. Individuals with a higher secure attachment style will be more likely to forgive a partner's infidelity. It is also assumed that there will be a significant correlation between acculturation and participants' forgiveness capability after a personal transgression has occurred in his or her life. It is also assumed that there will be a significant correlation between attachment style, acculturation, and gender in the individual's decision to forgive and infidelity.

Definition of Terms

The key terms for this current proposed study are attachment, infidelity, and forgiveness.

Attachment is defined as a close emotional bond between two people (Bowlby, 1973). It is the ability for someone to trust others and built intimacy.

Infidelity is defined as a secret sexual, romantic, or emotional involvement that violates the commitment to an exclusive relationship (Hall & Ficham, 2006).

Emotional infidelity is used to describe relationships where a significant emotional connection is formed with another person outside of the primary relationship but has not and may never become sexual (Peluso, 2019). Moller and Vossner (2015) add that emotional infidelity is considered when one falls in love with another person or there is a deep emotional attachment with someone else (e.g., sharing intimate details, feeling deeply connected with someone else, an investment discussing complaints about the primary partner, and meeting for a drink with that other person).

Sexual infidelity is defined as one person being in a committed relationship and engages in sexual intercourse with another person outside of the relationship (Peluso, 2019).

Forgiveness is defined both to be emotional and decisional, meaning that there will be a change in the person's behavioral intentions (i.e., not seeking revenge) and replacing negative emotions with more positive emotions (Worthington, 2003).

Emotional forgiveness involves replacing the negative emotions with positive feelings like compassion, sympathy, and empathy (Hook, 2009).

Decisional forgiveness is a decision to change one's behavioral intentions toward an offender, not pursue vengeance, not avoid (unless it is dangerous to continue to interact with the person), and to treat and the person as a human with dignity and value (Hook, 2009).

Acculturation is the construct which refers to an individual or group's ability to adapt to the new context and adopt cultural values, ideals, traditions, and practices while retaining aspects of the culture of origin (Torres, 2015).

Machismo is the code of conduct of a man and a direct legacy of the Spanish conquest and its sequelae (Paz, 2003). It entails men being physically strong, potentially virile, indomitable in character, and stoic (Flores, 2015). In other words, the better man is the man who can drink the most, defend himself the best, dominate his wife, command the respect of his children, have more sexual relationships, and engender more sons (Falicov, 2008).

Marianismo refers to the docile, self-sacrificing ideal of good womanhood. The traditional socialization script calls for loyalty to the family, especially men, overvaluing of sons, protecting of spouses, and absolute respect for and obedience to parental authority (Torres, 2015).

Familism (Famialismo) is defined as having the family be the emotional support for the individual; it is the tendency to rely on kin for emotional support rather than seeking outside help (Cuellar, Arnold, & Gonzalez, 1995).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Latinx are considerably changing the demographic profile of the United States (Rodríguez, 2011). Estimates indicate that, in the year 2050, the Latinx population will be 30% of the U.S. population, a demographic shift driven primarily by births and not immigration (Passel & Cohn, 2008). Census projections also indicate that ethnic minority individuals (e.g., Latinx, Africans Americans) will be the majority, surpassing the white population. Mexicans are by far the largest Latinx group, comprising almost two-thirds of the Latinx population, followed by Puerto Ricans and Cubans (Giddens, Duneier, & Appelbaum, 2007; Zayas, 2011). Central Americans and South Americans account for 8.7 percent and 5.9 percent of the Latinx population (Rodríguez, 2011). Many readers of this study may find that, with each passing year, they are working with Latinx. Thus, the future of the U.S. is guaranteed to be Latinx American. Therefore, there is a great need for competent counselors who understand the Latinx culture. The best way to help the Latinx community is by understanding the Latinx culture. Counselors need to be aware of Latinx culture, gender roles, traditions, *personalismo*, and spirituality. Furthermore, more research needs to be inclusive of Latinx participants.

Little research has been done with Latinx participants. In particular, not much research has been done on infidelity, attachment style, acculturation, and forgiveness with Latinx participants. In a world where infidelity has become a new norm, it is important that counselors research how to help this particular population in their romantic relationships overcome infidelity. According to Chohaney and Panozzo (2016), ashleymadison.com reported that Latinx are the fastest growing community when it comes to infidelity. Their analysis concluded that Latinx are also spending more money on subscriptions than any other ethnic group on the site. Infidelity is experienced in many relationships. In fact, 34% of men and 24% of women have

engaged in extramarital sexual relations (Jackman, 2015). Infidelity is becoming a huge problem in our society. Most individuals agree that infidelity is wrong and hope it never happens to them (Jackman, 2015). Since the number of infidelities are so high, one must look into what leads a partner in forgiving his or her partner after he or she has been unfaithful to her or him. Research suggests that an important factor in forgiveness is whether or not an individual has a secure attachment style (Lawler-Row et al., 2006). However, little to no research has been done on Latinx and attachment style and the link between attachment style and forgiveness in Latinx couples. Therefore, this study aims to raise awareness of Latinx culture and couples.

Latinx in the United States

It is important to understand the history of Latinx in the United States. Throughout the United States' history, periods of workforce scarcity have alternated with labor surplus. It is no surprise that in times of shortage, the United States has willingly welcomed immigrants to fill the gaps of the labor pool (Carrasco, 2011). It is also no surprise that available employment included severe working conditions, immense amounts of physical labor, and extremely low income (Carrasco, 2011). Negligible border restrictions and virtually no immigration laws aided early migration into the United States.

The first wave of Mexican laborers was drawn to California by the Gold Rush shortly after Mexico relinquished California to the United States under the terms of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 (Carrasco, 2011). Although economic trouble marked the years 1907 and 1921, when immigrants were blamed for many of the troubles, Mexican immigrants were generally welcomed into the United States until the 1930s and the Great Depression. It was during this time that many Latinx found themselves unemployed and unwanted. Because of the Depression, Mexican workers and immigrants were no longer welcomed (Carrasco, 2011). In

fact, they were unpopular, and many were driven out from the country. For example, Latinx in Oklahoma were threatened to be burned out of their homes (Carrasco, 2011). Other states such as Texas put up signs warning Mexicans and immigrants to get out of town (Carrasco, 2011). This betrayal continued throughout the Depression.

Sadly, many of the Latinx that were sent back to their county were lawful permanent residents of the country, and many had established homes and families in the United States (Carrasco, 2011). It is estimated that more than 400,000 Latinx who were repatriated to Mexico were citizens of the United States, and many were sent back without any formal deportation proceedings (Carrasco, 2011). It was not until after the Great Depression, specifically in 1942, that Latinx were invited back into the United for labor reasons through the Bracero program, a new labor program in the United States in that time (Carrasco, 2011). However, though Mexico knew about the betrayal, the country made the United States government sign an agreement with them to protect the Latinx laborers (Carrasco, 2011). It is important to note that the Bracero program ended in December 1947 (Carrasco, 2011).

A new Bracero program was signed in 1949. This new program stressed the reduction in the flow of undocumented workers from Mexico and the legalization of undocumented workers already in the United States (Carrasco, 2011). Public Law 78, which was the response to the outbreak of the Korean War, created another Bracero program in 1952. This law did not stem the tide of undocumented workers. Indeed, immigration authorities began finding undocumented workers in industrialized jobs, causing many labor unions to accuse undocumented laborers as unhelpful to their welfare (Carrasco, 2011). Operation Wetback, a massive deportation drive, was a result of these complaints (Carrasco, 2011). Unfortunately, Operation Wetback went beyond its scope, and deporting Mexican American citizens occurred again, mimicking the mass

deportations of the 1930s (Carrasco, 2011). It was not until 1986 that the United States implemented its most recent mass legalization program. The Immigration Reform and Control Act provided amnesty for many undocumented immigrants.

To this day, Mexican American immigrants reside in the border states of California, Texas, and Arizona. Although there are substantial groups in the Midwest and in northern cities, this is not surprising because these states were part of Mexico until 1846, when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed. The Latinx population increased in all 50 states and the District of Columbia from 2000 to 2010, and Latinx accounted for more than 58% of the growth in 33 states (Passel & Cohn, 2011). In fact, in 2010, roughly 75% of all Latinx lived primarily in eight states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas. The Latinx population continues to rise as more Latinx children are being born in the United States and more undocumented immigrants continue to cross the border (Farley, 2012). Mass quantities of immigrants are intercepted and sent back each year, but many try again and escape officials as they cross (Farley, 2012). It is also important to note that unauthorized immigrants enter the United States in two ways. One way is undocumented border crossing. This occurs mainly along the Mexican border, which at one time was not particularly well patrolled, but has become increasingly monitored in the last decade (Farley, 2012). Illegal border crossing accounts for approximately half of the undocumented immigrants in the United States. The second way unauthorized immigrants enter the United States is by entering legally and subsequently overstaying their visas. In fact, it is estimated that 45% of unauthorized immigrants in the United States may be overstaying their visas (Farley, 2012). However, this information is not new, and many other non-Latinx individuals have also overstayed their visas (Farley, 2012).

In 2006, there were 9.9 million Latinx family households in the United States (Zayas, 2011). Of the 9.9 million households, 62% included children under 18 years of age, and 67% were comprised of married couples (Zayas, 2011). Of Latinx youth younger than 18, a total of 93% were born in the United States. Approximately 800,00 Latinx turn 18 each year (P. Taylor, Gonzalez-Barrera, Passel, & Lopez, 2012). These statistics indicate the importance of researching Latinx couples. Healthcare providers are faced with increased demands of more than 50 million Latinx living in the United States. In 2008 the Latinx population was estimated to be at 46.9 million, reflecting an increase of nearly 33% since 2000 (Martinez, 2011). Additionally, the Hispanic population grew by 43%, rising from 35.3 million in 2000 to 50.5 million in 2010 (Rodríguez, 2011), meaning that Latinx accounted for more than half of the total population's increase (Rodríguez, 2011). Experts in population projections estimated that the rapid growth of the Latinx population will continue throughout the first half of the twenty-first century (Rodríguez, 2011), and expect that Latinx will make up mainly 29% to 30% of the U.S. population by 2050 (Rodríguez, 2011; Passel & Cohn, 2011).

Latinx Identity

As Latinx continue to grow in number and diversity, one of the challenges faced is operationalizing what it means to be Latinx in the United States. Latinx have a deep struggle with identity, which may be due to how others have defined identity previously (Crespo, 2003). According to Crespo (2003), there are six false assessments individuals may use to consider someone to be Latinx. First, some consider someone Latinx if they live in close proximity to a Latin country. Latinx have also been defined based on language (i.e., Spanish). The third false assessment is by analyzing physical features (i.e., brown skin color). The fourth false assessment to define Latinx is by cultural habits, such as the music one listens to or the food that one eats.

The fifth false assessment for Latinx identity is geographical parameters: Individuals may assume that socioeconomic or geographical parameters define an individual as Latinx. Others use religious parameters to identify who is a Latinx, concluding that all Latinx are Catholic.

While these measurements do reflect a piece of the Latinx experience, they all fall drastically short of how one should define themselves and others as Latinx in the United States, as there is no specified and defined Latinx look. Many Latinx speak different languages, and some choose not to speak Spanish. Latinx form part of different religious organizations, hold different beliefs, and also live in different parts of the United States. Crespo (2003) stated that there is a combination of two elements that help individuals define themselves as Latinx. The first element is if there is a family Latinx heritage, meaning these individuals can trace their heritage back to a Latin American country (Crespo, 2003). The second important factor is that an individual will choose to identify with Latinx heritage and is open to his or her ethnic roots (Crespo, 2003). Therefore, it is important to share about the Latinx culture, as their culture impacts their worldview.

Latinx Identity Model

Although a number of ethnic identity development models have been formulated to account for Latinx identity, there is only one that is the most similar to that of African and Asian Americans; this model was proposed by A. S. Ruiz (Sue & Sue, 2013). Ruiz's model was created after looking into many case studies with Latinx individuals (Sue & Sue, 2013). Ruiz's model was proposed after considering several assumptions. First, many other models lacked the understanding of the Latinx culture (Sue & Sue, 2013). Secondly, Ruiz noticed that the marginal status of Latinx is highly linked with maladjustment (Sue & Sue, 2013). Thirdly, negative assimilation experiences are considered destructive to an individual (Sue & Sue, 2013). Fourth,

having pride in one's cultural tradition and cultural identity is positively correlated with mental health (Sue & Sue, 2013). Lastly, Ruiz believed that pride in one's ethnicity affords the Latinx greater freedom to choose freely (Sue & Sue, 2013).

These five beliefs led Ruiz to develop his five-stage model. Ruiz's five-stage model consists of the following stages: casual stage, cognitive stage, consequence stage, working-through stage, and successful resolution stage (Sue & Sue, 2013). In the casual stage, messages or restrictions from the environment or significant others will either influence the positive or negative ethnic identity of the person. If during this stage affirmation of one's ethnic identity is absent, the person may experience traumatic or humiliating understanding related to his or her ethnicity, thus leading the individual to not being able to identify with Latinx culture (Sue & Sue, 2013). All of these negative attitudes and beliefs about one's own ethnic identity may be relayed from parents and family, as well as from the larger culture in which the person develops (Arredondo, Gallardo-Copper, Delgado-Romero, & Zapata, 2014).

During the cognitive stage, three negative beliefs occur. First, ethnic group identity is associated with discrimination and poverty (Arredondo, et. al., 2014). Second, assimilation to American culture is the only means of escape. And third, Latinx might attempt to distance themselves from their culture, ethnicity, and heritage to obtain success in the dominant culture (Sue & Sue, 2013).

In the consequences stage, a Latinx individual can be noted as having a disintegrated identity. This Latinx feels ashamed and embarrassed by his or her ethnic markers, such as his or her name, accent, color, and so on. This subsequently leads to the rejection of one's Latinx identity (Sue & Sue, 2013). If Latinx perceive their ethnic identity as inferior, this can result in a

fragmentation of ethnic identity that leads to feelings of estrangement from the community (Arrendo et. al., 2014).

In Ruiz's working-through stage, two important dynamics occur. First, the individual becomes increasingly unable to cope with the psychological distress of the ethnic identity struggle. Secondly, the person can no longer be someone who protects himself or herself by identifying with a foreign ethnic identity. It is during this stage that ethnic consciousness rises when the person is propelled to reclaim and reintegrate disowned ethnic identity fragments (Sue & Sue, 2013; Arrendo et. al., 2014).

Ruiz's last stage, the successful resolution stage, is reached when individuals have accepted one's culture and ethnicity. It is during this stage that there is also an improvement in self-esteem as they are now accepting of their culture, a sense that ethnic identity represents a positive and success-promoting resource. Latinx see their ethnic identity as strength and a resource (Sue & Sue, 2013; Arrendo et. al., 2014). Furthermore, Latinx in this stage are more likely to engage with other individuals in their ethnic group, leading to feelings of pride in their ethnic identification (Arrendo et. al., 2014).

Latinx and Acculturation

Latinx are also known for their spirit of acceptance, struggle, and ultimate resiliency against adversity (Falicov, 2014). Newly immigrant Latinx are likely to face many obstacles as they adjust to the United States; these challenges include learning a new language, unemployment, legal issues, change and expectations about respective families, and grieving a prior existence and extended family members left behind (Hovey, 2000). A new immigrant begins acculturating to the mainstream culture. The study of acculturation has focused on capturing, identifying, and assessing the process individuals go through as a result of merging

into a new cultural group. According to Adames and Chavez-Dueñas (2017), researchers have studied acculturation from different perspectives, ranging from a focus on cultural level to a focus on the psychological individual level. Acculturation is the construct, which refers to an individual or group's ability to adapt to the new context and adopt cultural values, ideals, traditions, and practices while retaining aspects of the culture of origin (Torres, 2015). At the individual level, acculturation describes the extent to which individuals learn the values, behaviors, lifestyles, and language of the host culture (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). The concept of acculturation was expanded by Padilla (1980), who explored two additional components: a) cultural awareness, referring to what an individual knows about his or her native and host culture, and b) ethnic loyalty, referring to the individual's preference for one culture over the other. Later, Cuellar, Arnold, and Maldonado (1995) added that acculturation involves changes at the affective and cognitive levels.

Acculturation is a key process in the immigration process (Smart & Smart, 1995). Beyond specific definitions of acculturation, a number of theories provided insight into how the process of acculturation takes place and has emerged over the decades. There are multiple theories of acculturation and three main models have emerged over the years: the earliest model was the unidirectional model, followed by the bidirectional model and the multidirectional model. Acculturation was first studied and proposed by Park and Miller (1921), leading to the first theory of acculturation. The unidirectional model states that all immigrants will undergo an acculturation to the host country. This process will be gradual and irreversible; and although some might try to resist the acculturation process, individuals would be unable to stop it (Park, 1955; Park & Miller, 1921). The directional models of acculturation state that identification with two or more cultures is not mutually exclusive (Nguyen, Messe, & Stollak, 1991). Bidirectional

models suggest that it is possible for members of the cultural group to develop a bicultural identification and become fully integrated members of two different cultures (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). According to Ramirez (1984), individuals who are bicultural have extensive socialization and life experiences in two or more cultures in which they actively participate in. The most known bidirectional acculturation model was design by Berry (1997, 2003). This bidirectional model is composed of three major phases: contact, conflict, and adaptation. As individuals go through these three phases, they will struggle how cultural maintenance and contact and participation. Berry (2003) suggests that individuals will then choose one of the following acculturation strategies to resolve some acculturation issues: patterns or trajectories, assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization.

Lastly, a new model of acculturation has ascended this model; it is the multidirectional/multidimensional model of acculturation. This has led to a multidirectional conceptualization of acculturation, focusing on the notion that acculturation is an ongoing process that can vary among a number of different domains, including social context (e.g., home, work, and school) and time (Feliz-Ortiz, Newcomb, & Myers, 1994). The multidirectional model of acculturation suggests that the process of acculturation may vary across social settings, time, and cultures (Kim & Abreu, 2001). In his effort to distinguish his model from unidirectional and bidirectional, Felix et al. (1994) suggested the use of the term “cultural identity” as the descriptor to capture multidimensional and complexities of acculturation. Therefore, the use of “cultural identity” as a construct between cultural groups changed to one that emphasizes the changes at the individual level across social functioning, context, and time (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). This emphasis led to the focus on how acculturation happens at the individual level, taking into account proficiency and preference in native and host

language, familiarity with dominant and nondominant culture, and adherence to cultural values of both host and native culture (Felix et al., 1994).

Acculturative stress is commonly experienced among Latinx immigrants in the United States who may feel pressured to maintain their heritage cultural norms and beliefs and/or adopt norms and beliefs of the dominant culture. The current study will also look at what impact acculturation has on the individual level in forgiveness after a sexual and/or emotional infidelity has occurred in the life of the participant. Research suggests that individuals who have lived longer in the United States have acculturated change in their views of their family values, specially Latina gender role beliefs (Ertl et al., 2019). According to research, this could be because of the acculturative stress from the pressure to acculturate while attempting to retain one's heritage culture while being challenged by the main culture (Steidel & Contreras, 2003). In their study of 530 women, Ertl et al. (2019) concluded that endorsing gender role beliefs may lead to greater acculturative stress; those women who experience this stress may alter their endorsement of these gender role beliefs in an effort to resolve culturally conflicting stress. With this conclusion in mind, the current study would like to identify if acculturation will impact forgiveness after a sexual and/or emotional infidelity in a Latinx romantic relationship.

Latinx Culture

Familismo

Familismo is how Latinx view family. *Familismo* is an anchor for individuals who have been socialized in traditional beliefs about the importance of the family. Latinx value family unity (Falicov, 2014), oftentimes living in households having five or more members (Sue & Sue, 2013). Traditional Latinx families are hierarchical in form, meaning that special authority is given to older adults, and children are taught about respect, dignity, and wisdom of the older

generations (Falicov, 1998; Falivoc, 2014). In Latinx families, all members are taught to cooperate, are often religious, possess strict child-rearing practices, and value extended family (Sue & Sue, 2013). Children are expected to be obedient and are typically not involved in family decisions. Parents may expect adolescents to work in helping meet family financial responsibilities. Also, parents reciprocate by providing for their children until adulthood, and even after their children are married (Sue & Sue, 2013). Parents teach their children about the value of endurance and hard work. Children and adults understand the importance of loving one another and are taught to practice enduring separation from loved ones in order to improve one's life circumstances (Falicov, 2014). Per Flores (2005) and Grau, Azmitia, and Quattlebaun (2009), many immigrant Latinx parents "tighten the reins" on their adolescent children, particularly their daughters, to ensure that they will follow *el buen camino* (i.e., the good path), which will lead to *la buena vida* (i.e., the good life). Immigrants and less acculturated parents often expect their children to remain connected primarily to their family and home (Flores, 2013). Parents who hold traditional values tend to be firmer in their socialization practices, in order to ensure that their children will follow the good path of life (Flores, 2005).

A celebratory spirit is employed in times of material deprivation to affirm love, life, and joy (Falicov, 2014). In other words, Latina mothers are revered for their commitment to the family and the sacrifices they make for their children. The family is the heart of the Latinx community, but it is important to mention that Latinx are poly-cultural (Flores, 2013). In other words, a manifestation of *familismo* is *compadrazgo*, or extended family relations (Arredondo et al., 2014). Latinx rituals such as baptisms, first communions, and even marriages introduce *comadres* and *compadres* (coparents), *madrinas* (godmothers), and *padrinos* (godfathers) into the family structure (Arredondo et al., 2014). *Compadres* and *compadres* assume a special

relationship to the parents of the children and the rest of the family. For Latinx, family makes visitors feel part of the family (Falicov, 2014). Many Latinx couples have an emphasis on social activities involving extended family and friends rather than on activities as a couple (Sue & Sue, 2013). Latinx have a strong community orientation in addition to a deep pride in cultural traditions.

The family is seen as a community of people connected by blood, adoption, marital agreement, or emotional connection with a strong sense of togetherness, belonging, and interdependency. The family is the main source of care, advice, and healing for Latinx individuals (Smith & Montillo, 2006). Another portrayal of *familismo* is found in professional Latinx. At annual conferences and events, students and professionals of all ages readily hug, kiss, and become very expressive, as it is traditional to do in their family. It is like one big family reunion where a sense of belonging is unmistakable (Arredondo et al., 2014). Latinx often marry and parent early in life and are viewed as stabilizing influences (Sue & Sue, 2013).

Personalismo

Personalismo is a basic cultural value of Latinx; it is a cultural trait of valuing and building interpersonal relationships. *Personalismo* is also a characteristic of a collectivist worldview where there is high emotional investment in the family and/or relationship (Santiago-Rivera, Arrendondo, & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002). In other words, *personalismo* is the human quality of being able to relate on a personal level, regardless of social or financial standing. *Personalismo* conveys respect among peers and grants admiration or respect to all persons (Chong, 2002). *Personalismo* can be viewed as self-worth; it is based on knowledge of an individual's qualities learned over many years of friendship and sharing (Chong, 2002).

Gender Roles

Within the Latinx community, gender roles are rooted in the *machismo* and *marianismo* spectrum. Gender roles often do not change, as many immigrants' parents or second and third generations will likely have strong messages about parenting and gender roles (Smith & Montillo, 2006). Socialization is influenced by the values of both *machismo* and *marianismo*. For example, boys are taught to *ser hombre*, or be men, indicating several objectives including being responsible for one's family, being in control, and being the dominator in the family (Smith & Montillo, 2006). Messages for Latinas are similar to those given to women across cultures (Arrendondo et. al., 2014). Latinas are expected to be mothers, long-suffering, and the glue that holds the family together (Smith & Montillo, 2006).

Machismo can be defined as a man who is strong or aggressive, has masculine pride, and accepts the responsibility for providing for the family (Smith & Montillo, 2006). However, in the popular press, *machismo* is generally presented more negatively and associated with attributes of sexism, chauvinism, womanizing, and hypermasculinity (Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, & Tracey, 2008). Notably, most individuals confuse being macho with *machismo*; macho emphasizes the dominating and aggressive implication of the label, and *machismo* is focused on the humanitarian aspect. For example, a truly masculine man is responsible and honorable, and his deepest wish is to maintain dignity in his relations with others (Smith & Montillo, 2006). Other attributes of *machismo* include dignity, hard work, spirituality, and emotional connectedness (J. M. Casas, Wagenheim, Bachero, & Mendoza-Romero, 1994; Mirande, 1998). Therefore, it is important for counselors and researchers to note that the terms *macho* or *machista* are more slang and crude and are viewed as a microaggression if attributed to a man indiscriminately. Recent research has encouraged counselors and researchers to use the

term *caballerismo*, which is associated with the more positive qualities of *machismo* as introduced by Arciega et al. (2008).

For Latinas, *marianismo* was first identified in 1973, and takes its name from the adoration of the Virgin Mary in the Catholic tradition (Sue & Sue, 2013; Arrendondo et al., 2014). The concept underlying *marianismo* is that women are spiritually superior to men and therefore can endure all suffering caused by men or their husbands (Arrendondo et al., 2014). In other words, Latina women need to *aguantar* (i.e., put up with situations or suppress). Although there is a trend towards more equality regarding decision making because of more women in the labor force, women still do the majority of domestic work in Latinx families (Denner & Guzman, 2006). *Marianismo* influences the identity formation of young Latinas when it is part of the identity of their closest female role models such as their mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and older cousins. Research suggests a greater inclination among Latinas to adopt their parents' polarized sex roles (Denner & Guzman, 2006). In fact, a leading researcher on *marianismo* has condensed this gender role concept to ten guidelines:

Don't forget a woman's place; don't forsake your customs; don't be an old maid, do not be independent, and have your own opinions; don't put your needs first; don't wish anything but to be a housewife; don't forget sex is to make babies and not for pleasure; don't be unhappy with your man or criticize him for infidelity, gambling, and or verbal and physical abuse and or substance abuse him; don't ask for support; don't discuss your personal problems outside the house; and don't change. (M.R. Gil & Vazquez, 1996; Jezzini, Guzman, Grayshield, 2008; Arredondondo et al., 2014)

Latinx and Religion

Not only are Latinx the largest growing population in the United States, they are also committed to their religion and faith. Montilla and Medina (2006) said, “Hay de todo en la viña del Señor,” which means, “In the Lord’s vineyard, there is a little of everything. Faith and religion are present in most experiences of Latino individuals (Hilton & Child, 2014). Latinx consult the spiritual realm in many areas including life, education, health, and family (Montilla & Medina, 2006). For Latinx, religion is not simply something that you do; rather, religion reflects who you are as a person (Montilla & Medina, 2006).

According to a 2007 study, 92% of all Latinx “profess a religious faith” (Rodríguez, 2011). However, this dropped to 90% in 2014 per the Census Bureau. Latin America was once almost entirely Catholic, but that is changing (Steigenga & Cleary, 2007). More than two-thirds, or 68%, of all Latinx report being Roman Catholic, and 15% identify themselves as Evangelical (i.e., born-again Christians) (Rodríguez, 2011). Most recently, research revealed that U.S. Latinx who are Catholic dropped from 67% in 2010 to 55% in 2013 (Pew Research Center, 2014). Recent studies revealed that the Protestant and Evangelical faiths are becoming increasingly popular among Latinx. In fact, Evangelicals in Chile represent 12% of the total population; in Guatemala, as many as 25% to 35% of the total population is Evangelical (Montillo & Medina, 2006). Another study revealed that five percent of Latinx identified as Mainline Protestant, and three percent identified themselves as belonging to other denominations (e.g., Jehovah's Witness); the other one percent identifies with a non-Christian faith (e.g., Muslim or Jewish) (Rodríguez, 2011). Eight percent identified themselves as secular, meaning these individuals claimed no specific religious affiliation or would consider themselves agnostic or atheist (Rodríguez, 2011).

Additionally, native-born Latinx are more likely than foreign-born Latinx to describe themselves as Evangelical Protestant (Rodríguez, 2011). Although most Latinx consider themselves religious, about 52% of Latinx immigrants reported attending a religious service at least weekly, and about 31% of U.S.-born Latinx reported similar attendance rates (Espinosa, Elizondo, & Miranda, 2003). Most Latinx would describe their spirituality as being focused on the relationship and intimacy with the transcendent, the self, and others (Montillo & Medina, 2006). In much of Latinx history, this web of relationships is what Latinx families have used to face adversities, celebrate achievements, and make sense of their existence (Montillo & Medina, 2006). Accordingly, many Latinx immigrants arrive in the United States with solid religious and spiritual belief systems and anticipate that God will provide for them and protect them (Hilton & Child, 2014). Empirical research suggests that religious attendance promotes well-being across multiple generations of Latinx (Hilton & Child, 2014).

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory is the joint work of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. Attachment is defined as a close emotional bond between two people (Bowlby, 1973). Bowlby concluded that attachment is a strong emotional tie to a specific person or persons. Attachment was first studied to understand separation distress in very young children (Davies, 2011). Humans develop attachment styles during infant years, which are based on interactions with a caregiver (Cozzarelli, Hoekstra, & Bylsma, 2000). Infants and their primary caregivers are biologically predisposed to form attachment (Bretherton, 1992). Newborns are biologically equipped to elicit attachment behaviors (e.g., the baby cries, clings, coos, and smiles); and later in life, infants begin to crawl, walk, and follow his mother, this of course with the intention to keep his mother nearby. This behavior is to increase the infant's chances of survival (Bjorklund, 2011).

Attachment serves as a protective device for children. Babies need the care of adults to survive. This attachment can be seen in early weeks after birth and becomes more visible between four and six months after birth (i.e., by the elicited attachment behaviors) (Bjorklund, 2011).

Attachment has four main functions: provide a sense of security, regulate affect and arousal, promote the expression of feelings and communication, and serve as a base for exploration (Davies, 2011). Most infants have more than one caring person with whom they form an attachment that can help these four functions be reached. Most commonly, the first object of attachment is the mother, but the father, siblings, and even childcare professionals also become objects of attachment (Davies, 2011). Three factors have been identified as important predictors to which people will form the child's significant attachment figures: the amount of time infants spend with caregivers, the quality and responsiveness of care provided, one's emotional investment in the infant, and the presence of the person in the infant's life across time (Newman & Newman, 2012).

It is, however, important to distinguish between the presence of an attachment and the quality of that attachment. According to attachment theory, if adults are present to interact with infants, then attachment will be formed. In Ainsworth and Bowlby's (1991) observational and experimental studies, they discovered four patterns of attachment behavior. In the studies, Ainsworth identified characteristics of secure attachment, anxious avoidant attachment, anxious-resistant attachment, and disorganized attachment (Davies, 2011).

As mentioned earlier, attachment is the trust based in the early relationship between children and primary caregiver. Secure attachment provides the basis for healthy intrapersonal and interpersonal development in later childhood and adulthood. Parents who are present for their children allow the infants to develop stable beliefs about themselves as lovable or

worthwhile (Cozzarelli, Hoekstra, & Bylsma, 2000). When individuals do not experience fast responsiveness and accessibility from their caregivers, one might develop an insecure attachment style. On the other hand, if individuals experience fast responsiveness and accessibility from caregivers, the individual is likely to develop a secure attachment style (Cozzarelli, Hoekstra, & Bylsma, 2000).

Children who have a secure attachment style are more skillful in emotional regulation compared to children who have insecure attachment styles. Overall, children who have a secure attachment style are better off than children who have one of the other three attachment styles (Flanagan & Hall, 2014).

Attachment in Relationships

Drawing on Bowlby's theoretical model, several researchers elaborated on the idea of attachment differences in interpersonal functioning. According to Johnson (2004; 2008), the yearning for humans to feel safe and securely connected to others is hardwired into one's genes. It is this desire that allows for romantic relationships to become so important in people's lives. Dunham and Woolley (2011) state that when working with individuals, it is important to understand the human condition as it relates to attachment and romantic love. Internalized mental representations of attachment figures offer the foundation of attachment in adulthood (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2004). The attachment system organizes the ways in which one thinks, feels, and behaves in close attachment relationships (Johnson, 2013; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Attachment working models operate both on a general level, impacting our general views of ourselves and others; they also work on a relationship specific level, impacting one's view of self and others in the specific relationship, and out of experience of attachment-related effects (Barry, Lakey, and Orehek, 2007). Much research has been done on adult attachment styles

through intimate partner relationships (Collins & Read, 1990; Feeney & Noller, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver et al., 1996; Simms, 1998; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Hazan and Shaver (1987) first conceptualized romantic love as a process of attachment and created a self-report measure to categorize adults into the three attachment categories that corresponded to Ainsworth and colleagues' (1978) childhood attachment styles. Based on their research, they characterized someone with a secure attachment style as trusting, happy, friendly, and highly invested in the romantic relationship. Also, secure adults tend to be stable, have positive regard for others, as well as a strong sense of self (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Such individuals also tend to exhibit higher levels of satisfaction within the close relationship as well as interdependence and commitment (Simms, 1998). In contrast, Hazan and Shaver (1987) found insecure attachments in romantic relationships to be portrayed by obsession, jealousy, and emotional extremes. More specifically, anxious-ambivalent attachment styles are characterized by a desire for union, yet fear of abandonment, while avoidant styles fear intimacy. Individuals with anxious-ambivalent attachment styles also tend to experience higher break-up rates with a higher occurrence of getting back together.

Moreover, persons with such styles also report more social dissatisfaction and loneliness, as well as having an extreme concern about rejection (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). It is well known that adult insecure attachment is associated with depressive symptoms (Wei, Mallickrodt, Larson, & Zakalik, 2005). Anxious-ambivalent styles tend to overly self-disclose, appear unstable, and experience difficulty coping in stressful situations, while avoidant people tend to experience discomfort when close to others and struggle to depend on others or completely trust them (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Furthermore, individuals with avoidant attachment styles are characterized as having a low investment and lack of involvement in romantic relationships

(Shaver et al., 1996). Persons with these insecure attachment styles are found to experience less satisfaction in their intimate relationships (Tucker & Anders, 1999). Overall, relationship satisfaction as an outcome of attachment is well represented and consistent in the attachment literature. Previous researchers have found that relationship satisfaction is positively correlated to secure attachment, while insecure attachments are negatively associated (e.g., Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Collins & Read, 1990; Simpson, 1990; Feeney et al., 1994).

Securely attached individuals reported feeling that their partners were more dependable and therefore felt less insecure and more satisfied in their relationships. Moreover, secure attachment correlates with a higher proportion of positive emotions in the relationship than negative ones, whereas the inverse correlation occurs in insecure attachments (Simpson, 1990). Furthermore, those individuals who expressed higher satisfaction in their romantic relationships also tended to experience their partners' behavior as being more positive than those with less satisfaction (Feeney, 1999). Securely attached partners also tended to describe themselves as more confident in their relationships as well as in their partners' level of commitment (Collins, 1996). In terms of gender differences, satisfaction was negatively related to the female's level of anxiety, while positively related to the male's comfort of closeness or intimacy in relationships (Collins & Read, 1990; Feeney et al., 1994).

While previous researchers have found consistent results relating to attachment patterns and relationship satisfaction, there have been some interesting findings involving individuals with avoidant attachments (Simpson, 1990; Collins & Read, 1990). Hazan and Shaver (1987) describe avoidant attachment as a fear of being close to others, as opposed to an avoidant behavior that is detached in relationships. This definition of avoidance is similar to their description of ambivalent behavior, and as a result, their analysis found similar results between

the two categories (Bartholomew, 1990). For example, both experienced greater self-doubt and increased levels of jealousy (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Therefore, it has been proposed that a single definition of avoidance may be inadequate to accurately capture the variations of avoidant behavior patterns witnessed in adulthood, as compared to those seen during childhood (Bartholomew, 1990). To differentiate between the behavioral aspect of avoiding closeness and the personal need for attachment and fear of intimacy, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) proposed a two-dimensional model that yields a four-category measure of adult attachment. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) conceptualized adult attachment into two dimensions, based on Bowlby's concept of the working model of self and self concerning others.

The two aspects are dichotomized to create positive and negative continuous and categorical ratings of both the image of self (e.g., "I believe I am worthy of support and love" vs. "I am not") and the image of others (e.g., others are considered to be trustworthy and reliable vs. unavailable and unresponsive) (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). In other words, the self-model is connected with the level of anxiety and dependency encountered in close relationships (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). When an individual has a low sense of dependence on others, he or she is able to maintain internal validation, in contrast to those who need others' validation to determine their self-worth, or those who have a high level of dependency (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). The dimension of the other model pertains to the movement towards or away from intimacy, based on the person's anticipated outcome of close relationships (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). In addition, these dimensions are also combined to form four prototypes, as compared to the Hazan and Shaver (1987) three-category model (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Secure types are described as trusting of others and having a strong sense of self-worth. Secure individuals contribute positive attributes to both self and others, thereby demonstrating a low level of anxiety and a small degree of avoidance in relating to others (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). This prototype corresponds to previous researchers' secure category. The second type is a preoccupied style, which is demonstrated by feelings of unworthiness and a need for others' acceptance and approval (Bartholomew, 1990). In other words, people matching this prototype experience a high level of anxiety and a low degree of avoidance in relationships due to their negative sense of self and positive regard for others (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). Previous research has categorized this pattern as preoccupied or as ambivalent. The third style, fearful, is also represented by a negative sense of self that results in feelings of being unlovable. However, unlike the preoccupied style, these individuals also have a negative experience of others, which contributes to a distrust of others and an avoidance of intimacy, even though they desire the closeness (Bartholomew, 1990).

This pattern describes individuals with high levels of anxiety coupled with a high degree of avoiding close relationships (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). This style corresponds to Hazan and Shaver's (1987) avoidant category (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Dismissing, the fourth and final prototype, captures adult behavior exhibiting what Bowlby (1988) termed "deactivation," or denial of attachment needs (Bartholomew, 1990). A positive sense of self and feelings of worthiness, a strong sense of self-reliance, as well as personal achievement, identify this style; however, individuals with dismissing attachment patterns have had negative experiences with others and therefore actively avoid close relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Unlike the fearful pattern, dismissing is characterized as exhibiting low anxiety due to the strong sense of self; however, similar to fearful, the dismissing pattern also

falls on the dimension of high avoidance. Due to these differences between fearful and dismissing, it is apparent that there is a need for a model of two dimensions with four prototypes rather than three categories. Another difference and advantage of this four-style model is that an individual is not expected to exclusively display one attachment style. Instead, based on the individual's past experiences, he or she is described as best matching one of the four styles. This match is an approximation since an individual commonly displays two or more prototypes to varying degrees (Bartholomew, 1990).

This proposed differentiation of two distinct types of avoidance is empirically validated, and therefore, researchers are increasingly utilizing the four-category model of adult attachment pattern (Feeney, 1999). Research has confirmed the dimensional aspect of adult attachment (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Mikulincer et al., 2003). Brennan and colleagues (1998) found there was a growing consensus that a two-dimensional model for conceptualizing attachment more accurately reflected an individual's adult attachment style. Several studies have identified anxiety and avoidance as underlying structures or dimensions of adult attachment. The former dimension is related to the working model of self while the latter is related to the working model of others (Feeney, 1999). In addition, recent research has identified useful reactivity and regulation, two affect-based processes, underlying internal working models, which correspond to the individual differences in attachment styles.

Affective reactivity implies that a person experiences a threat that constitutes the need to regulate personal feelings of distress, while regulation involves the approach or withdraw from others, also known as an interpersonally based regulation. In relation to attachment styles, affective reactivity and regulation depend on high or low ratings on both the anxiety and avoidance dimensions, such that individuals with high anxiety tend to exhibit more frequent

emotional reactivity and seek to restore feelings of security; however, the behaviors the individuals engage in will depend on their level of avoidance (Pietromonaco, Feldman, Barrett, & Power, 2006). For instance, individuals with high avoidance tend not to approach or request interaction with others, while those with low avoidance are more likely to create an interaction with another. These behaviors correspond, respectively, with Bartholomew & Horowitz's (1991) fearful and preoccupied prototypes (Pietromonaco et al., 2006).

Attachment styles are persistent and consistent in daily interactions, and define and predict how individuals will relate to others (Bowlby, 1969). As infants, individuals create internal working models that are schemas of self-worth as well as generalized beliefs and expectations for others (Bowlby, 1988). Infants and adults alike create expectations of others based on previous experiences; and based on these expectations, an individual can determine which strategies will be most effective in the reduction of distress (Pietromonaco et al., 2006). Adult attachment styles create the foundation for an individual's behavioral, cognitive, and emotional functioning in a romantic relationship (Shaver et al., 1996). Affect, cognition, and behaviors related to an individual's working model are stimulated by situations or events of actual or perceived distress (Feeney, 2002).

Like the infant whose attachment style is activated during times of stress (Bowlby, 1969), adult attachment styles are also marked during situations that threaten the self or the romantic relationship, such as times of stress or conflict (Feeney, 2002). Attachment styles influence the type of partner one seeks and one's ability to sustain an intimate relationship (Bjorklund, 2011). For example, secure individuals have a positive model of themselves and of others (e.g., it is easy for them to become emotionally close to others) (Newman & Newman, 2012). Preoccupied individuals have a positive model of others but a negative view of themselves (e.g., individuals

want to be emotionally comfortable with others but feel that others find them reluctant).

Whereas, dismissing avoidant individuals have a positive model of themselves, but a negative view of others (e.g., individuals are comfortable without close emotional relationships).

Individuals who want to be close to others but find it difficult to trust others entirely or depend on them are those who fall into the fearful avoidant attachment styles (Newman & Newman, 2012). Individuals often seek out partners with similar attachments styles. Fearful-avoidant individuals prefer other anxious partners to dismissing or secure ones (Newman & Newman, 2012). Attachment style plays an important role not only in children, but because the attachment style is often stable, over time it also plays a vital role in adult behavior and intimate relationships. When one fails to achieve proximity or reduce distress, this individual, characterized as either anxious or avoidant, adopts a strategy for secondary attachment or, in other words, assumes hyperactivating or deactivating strategies (Mikulincer et al., 2003). Shaver and Mikulincer (2004) further conceptualized the activation of attachment systems with their three-component model.

First, an individual appraises a threatening event, which may constitute the activation of attachment behavior, or proximity-seeking. Previous studies empirically support the response of proximity-seeking as a result of an actual or perceived threat (Mikulincer et al., 2003). The second component involves the evaluation of the availability of attachment figures, both internal and externalized. Finally, the feasibility of proximity-seeking is also assessed as an adequate and appropriate coping behavior to alleviate distress. This third stage contributes to an individual's movement towards secondary strategies, which can be heightened with recurrent usage (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2004). When an attachment figure is deemed unavailable, and an individual is experiencing distress and insecurity, or is unable to maintain a sense of autonomy through

internalized attachment, he or she may likely approach the activation of their attachment system with the secondary strategies of hyperactivating or deactivating (Mikulincer et al., 2003).

In terms of accessibility, Mikulincer, Gillath, and Shaver (2002) found that activation was heightened in anxious attachments yet repressed with avoidant attachments. The former attachment style is likely to utilize hyperactivating strategies, while the latter is deactivating. Hyperactivating strategies can include clinging behaviors, attempts to minimize distance, and eliciting of involvement from the significant other as well as establishing a state of closeness or intimacy (Mikulincer et al., 2003). This strategy creates a cycle of hypervigilance in appraising possible threatening events as well as oversensitivity to events being perceived as threatening, thereby maintaining a constant state of distress and negative outlooks (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2004). In contrast to the former strategy, a deactivating strategy involves an individual withdrawing from and/or denying proximity to significant others and instead of disregarding threatening events and seeking independence. In summary, the activation of an individual's attachment system is triggered by actual or perceived threats (Mikulincer et al., 2003).

According to Shaver and Mikulincer (2004), the component model, the appraisal of a situation, the evaluation of attachment figure availability, and the proximity-seeking to reduce distress are all influenced by an individual's attachment style.

As one can note, attachment theory has become an essential framework for understanding the process of relationship formation (Newman & Newman, 2012). Newman and Newman (2012) suggested that adults continue to form healthy new attachments in adulthood, particularly to a spouse or partner. In relationships, individuals continue to seek three kinds of support from attachment figures: proximity (i.e., comfort from individuals who are close physical or psychological present), a safe haven (i.e., help and support when a threat is present), and a secure

base (i.e., support in pursuing goals) (Newman & Newman, 2012). Adults who have a secure attachment style believe that the world is a safe place, and they welcome the challenges that life presents.

Attachment and Latinx

As attachment research expanded to populations outside the United States and Europe, scholars have questioned the applicability of Western-based attachment to non-Western individuals. An extensive review done by Van IJzendoorn and Sagi-Schwartz (2008) concluded that the core of attachment theory appears to be universal; however, the exact manifestations of attachment behaviors may have some cross-cultural variations. This may be in part because of different cultural norms that promote different sets of secure attachment behavior and interpersonal relatedness (Wang & Scalise, 2010). Researchers also believe that cultural difference reflected in parenting practices lead to differences in attachment behavior in adulthood; for example, one central tenet is that caregiver's sensitivity to attachment behaviors (e.g., crying) contributes to forming a secure between the caregiver and the child (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). However, in non-Western countries such as Japan, the parenting practice is to anticipate the needs of the infant rather than waiting for an infant to communicate his or her needs (Rothbaum, Weisz, Pott, Miyake, & Morelli, 2000). There appears to be a similarity in Latina mothers, who tend to be more indulgent and affectionate than do non-Latina white mothers (Falicov, 1998).

Unfortunately, despite the fact that Latinx are the largest minority group in the United States, not much research has been published on Latinx and attachment. One study found a significantly higher avoidance score for Latinx college students at southwestern and midwestern public universities compared to white students, and no differences in anxiety scores using the

Adult Attachment Questionnaire (Lopez et al., 2000). However, another study concluded that Latinx college students scored higher in anxiety than white students, and no differences were found in avoidance using the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale. Due to the lack of research, it is important that more studies on attachment and Latinx participants be done, more specifically, studies regarding attachment in Latinx romantic relationships.

Infidelity

Commitment and exclusivity are hallmarks of a romantic relationship (Gibson, Thompson, O'Sullivan, 2016; Fuhrman, Flannagan, & Matamoros, 2009; Hampel & Vangelisti, 2008). Typically, people in committed relationships expect emotional and sexual exclusivity of one another (Treas & Giesen, 2000), yet infidelity continues to be a relatively common problem among couples (Gibson, Thompson, & O'Sullivan, 2016). Infidelity is considered a serious relationship breach that commonly affects individuals in committed relationships (Widmer, Treas, & Newcomb, 1998). Acts of infidelity represent relational betrayals that often lead to feelings of hurt, shame, sadness, and anger (Gordon, Baucom, & Snyder, 2004). Infidelity is defined as a secret sexual, romantic, or emotional involvement that violates the commitment to an exclusive relationship (Hall & Ficham, 2006).

Sexual infidelity refers to sexual activities that are committed with someone other than one's partner. Commonly identified behaviors of sexual infidelity include kissing, sexual intercourse, oral sex, and sexual touching (Allen, Atkins, Baucom, Snyder, Gordon, & Glass, 2005; Roscoe, Cavanaugh, & Kennedy, 1988). However, research that limits the definition of infidelity to only sexual contact minimizes the devastating effects that emotional infidelity can have on relationships. Emotional infidelity refers to becoming emotionally involved with someone other than one's partner (Ellis & Kleinplatz, 2018).

Behaviors such as flirting, dating, spending time together, and falling in love with someone other than one's partner are commonly identified as emotional infidelity (Ellis & Kleinplatz, 2018). Thompson (1984) described emotional infidelity as a type of close friendship like falling in love with someone else. Yet, emotional infidelity appears to be in the rise. Per the research, many individuals continue in communication with an ex-partner after the relationship has ended. Although there is relatively little research on post-dissolution communication, some research on marital dissolution has found that approximately 50% of individuals maintain contact with their ex-spouses between two and 10 years after separating (Fischer, de Graaf, & Kalmijn, 2005), and between 40% and 67% report communication with an ex-partner after a nonmarital relationship dissolution (Koenig-Kellas, Bean, Cunningham, & Ka Yun, 2008; Schneider & Kenny, 2000).

However, sexual infidelity is the most cited cause of divorce (Amato & Previti, 2003; Previti & Amato, 2004; Steiner, Suarez, Sells, & Wykes, 2011). In fact, in a recent study, clinicians estimated that between 50% and 65% of couples entered into couples therapy due to issues of infidelity (Atkins, Baucom, & Jacobson, 2001). Extramarital infidelity is the most common cause of divorce and is perceived as more immoral than suicide, polygamy, or human cloning (Amato & Previti, 2003; Newport & Himelfarb, 2013). Furthermore, sexual infidelity committed by a woman, either actual or suspected, is the leading cause of spousal battery and homicide (Shackelford, Besser, & Goetz, 2008). Infidelity is also rated by couples therapists to be the single most difficult problem to treat in therapy (Atkins, Baucom, & Jacobson, 2001). Some therapists have referred to infidelity as “the dark underbelly of couples therapy” (Whisman, Dixon, & Johnson, 1997).

In addition to the numerous ways in which infidelity is defined, there are also a variety of ways in which it affects individuals and relationships. The impact can be emotionally, psychologically, and relationally damaging. An affair of any kind can be rather traumatizing, and it shows that “much of our emotional and psychological wellbeing depends on a committed relationship with a significant other” (Boekhout, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1999, p. 98). When a violation of a boundary involving extradyadic involvement occurs within a committed relationship, both individuals in the relationship, and the relationship itself, will inevitably suffer.

Prevalence of Infidelity

More recent findings suggest that reports of infidelity range from 23% to 63% among men and 19% to 45% among women (Mark, Janssen, & Milhausen, 2011; Schmitt, 2004), with rates comparatively high among those in dating and marital relationships.

Low levels of commitment to romantic relationships, sexual permissive attitudes, and anxious attachment styles are predictors of infidelity in a romantic relationship (McAnulty & Brineman, 2007). Experiencing low marital quality, as well as low levels of commitment and investment in the relationship, are also associated with infidelity (Allen et al., 2005; Drigotas, Safstrom, & Gentilia, 1999). Biological sex has received much of the spotlight and has been found to be the most direct predictor of infidelity (Blow & Hartnett, 2005b). The aforementioned statistics demonstrate a gendered pattern in extradyadic involvement. Namely, men are more likely to have extradyadic involvements and will do so with a greater number of partners than will women (Ellis & Kleinplatz, 2018).

Furthermore, men are more likely to see their extradyadic involvements as justified and, thus, experience less or no guilt when they engage in those behaviors (Urooj, Anis-ul-Haque, & Anjum, 2015; Spanier & Margolis, 1983). One of the largest discrepancies between the sexes is

the type of extradyadic involvement that occurs. Specifically, men are more likely to have physically intense, sexual experiences, whereas women are more likely to engage in an emotional bond or some combination of emotion and sex (Glass & Wright, 1992). Some researchers have even argued that the infidelity frequency numbers for women are misleading because it was not until Glass and Wright's 1985 study that three types of infidelity were defined: sexual, emotional, and a combination of sexual and emotional. When all three forms of infidelity are considered, it was hypothesized that males and females might be closer in frequency than previously imagined (Oliver & Hyde, 1993; Wiederman, 1997).

Precursors of male infidelity include pre-marital sexual dissatisfaction and female invalidation. Treas and Giesen (2000) concluded that individuals who cohabit are more likely to be engaged in infidelity than individuals who are married, and individuals who cohabitated prior to marriage were more likely to engage in infidelity than individuals who were married and did not cohabit before marriage. When it comes to religion and infidelity, research suggests that individuals who are in Christian marriages are less likely than individuals who are not in Christian marriages to engage in infidelity (Kelly, Mathes, & Kurz, 2010; Lu, Marks, Nesteruk, Goodman, & Apavaloaie, 2013).

Infidelity in Latinx Population

Based on a review of the literature, there is limited research on the relationship between ethnicity, culture and infidelity. It appears that infidelity is socially constructed and heavily influenced by the individual's cultural values and beliefs. The majority of studies have been focused on Caucasian samples, which limits the generalizability to other ethnic or cultural groups. However, according to Campbell et al. (2012), it appears that there are no differences between ethnic groups in terms of the likelihood of committing infidelity. Several studies have

found that African Americans and Latino men commit sexual infidelity at higher rates than Caucasians (Bauman & Berman, 2005; Choi, Catania, & Dolcini, 1994; Macaуда, Erickson, Singer, & Santelices, 2011; Treas & Giesen, 2000; Wiederman, 1997). Choi et al. (1994), found that male Latinos were far more likely to commit sexual infidelity than female Latinas, and at higher rates than those of Caucasians counterparts. In line with the above studies, other recent studies done outside of the United States suggest that Latino men are more unfaithful than Latina women and report more sexual partners (Gil et al., 2010 & Gimenez-Garcia et al., 2010). Another study done by Gil et al. (2017), suggests that men in both Spain and Mexico more commonly report the practice of masturbation and vaginal sex and are more likely to be unfaithful than women. It is important to note that this study was done outside of the United States. A 2007 study done by Ahrold and Meston concluded that, in the United States, Latinx who are more acculturated moved away from conservative sexual attitudes to more non-conservative sexual attitudes.

According to infidelity expert, Esther Perel (2018), Latinx culture has allowed infidelity to be accepted in romantic relationships for many generations. In Latinx romantic relationships, men have been given “permission” to have *La Casa Grande y La Casa Chica* (i.e., the big house and the little house), meaning that Latino men have been having affairs and families that are not known to the public and kept in secret. Greeley (1994) suggested that the prevalence of infidelity in Latinx was 8 percent for women and 46 percent for men. Unfortunately, there were only six Latinx in the study and, therefore, these figures should be viewed hesitantly.

Reasons for infidelity in Latinx. Penn, Hernandez, and Bermudes (1997) suggest that there are many factors that lead to infidelity in Latinx couples, such as gender roles, poor education, and acculturation. The authors note how sexualized gender roles may impact these

findings, particularly how Latino men are encouraged to have multiple sex partners, while Latina women are expected to be faithful. This might be due to the scripts that Latina women have about relationships and Latino men. In fact, many Latina women, although hopeful that their husband will remain faithful in the marriage, feel that the chances are high that the husband will eventually have another woman (Penn, Hernandez, & Bermudez, 1997). Although infidelity is not accepted by the Latinx culture, the wife may pretend she does not know anything about it, become angry, and try to win her husband back (Penn, Hernandez, & Bermudez, 1997).

When McLellan-Lemal, Toledo, O'Daniels, Villar-Loubet, Simpson, Adimora, and Marks (2013) studied the perception of African American and Hispanic women in heterosexual relationships, they noted that most Latinas have a script about relationships with men. Latina women have described an inherent expectation that their partners will participate in extradyadic involvement at some point over the course of the relationship, which differs from research with predominantly European American samples (McLellan-Lemal et al., 2013). In their study, McLellan-Lemal et al. (2013) quote a woman in the study stating the following: "Some woman, I feel, you know, because they have a man, he may be a good man to them in their eye sight as far as a provider but he still have this little thing on the side, you know, one woman ain't enough for him. I've seen women put up with them being cheaters, a husband or a friend or their partner cheatin' on them, just to keep what they feel like is a stable life, you know, because he's a provider.... But just cause you got somebody to put britches on don't necessarily make him a man." About 43% of the women in the study indicated that one or more of their male partners in the past 12 months were either probably or definitely having sexual relationships with other women. Women in this study suggested that although most of them would want a male partner who was faithful, respectful, trustworthy, and have a high self-esteem, there was a shortage of

this type of men (McLellan-Lemal et. al., 2013). One woman in the study stated: “Now every time my friends talk about something that happen they always talk about the man done cheated, but they'll stay with him cause she'll be like I can't find no another good man and I just be like that ain't no good man (laughs).” It also appears that these scripts are learned early on in life.

A qualitative study that examined how 24 Mexican American young women define and respond to partner infidelity concluded that young women have a script that men are allowed to be unfaithful while woman are not (Lopez, 2015). One of the girls in the study stated: “I know it’s not fair for a woman to be judged as a whore because she’s sleeping around with men, while men do the same thing, but are not judged, but still, this is the way I was raised. The man is allowed to do that while the woman is not. That’s just my mentality right now.” It also appears that these young women develop this script from growing up in a culture that allows men to be unfaithful. One of the girls stated the following in the study: “It might be sad to say, but in Mexican culture, we see the man as *machista*, as in Mexican guys are more prone to cheat. We see that, and we’ve grown up with it, so it seems more okay to us. For Americans, cheating has always been declared wrong. In Mexico, there’s always like *mujeriegos* [womanizers] and we put up with them.”

Most Latina women will avoid conflict and resign themselves to be thankful that he provides for her and their family. Parra-Cardona and Busby (2006) suggest that this perspective is related to the greater value Latinx couples place on the role of the man as the provider. When infidelity occurs, partners would rather preserve their existing roles than participate in the conflict that results from confronting the infidelity (Parra-Cardona & Busby, 2006). McLellan-Lemal et. al. (2013) noted that Latina women are often reluctant to address suspicions or knowledge of infidelity by their male partner; in fact, participants talked about the importance of

trying to work through problems. Most of the women were willing to personally try to work through a partner's infidelity as long as he strove to be financially responsible (i.e., be able to provide to her and her children).

This appears to be the case with young women as well. In her study, Lopez (2015) noted that although girls variously defined cheating, most of them believed that girls should break up with boyfriends who are physically intimate with other girls. However, these same girls, who responded that they would break up with their partner, were also quite likely to reconcile with them for a variety of reasons. Lopez (2015) concluded that the girls stayed with their unfaithful partners because their boyfriends apologized, promised to never cheat again, rationalized their infidelity, and pleaded forgiveness. Of the 24 girls, only two girls said they stayed with cheating boyfriends as a result of their traditional beliefs about gender roles. These young women were both from Mexico and were raised to believe it was okay for men to cheat, but not women. Based on this, Lopez (2015) concluded that young women endorse the *marianismo* gender script.

Penn, Hernandez, and Bermudes (1997) state that there is also an association between Latinx being less acculturated and the acceptance of infidelity. For example, Deardoff, Tschann, and Flores (2008) conclude that less acculturated girls are more likely to endorse traditional gender scripts than are more acculturated girls. In addition to acculturation, a common proxy measure for sexual values is gender role norms (Marin, 2003; Phinney & Flores, 2002). Past studies with adult Latinx suggest that gender role norms, including *marianismo* and *machismo*, influence expression of sexuality and sexual behaviors (Marin, 2003; Phinney & Flores, 2002). Qualitative research with young Latinx confirms that these gender stereotypes operate among youth as well (Lopez, 2015). These norms imply that women are expected to maintain their

virginity until marriage (Flores, Tschann, & Marin, 2002; Padilla & Baird, 1991) and men have low sexual impulse control (Lopez, 2015; Villarruel, 1998).

However, most of these women also stated that men have low tolerance for women who cheated or were unable to carry out their expected traditional mothering, nurturing, and domestic roles. In the study, participants commented that in such situations, men would rather leave to find someone else than to work things out in the relationship (McLellan-Lemal et. al., 2013). Similarly, Penn, Hernandez, and Bermudez (1997) state that if a woman has an affair and is discovered, she will be thought as a “prostitute” by her family, spouse, and society. This could be because of the culture of honor in Latinx culture, according to Vandello and Cohen (2003), where a Latino male is seen as less honorable if his wife had an affair (i.e., infidelity seemed to reflect more negatively upon the Latino men). This in turn leads to the male partner not wanting to stay in the relationship or increasing violence in the relationship (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). Surprisingly, a study done by Walters and Valenzuela (2019) with 20 Latino men concluded that Latino men who acculturate to the United States move away from infidelity to a desire to respect their partners. In fact, the study also concluded that men rejected the social stereotype of the philandering Latino male. In their, study men preferred and sought monogamous romantic and sexual relationships and characterized cheating as a demonstrable failure to honor the values of respect and responsibility (Waters & Valenzuela, 2019).

Forgiveness

When transgressions occur, couples must engage in the decision-making process. An individual must decide whether he or she will forgive the individual that has betrayed, hurt, or mistreated him or her. Although there is no one definition of forgiveness upon which all researchers agree, Worthington (2016) believes there are two types of forgiveness: decisional

forgiveness and emotional forgiveness. Decisional forgiveness involves individuals making decisions to forgive personal offenses and let go of angry, resentful thoughts and feelings towards the person that betrayed him or her. Emotional forgiveness involves individuals replacing negative emotions with positive feelings towards individuals who have betrayed him or her (Worthington, 2016). Worthington (2016) argues that emotional forgiveness is where most health benefits can be found. In other words, forgiveness involves a transformation in which the motivation to seek revenge against the transgressor and/or to avoid contact with the transgressor is lessened, and prosocial motivation toward the transgressor is restored. McCullough, Worthington, and Rachal (1997) defined interpersonal forgiving as “the set of motivational changes whereby one becomes (a) decreasingly motivated to retaliate against an offending relationship partner, (b) decreasingly motivated to maintain estrangement from the offender, and (c) increasingly motivated by conciliation and goodwill for the offender, despite the offender's hurtful actions” (p. 321-322).

McCullough, Pargament, and Thoresen (2000) identified a common feature of all definitions of forgiveness. They proposed that when people forgive, their responses toward people who have offended or injured them become more positive and less negative, and that even though the interpersonal offense initially elicited negative thoughts, feelings, motivations or behaviors toward the offending person, those responses become more prosocial when they forgive. In some senses, forgiveness is a psychological construct (McCullough et al., 2000) because the forgiver changes his thoughts, feelings, motivations and/or behaviors. Several personality traits are associated with the propensity to forgive. Forgiving people tend to be less anxious, depressed, and hostile (Mauger, Saxon, Hamill, & Pannell, 1996), less ruminative (Metts & Cupach, 1998), less exploitative, less narcissistic, and more empathic (Tangney et al.,

1999) than people who are less forgiving. Self-ratings of the disposition to forgive also correlate negatively with scores of hostility and anger (Tangney et al., 1999).

However, besides its intrapersonal dimension, forgiveness also has an interpersonal dimension: The person who forgives a transgression has to forgive another person (McCullough et al., 2000). Indeed, much research has been conducted to figure out what interpersonal processes facilitate forgiveness. For example, people tend to have more difficulty forgiving transgressions that seem to be intentional, that are severe, and that have more serious consequences (Boon & Sulsky, 1997; Girard & Mullet, 1997). The degree to which an offender apologizes for a transgression and seeks forgiveness also seems to influence a victim's likelihood to forgive (Girard & Mullet, 1997; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997; McCullough et al., 1998). Although the literature and scholarly interest in forgiveness has expanded dramatically in recent years, studies of forgiveness thus far have not focused much on differences in forgiveness depending on the type of transgression experienced by the person who has been harmed or on how the dynamics of forgiveness may vary as a result of the type of relationship (Fincham, 2000).

Forgiveness in Close Relationships

However, when considering the topic of infidelity, the afflicted people by definition are involved in a close sexual or romantic relationship. Recent research has looked at forgiveness in close relationships specifically. Even though forgiving someone who has inflicted hurt is often a difficult process that may take substantial time and effort, there are many reasons it may be beneficial. Assuming that the romantic partners have decided to continue the relationship, forgiveness following a transgression has been found to be associated with better relationship functioning and satisfaction, particularly within intimate partner relationships (Fincham &

Beach, 2001). Spouses report that the capacity to seek and grant forgiveness is one of the most important factors contributing to their marital longevity and satisfaction (Fenell, 1993). Several studies have investigated forgiveness of romantic partner transgressions specifically, although most have not separated infidelity-related transgressions from non-infidelity transgressions.

McCullough et al. (1998) found that romantic partners who were more satisfied with and committed to their partners scored higher on measures of the extent to which they had forgiven their partners for the most severe and most recent offenses in the histories of the relationship.

McCullough et al. (1998) also found evidence to support the idea that relationship closeness facilitates forgiveness and the idea that forgiveness makes the reestablishment of closeness following a transgression easier and smoother. Besides relationship-level variables such as satisfaction, commitment, and closeness, forgiveness can also be predicted by offense-level variables like an apology and the transgression's impact, and social-cognitive variables like offender-focused empathy and rumination about the offense (McCullough et al, 1998). Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro, and Hannon (2002) examined forgiveness of a variety of transgressions in romantic relationships within the context of interdependence theory (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978), linking forgiveness to levels of commitment. They found that compared to less committed individuals, highly committed individuals are more likely to forgive partners' acts of betrayal.

In their study of Italian husbands and wives in long term marriages, Fincham, Paleari, and Regalia (2002) found that having a self-identified strong marriage predicted attributing a spouse's negative behavior to benign causes, which in turn facilitated forgiveness, both directly and also via affective reactions and emotional empathy in response to hypothetical negative partner behaviors. Kachadourian, Fincham, and Davila (2005) found that having simultaneously strong positive and strong negative feelings toward one's partner was associated with decreased

forgiveness after a transgression, but only when the partners thought about the transgression frequently. When the husbands and wives did not ruminate about the transgression, no relationship was found between attitudinal ambivalence and forgiveness.

It is clear that a number of variables contribute to the likelihood that one would be inclined to forgive a romantic partner who has hurt him or her. In addition to the individual level, relationship level, and offense level variables (McCullough et. al., 1998), there may also be sex differences in forgiveness among romantic partners. Forgiveness among men could be more difficult because sexual infidelity has been reported to be more hurtful to men, while women seem to be more concerned about emotional infidelity (Harris, 2003). Fincham, Beach, and Davila (2004) found that forgiveness is associated with better conflict resolution among married couples, and that different motivations by the wife and the husband were predictive of greater forgiveness. Couples in their third year of marriage were asked to recall an incident in their relationship where they “felt most wronged or hurt by your partner.”

They then rated their levels of marital satisfaction, amount of forgiveness and styles of conflict resolution. Retaliation and benevolence emerged as two dimensions of forgiveness. They found that husbands’ motivation to retaliate predicted poorer wife-reported conflict resolution, and that wives’ motivation toward benevolence predicted husbands’ reports of better conflict resolution. In a second study of longer-term marriages, a third dimension of forgiveness, motivation to avoid, was added. Fincham et al. (2004) again found that wives’ benevolence predicted better conflict resolution, and additionally found that husbands’ level of avoidance in response to the transgression predicted wives’ reports of poorer conflict resolution. This study highlights that there may be sex differences in forgiveness, at least among romantic partners.

Paletia, Regalia, and Fichman (2005) have shown that forgiveness predicted concurrent marital quality and that there is a reciprocal effect between forgiveness and marital quality over time. Spouses who forgive offending partners have the most adaptive marital functioning. The more spouses forgive, the more they make positive marital assumptions feel an equal balance of power in their marriages and have close well-adjusted marital relations (Oranthinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2006). Oranthinkal and Vansteenwegen (2006) suggested that forgiveness has a positive impact on marriage. However, marriage is not the only beneficiary of forgiveness. For example, within a therapeutic context, granting forgiveness has often been promoted as a means of self-enhancement. Forgiveness of an offense leads to a reduction in rumination, negative emotions (e.g., fear and anger), and stress-related physical symptoms (McCullough & Worthington, 1995). Basset et al. (2016) concluded that there is a link between granting forgiveness and psychological health. Forgiveness of a single incident of wrongdoing may decrease the chances of depression, anxiety, and distress in the individual's life (Bassett et al., 2016). Forgiveness is an important factor not only for relationships but also for one's well-being. Therefore, it is important to identify what makes individuals more willing to forgive themselves and others after an offense.

Although these studies provide some useful background for considering the nature of forgiveness in romantic relationships, they do not investigate the specific contours of forgiveness within any particular type of transgression (i.e., infidelity). This idea, as well as a review of the studies that have empirically addressed the specific issue of sex differences in forgiveness in the context of romantic infidelity (e.g., Maganto & Garaigordobil, 2010; Shackelford et al., 2002), will be addressed below, as well as cultural constructs in Latino men and women that contribute to forgiveness of infidelity.

Forgiveness and Attachment Style

Forgiveness of an offense is influenced by many factors. Forgiveness is influenced by the attachment style an individual has. For example, (Ashy, Mercurio, & Malley-Morrison, 2010; Lawler-Row, Younger, Piferi, & Jones, 2006; Webb, Call, Cheickering, Colburn, & Heisler, 2006) individuals with secure attachment were more forgiving than individuals with insecure attachment styles. Individuals with an insecure attachment style are likely to forgive a parent, but are less likely to forgive romantic partners or friends (Lawler-Row et al., 2006). Individuals with an insecure attachment style were also more likely to avoid the offender and have a greater desire to act in revenge (Lawler-Row et al., 2006). Differences between all insecure attachment styles (e.g., anxious, avoidant) were not significant in forgiving a romantic partner (Lawler-Row et al., 2006).

Attachment style influences forgiveness in an individual whose romantic partner is unfaithful to him or her (Kachadourian, Fincham, & Davila, 2004). Research on attachment styles and forgiveness suggests that attachment style may play a more proximal individual development role in facilitating forgiveness in a relationship. For example, Ashy et al. (2010) suggested that securely attached individuals score higher on trait and state forgiveness than insecurely attached individuals and are more likely to be forgiving of a personal offense. Ashy et al. (2010) concluded that securely attached individuals are more likely to forgive than individuals who have an avoidant and fearful attachment style. A study done by Webb, Call, Chickering, Colburn, and Heisler (2006) concluded that secure attachment was significantly positively correlated with forgiveness, compared to fearful, preoccupied and dismissing attachment style individuals. Mikuliner and Shaver (2005) also suggested that when confronted

with a partner's negative behaviors, securely attached individuals will often hold optimistic expectations about their partner's negative behaviors.

The research suggests that individuals with a secure attachment style have a strong tendency to maintain and enhance relationship quality and look after their partner's welfare; they are more likely to overcome obstacles, restore the relationship's stability in difficult times, and encourage their partner's personal growth (Mikulinger & Shaver, 2005). Hazan and Shaver (1987) revealed that, compared to adults with insecure attachment styles, individuals with a secure attached style believe that romantic love can be sustained over time; they also held more positive beliefs about their partner. Religion also influences both secure and insecure attachment style individuals in forgiving. Individuals who were more religious also forgave their romantic partner at a higher level (Ashy, Mercurio, & Malley-Morrison, 2010).

Counseling the Latinx Population

Many conflicts in Latinx families often involve differences in acculturation level and conflicting views on gender roles (Sue & Sue, 2013). Different expectations for family members, as well as conflicts between cultural values and mainstream societal expectations also take part (Sue & Sue, 2013). Notably, the concept of *familismo* has not been well understood by counselors; many have mistakenly diagnosed behaviors as pathological when they are relatively normal when viewed through the cultural lens (Santiago-Rivera, Arrendondo, & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002). Diagnostic labels such as *enmeshed* and *codependent* have been widely used to describe Latinx families. With this in mind, Falicov (2014) urges and recommends that each counselor examines their own personal and professional values about family structure and connectedness, while simultaneously exploring the specific meaning of closeness and attachment for each family. This will expectantly encourage the researcher to view *familismo* and its many

dimensions as strengths within families. The extended family, particularly *los compadres* or the godparents, can be an important resource in providing needed support during times of hardship.

Researchers should be aware that valuing warm, friendly, and personal relationships have important implications for how Latinx perceive and respond to environments like hospitals or mental health facilities (Santiago-Rivera, Arrendondo, & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002). For example, a warm welcome by the researcher and communication style of the researcher will determine whether or not the Latinx client will participate in or contribute to the research study (Santiago-Rivera, Arrendondo, & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002). Researchers should be aware that structured interviews will often be viewed as negative by the Latinx client, and a lack of *personalismo* and *respecto* (respect) may be perceived if the researcher places more attention of completing paperwork than getting to know the participant through small talk (Arrendondo et al., 2014).

It is imperative to note that Latinas will oftentimes disclose issues related to family issues, sexuality, and gender roles, but may have difficulty in reporting various sexual behaviors to a male counselor (Smith & Montillo, 2006). Latinx gender roles affect personal choices, marital dynamics, sexual interactions, and family problems (Smith & Montillo, 2006). Counselors must also be able to help the family, especially males, deal with the anxiety associated with the role change. Sue and Sue (2013) suggest that counselors should frame conflicts in gender roles as external issues involving different expectations between the client's cultural and mainstream society values, and encourage problem solving to deal with the different sets of expectations. Counselors working with Latinx should be educated about the Latinx culture. Counselors should know about traditions and poly-cultural family, *personalismo*, and gender role expectations when working with Latinx clients. Culturally sensitive clinicians working with the Latinx population will understand that spirituality is an integrated part of this

culture's daily lives. Attention to the whole person within the population context is essential for the healing process (Montillo & Medina, 2006).

With all of this in mind, this study is a quantitative design to address the absence in literature regarding the relationship between infidelity and forgiveness in Latinx individuals, identifying how acculturation and attachment impact the individual's decision in forgiving betrayal in the relationship. The Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ), the Multiphasic Assessment of Cultural Constructs-Short Form, and the Trait Forgiveness Scale (TFS) will be utilized to gather data on the variable, and IBM SPSS Statistics will be used to analyze the data and communicate the strength of the relationship between variables. It is hypothesized that attachment style and acculturation will influence the individual's willingness to forgive after relationship betrayal. Results will be gathered and discussed to further explore the implications of the data in later chapters

Chapter 3: Methodology

The goal of this study is to add to the field of counseling by understanding what role attachment style, acculturation, and gender play in forgiveness of infidelity in romantic Latinx relationships. Minimal research has been done with Latinx participants in understanding these three areas of study and how they interact with each other. This study aims to close the gap in research by providing insight for the following research questions:

- Does secure attachment lead to forgiveness of infidelity in Latinx individuals?
- What role does acculturation play in attachment and forgiveness in Latinx individuals who have experience infidelity?
- Does acculturation play a role in forgiveness of infidelity in Latinx individuals?
- What is the influence of gender in relation to level of acculturation and forgiveness of infidelity?

With these questions in mind, it is hypothesized that:

- The degree of secure attachment will predict the level of forgiveness in couples who have experience infidelity (i.e., individuals with a secure attachment style will be more likely to forgive infidelity in their romantic relationship).
- The degree of attachment, acculturation, and gender will predict revenge in forgiveness (i.e., individuals with a secure attachment style, women who are less acculturated, and men who are more acculturated will be more likely to forgive infidelity in their romantic relationship and will not seek revenge towards that person that has hurt them).
- The degree of attachment, acculturation, and gender will predict avoidance in forgiveness (i.e., individuals with a secure attachment style, women who are less

acculturated, and men who are more acculturated will be more likely to forgive infidelity in their romantic relationship and will not avoid the person who has hurt them).

- The degree of attachment, acculturation, and gender will predict benevolence in forgiveness (i.e., individuals with a secure attachment style, women who are less acculturated, and men who are more acculturated will be more likely to forgive infidelity in their romantic relationship and desire good for him or her).

Participants

Participants were Spanish speaking and bilingual Latinx currently living in the United States. According to Valdeon (2013), a Latinx is defined as someone who is currently living in the United States from Latin American origins. Participants were 18 years or older and must have been in a previous and/or current romantic relationship where sexual and/or emotional infidelity had occurred. Participants ranged from being immigrants to being fourth generation in the United States.

Potential participants were invited to take a 25-minute online-based questionnaire of 92 total questions. Questions ranged from demographic questions, to assessing attachment style, acculturation level, and forgiveness. Each participant checked an “I consent” box before being allowed to answer the 92 questions in the study. Participants had the option to drop out of the study or skip any questions when they felt uncomfortable. Of the completed questionnaires, a multiple regression backward analysis was done to identify what factors contribute to forgiveness of infidelity in Latinx romantic relationships.

Sampling

Participants were sampled from 17 states from all over the United States. Participants were filtered based on participant criterion qualifications and interest in participating in the study. Participants were recruited from a Midwest university through flyers and emails. Participants were also recruited through the Listserv email service. The researcher used convenience sampling and filtered participants based on the criteria qualifications. Because part of this study attempted to explore a population that may be sparse in its setting, and due to limited financial and technological resources, simple random sampling was not an option. Recruitment also happened in local Spanish and bilingual churches. The flyer was also posted on Facebook groups.

Sample size. Initially, 135 respondents began the survey, resulting in 115 completed surveys used for data analyses. Research suggests that each variable measure in the study should have at least 15 participants (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2006). Therefore, the number of participants is the proper number of participants as presumed by the variables intended to be measured in the study.

Demographic questionnaire. In the questionnaire, participants were requested to specify their demographics. Participants were asked about their gender, age, if they are currently involved in a romantic relationship, the length of their current relationship, if they had children, if they have experienced sexual and/or emotional infidelity in the past, their ethnicity, their generation in the United States, their highest level of education, and their income. For the complete demographic questionnaire, please see Appendix A.

Instruments

Instruments were chosen to measure the constructs that were addressed in this study. The Relationship Scales Questionnaire (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994) explores attachment style by providing an attachment style of the participants. The Multiphasic Assessment of Cultural Competence – Short Form (Cuéllar, Arnold, & González, 1995) explores the participants' level of acculturation, and the Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Scale--18-Item Form (McCullough, Rachal, Sandage, Worthington, Brown, & Hight, 1998; McCullough, Root, & Cohen, 2006.) explores the level of forgiveness of each participant.

Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ)

The Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994) asks participants to rate the extent to which they believe each statement best describes their feelings about romantic relationships. Participants answer on a 5-point Likert scale (1= *not at all like me* and 5= *very much like me*). The RSQ is a 30-item questionnaire measuring four styles of attachment: secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing. A secure attachment style is defined as the ability to maintain an inner sense of self-worth and by the ability to retain a sense of self when engaged in close intimate relationships. A fearful attachment style is defined as a desire for approval from others combined with avoidance of intimacy due to a fear of rejection. A preoccupied attachment style is defined as the constant need for the approval of others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). A dismissing attachment style is defined as the need to maintain distance in relationships in order to foster a sense of self-worth (Mayselless, Bartholomew, Henderson, & Trinke, 2004). The RSQ is comprised of continuous variables with the highest of the four scores marking an individual's predominant style of attachment. Reliability measures for the four domains, namely close (secure), fearful, preoccupied and

dismissing, have been shown to range from .41 to .70 (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). The reliability of the RSQ is said to be of about .65 for each of the four scales assessing the four attachment patterns (Crowell, Fraley, & Shaver, 1999). A meta-analysis of studies testing the RSQ using confirmatory factor analysis yielded a two-factor loading of anxious and avoidant. The anxiety score yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .83 and the avoidance score yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .77 (Kurdek, 2002). The scale has satisfactory Cronbach's alpha coefficients for total scores and for subscales in the present study ranging from .60 to .73 (Anwer, Malik, Maqsood, & Rehman, 2017). This indicates that the RSQ is a trusting instrument to measure attachment in adults. For a sample of items from the RSQ questionnaire, please see Appendix B.

Multiphasic Assessment of Cultural Constructs-Short Form (MACC-SF)

The MACC-SF (Cuéllar, Arnold, & González, 1995) consists of 60 true/false items taken from the multiphasic assessment of cultural constructs. The five subscales (*machismo*, folk beliefs, *familismo*, fatalism, and *personalismo*), based primarily on cultural beliefs, ideas, and attitudes of Mexican Americans (Cuéllar, Arnold, & González, 1995), have shown acceptable levels of internal consistency in previous studies (Cuéllar, Arnold, & González, 1995; Ferrari 2002). Coefficient alphas for the *familism*, fatalism, folk illness, *machismo*, and *personalismo* subscales were .65, .63, .75, .78, and .47, respectively. Construct validity was established by demonstrating differences among acculturation groups and generational status for each factor, except the *personalismo* construct (Cuéllar, Arnold, & González, 1995). The overall Cronbach's alpha of this instrument is .75. The instrument has also been shown to have reliability validity with individuals of different Latinx descent (Gibbons, Wilson, & Rufener, 2006).

It is important to define the five subscales. According to Cuellar, Arnold, and González (1995), *machismo* is both a positive and negative view of masculinity. The negative association of *machismo* is based on Latino men negative behaviors (e.g., womanizer, lower class definition of masculinity, dominant over wife and family affairs), while the positive views of *machismo* are based on Latino men being manly, brave or courageous, strong, independent, powerful and protecting. Folk illness is defined as the belief to use folk healers, resulting in the underutilization of mental health services (Cuellar, Arnold, & González, 1995). Familism is defined as having the family be the emotional support for the individual; it is the tendency to rely on kin for emotional support rather than seeking outside help (Cuellar, Arnold, & González, 1995). The concept of fatalism is defined as the extent to which people feel their destinies are beyond their control; in other words, an individual consistency to be passive, subjected, and controlled by the forces of fate (Cuellar, Arnold, & González, 1995). *Personalismo* is defined as a warm and personal way of relating to an individual; in other words, individuals are drawn toward people rather than toward interpersonal relationships (Cuellar, Arnold, & González, 1995).

This study investigated how acculturation and gender influenced forgiveness in Latinx romantic relationships; only the familism and *machismo* subscales were used in this study. Familism are behaviors and attitudes that emphasize the centrality of family as well as feelings of closeness, loyalty, reciprocity, and obligation to nuclear and extended family (Calzada, Tamis-LeMonda, & Yoshikawa, 2013). *Machismo* is defined as an ideology that defines and justifies the superiority and dominion of the Latino male over the Latina female; it exalts the masculine qualities like aggressiveness, independence, and dominance, and it stigmatizes the qualities of

the Latina female, like weakness, dependence, and submissive (Moral de la Rubia & Ramos Basurto, 2016).

It appears that *machismo* and *familismo* might act as buffers to forgiveness or unforgiveness after infidelity in romantic Latinx relationships. Other researchers have only used certain subscales of the MACC-SF. For example, Castillo, Perez, Castillo, and Ghosheh (2010) only used the familism subscale in their study on *marianismo* in Latinas. Validity of the familism subscale was established through significant correlation with acculturation. Alpha for their study was 0.67. The *machismo* subscale has been used by the Gibbons, Wilson, and Rufener (2006) study on gender attitudes in adoption in Guatemala; the internal reliability for the *machismo* subscale had an alpha of .80 in their study. For sample items of the MACC-SF questionnaire, please see Appendix C.

Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Scale-18-Item Form (TRIM-18)

The TRIM-18 (McCullough, Rachal, Sandage, Worthington, Brown, & Hight, 1998; McCullough, Root, & Cohen, 2006) is a 12-item self-report measure consists of two subscales. The avoidance subscale comprises seven items that measure motivation to avoid contact with a transgressor (e.g., “I live as if he/she doesn’t exist, isn’t around.”). The revenge subscale comprises five items that measure motivation to seek revenge (e.g., “I’ll make him/her pay.”). Both subscales have high internal consistency (i.e., .85), moderate test–retest stability (e.g., 8-week test–retest r_s = approximately .50), and evidence of convergent and discriminant validity (McCullough et al., 1998, 2001). Items are rated on a five-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). Higher scores (i.e., higher avoidance or revenge motivations) indicate greater unforgiveness (hence less forgiveness). The TRIM is the most widely used measure of forgiveness (Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010). Internal reliability estimates for the total

scores were acceptable and pre and posttest, Chronbach's $\alpha = .94$ (Landry, Rachal, Rachal, & Rosenthal, 2005).

A recent addition is a six-item subscale for measuring benevolence motivation (McCullough, Root, & Cohen, 2006) (e.g., “Even though his/her actions hurt me, I have goodwill for him/her.”) that also has good reliability (McCullough et al., 2003; McCullough & Hoyt, 2002). These six items are rated on the same five-point Likert-type scale as are the 12 avoidance and revenge items. Therefore, the TRIM has been suggested to vary along three dimensions: avoidance, revenge, and benevolence (McCullough, Bellah, Kilpatrick, & Johnson, 2001; McCullough et al., 1998). That is, individuals may respond to transgressions with an increased motivation to avoid the transgressor, to retaliate against the transgressor, and to express decreased benevolence or good will toward the transgressor. With forgiveness, individuals become less avoidant, less vengeful, and more benevolent toward their transgressor (Fincham & Beach, 2002; McCullough, 2001). For a sample of items of the TRIM-18 questionnaire, please see Appendix D.

Procedures

Because the study involved human participants, the researcher sought approval from Governors State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Once the study was approved, the researcher proceeded with recruitment for the study. Recruitment took place by flyers, online, emails, and announcements made in churches (primarily those with predominately Latinx attendees), CESNET Listserv, as well as a Latinx seeking doctorates Facebook group online.

An ethically appropriate flyer for participation requests was emailed and/or posted to the referral source that followed ethical considerations and informed the participants of confidentiality and the details of the study. Requests to participate specified that the study was

seeking individuals who identify as Latinx and are older than 18 years of age along with individuals that had also been in a relationship where he or she experienced sexual and/or emotional infidelity in their romantic relationship. The researcher communicated that participation was voluntary and participants could drop from the study at any time. Participants who decided to participate in the study were directed to an internet-based questionnaire.

As participants started taking the questionnaire, they were presented with the cover letter and consent form approved by the Governors State University's IRB. Before participants began taking the questionnaires, they had to check the "I consent to participate" button. Participants who did not hit the "I consent to participate" button were not allowed to move forward in the study. Each page gave the participants the option to exit the questionnaire and discontinue their participation in the study. The cover letter informed all participants of the purpose of the study and their role as a participant. Participant rights were explained in the consent form (e.g., freedom to drop out of the study). The completion of the Relationship Scales Questionnaire, Multiphasic Assessment of Cultural Constructs, the Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Scale, and the demographic questionnaire took an average of 16 minutes to complete. The instruments were administered electronically. Each electronic page had one questionnaire and each page had clear directions for that specific questionnaire. For the Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Scale, participants were asked to recall the infidelity that their partner committed in their romantic relationship. As they recalled the situation and the transgressor, they were then asked to answer the questionnaire. After completing the survey, participants were provided a list of mental health providers should they wish to seek counseling. No identifiable information was gathered in the study in order to increase confidentiality. However, it is important to note that the internet-based survey service

that was used for this study collects the IP address of the device to prevent a person from taking the survey multiple times.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this quantitative research study was to examine which factors, if any, lead to forgiveness after emotional and/or sexual infidelity in romantic relationships. Based on the literature review, it was hypothesized that there would be a statistically significant relationship between the degree of attachment, acculturation and forgiveness and that secure attachment and level of acculturation will predict the level of forgiveness in couples who have experienced infidelity. A second hypothesis stated that there would be a statistically significant relationship between the degree of attachment, and that acculturation and gender will predict revenge in forgiveness. A third hypothesis stated that there would be a statistically significant relationship between the degree of attachment, and that acculturation and gender will predict avoidance in forgiveness. Lastly, this research study's fourth hypothesis stated that there would be a statistically significant relationship between the degree of attachment, and that acculturation and gender will predict benevolence in forgiveness.

Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for all variables are in Table 3. The focus of this research study was to identify what factors predict forgiveness of emotional and/or sexual infidelity in Latinx romantic relationships. The research question was tested using a series of backward regressions with the following dependent variables: forgiveness, revenge, avoidance, and benevolence.

Population Demographics

There was a total of $n=115$ participants, and of the total population, 21 participants were male and 94 participants were female. Refer to Table 1 and Table 2 for a demographic description of all participants. The age of the participants ranged from 19 to 58 years old, with the mean age being 30 years old. Of the $n=115$ participants, seven were immigrant participants,

63 were first generation Latinx, 30 were second generation Latinx, 10 were third generation Latinx, three were fourth generation Latinx, and two were fifth generation Latinx. Of the 115 participants, 90 were currently in a romantic relationship and 25 reported not being in a romantic relationship. Of the 115 participants, 57 did not have any children and 58 reported having children.

Income reported by participants ranged from 0 dollars to 500,000 thousand dollars. The mean income reported by participants was 53,504 dollars. Of the 115 participants, 82 participants answered Illinois as being their current state; there was one participant for each of the following states: Iowa, Maryland, Mississippi, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Georgia and Wisconsin. The following states had two participants: Arizona, Florida, and Indiana. Five participants reported being located in Texas, 10 in California, and two in Puerto Rico.

Of the 115 participants, 38% reported living in an urban setting, 57% reported living in a suburban setting, and 6% reported living in rural setting. Of the 115 participants, 1% had completed some high school, 11% had completed high school, 26% had completed some college, 26% had a college degree, 21% had a master's degree, and 15% had a doctorate degree. Of the 115 participants, 24% reported not being involved in a romantic relationship where their partners went against their wishes engaging in a sexual relationship outside the relationship, and 76% reported being in a romantic relationship where their partners went against their wishes engaging in a sexual relationship outside the relationship. Of the 115 participants, 14% reported not having a partner engaging in an emotional romantic relationship outside their relationship while 86% of the participants reported having a partner engaging in a romantic relationship outside

their relationship. Lastly, of the 115 participants, 66% reported having a religious affiliation while 34% of the participants reported not having a religious affiliation.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants ($N = 115$)

Demographics	<i>n</i>	%
Ethnicity		
Latinx	115	100
Generation		
Immigrant	7	6.1
First Generation	63	54.8
Second Generation	30	26.1
Third Generation	10	8.7
Fourth Generation	3	2.6
Fifth Generation	2	1.7
Relationship Status		
In a Relationship	90	78.3
Not in a Relationship	25	21.7
State of Residence		
Illinois	82	71.3
Iowa	1	.9
Maryland	1	.9
Mississippi	1	.9
New Mexico	1	.9
Nevada	1	.9
Utah	1	.9
Virginia	1	.9
Washington	1	.9
Georgia	1	.9
Wisconsin	1	.9
Arizona	2	1.7
Florida	2	1.7
Indiana	2	1.7
Texas	5	4.3
California	10	8.7
Puerto Rico	2	1.7
Living Community		
Urban	44	38.3
Suburban	65	56.5
Rural	6	5.2
Education		
Some High School	1	.9
High School Diploma	13	11.3
Some College	30	26.1
College Diploma	30	26.1
Master's Degree	24	20.9

Doctorate Degree	17	14.8
Sexual Infidelity in the Relationship		
Yes	88	76.5
No	27	23.5
Emotional Infidelity in the Relationship		
Yes	99	86.1
No	16	13.9
Religious Affiliation		
Yes	76	66.1
No	39	33.9

Table 2 Demographic Characteristics of Participants ($N = 115$)

Demographics	Mean	Median	Range	Mode
Age	30 years old	29 years old	57 years old	23 years old
Income	\$53,000	\$40,000	\$500,000	\$0.00

Data Analysis

A regression analysis using SPSS data software was conducted. The completed questionnaires were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. The objective of regression analysis is to help predict a single dependent variable from the collected data of one or more independent variables (Erford, 2008). Due to this study involving five independent variables (i.e., attachment, acculturation, and gender) predicting a single dependent variable (i.e., forgiveness: overall forgiveness, revenge, avoidance, and benevolence), the researcher used a multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis was utilized to determine the predictive relationship between continuous dependent variables and independent variables. More specifically, this analysis was conducted to examine the influence of cultural variables and attachment style on a participant's estimation of their likelihood to forgive infidelity in a romantic relationship.

The addition of attachment and cultural variables account for more variance in the

prediction of the dependent variable. Multiple regression analyzes the existence of a relationship and the extent to which variables are related. This statistical analysis shows how the independent variables accounted for more variance in the predictions of the dependent variable. This improvement in a multiple regression analysis is related not only to the way the independent variables correlate with the dependent variable, but also to the correlation of the additional independent variables already in the regression equation (Erford, 2008). In order for the correlation to identify between the variables, a backward multiple regression analysis was used by the researcher. The focus of the backward regression would answer the question of what the best combination of independent variables would best predict the dependent variables. In the backward regression, predictor variables are entered into the regression equation at the same time based upon statistical criteria (Erford, 2008).

At each step in the analysis, the predictor variable that contributes the most to the prediction equation in terms of increasing the multiple correlation is entered first (Erford, 2008). The process is continued only if additional variables add anything statistically significant to the regression equation (Erford, 2008). When no additional predictor variables add anything statistically meaningful to the regression equation, the analysis stops (Erford, 2008). Using this analysis, all predictors of acculturation and attachment were added to the analysis and tested together to identify a meaningful statistical result (Erford, 2008). Subsequent steps will identify the best two-variable model and the best three-variable model until all variables are analyzed (Erford, 2008).

Independent variables were entered in the following order:

H1: attachment then infidelity (H1: $b(\text{attachment}) + b(\text{acculturation}) + b(\text{infidelity}) + a = \text{forgiveness}$).

H2: attachment, infidelity, acculturation, and gender (H2: $b(\text{attachment}) + b(\text{infidelity}) + b(\text{acculturation}) + b(\text{gender}) + a = \text{revenge in forgiveness}$).

H3: attachment, acculturation and gender will predict avoidance in forgiveness. The variables will go in the following order: attachment, infidelity, acculturation, and gender. (H3: $b(\text{attachment}) + b(\text{infidelity}) + b(\text{acculturation}) + b(\text{gender}) + a = \text{avoidance in forgiveness}$).

H4: attachment, acculturation and gender will predict benevolence in forgiveness. The variables will go in the following order: attachment, infidelity, acculturation, and gender. (H4: $b(\text{attachment}) + b(\text{infidelity}) + b(\text{acculturation}) + b(\text{gender}) + a = \text{benevolence in forgiveness}$).

Attachment, Acculturation, and Forgiveness

The first hypothesis of this study was to identify if the degree of attachment style would predict the level of forgiveness in an individual who has experienced emotional and/or sexual infidelity. The hypothesis was supported. The final model was significant $F(4,110) = 5.170$ ($p = .001$). Familism was a positive predictor of forgiveness ($\beta = .198, p = .028$). Secure attachment was a positive predictor of forgiveness ($\beta = .197, p = .045$). Preoccupied attachment style was a negative predictor of forgiveness ($\beta = -.203, p = .039$), and sexual infidelity was a negative predictor of forgiveness ($\beta = -.204, p = .025$).

Attachment, Acculturation, and Revenge

Second, the study explored the effects of attachment, acculturation, gender, and type of infidelity on revenge in forgiveness. The hypothesis was supported. The final model was significant $F(3, 111) = 4.91$ ($p = .003$). Fearful attachment was a positive predictor of revenge

($\beta=.23$, $p=.013$), sexual infidelity was a positive predictor of revenge ($\beta=.179$, $p=.05$), and *machismo* was a negative predictor of revenge ($\beta=-.17$, $p=.052$).

Attachment, Acculturation, and Avoidance

Thirdly, the study explored the effects of attachment, acculturation, gender, and type of infidelity on avoidance in forgiveness. The hypothesis was supported. The final model was significant $F(3,111)=4.55$ ($p=.005$). Dismissing attachment was a positive predictor of avoidance ($\beta=.20$, $p=.04$), sexual infidelity was a positive predictor of avoidance ($\beta=.16$, $p=.85$), and familism was a negative predictor of avoidance ($\beta=-.16$, $p=.09$).

Attachment, Acculturation, and Benevolence

Fourth, the study explored the effects of attachment, acculturation, gender, and type of infidelity on avoidance in forgiveness. The hypothesis was supported. The final model was significant $F(2,112)=6.89$ ($p=.002$). Secure attachment was a positive predictor of benevolence ($\beta=.25$, $p=.007$) and *machismo* was a positive predictor of benevolence ($\beta=.24$, $p=.008$).

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations of Study Variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Familism	4.93	2.41	-									
2. Machismo	3.50	3.00	.68*	-								
3. Secure	2.90	.80	.003	-.70	-							
4. Preoccupied	2.80	.80	-.06	-.09	.42*	-						
5. Dismissing	3.50	.65	-.17	-.07	.30*	.16	-					
6. Fearful	3.30	.82	-.06	.02	.10	.36**	.38**	-				
7. Avoidance	21.40	6.87	-.22	-.17	-.05	.18	.23	.17	-			
8. Revenge	10.80	4.40	-.17	.19*	-.02	.11	.12	.22	.55**	-		
9. Benevolence	18.20	5.90	.26	.22	.23*	.04	-.20	.11	-.82**	-.44**	-	
10. Forgiveness	57.30	12.44	.25	.21*	.13	.14	-.22*	.17	-.96**	-.66**	.91**	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The results in this study indicate that attachment style, acculturation, and type of infidelity (i.e., sexual and/or emotional) are significantly related to a partner's willingness to forgive infidelity. Sexual and emotional infidelity occurs within a complex web of social, cultural, relational, and individual-level factors, which often makes for a limited understanding of what leads the hurt individual to forgive the unfaithful partner. Considering the growth of the Latinx population in the United States and understanding the factors that contribute to forgiveness after an infidelity will hopefully lead to multicultural awareness and clinical practices among those clinicians who wish to walk with Latinx clients. Recognizing the factors that contribute to forgiveness of infidelity is essential to clinicians working with individuals who are often at a loss to understand infidelity and what helps with forgiveness. In many cases, clinicians also feel lost in understanding their Latinx clients. Many studies have been done on forgiveness in the Caucasian population, but not many studies have been done with Latinx participants. The results of this study provide some insight into areas contributing to forgiveness after infidelity in Latinx romantic relationships.

The results provide meaningful information regarding socialized gender roles in Mexican Americans and their potential influences on sexual and emotional infidelity. It is important to note that more women participating in the study could mean that more men engage in sexual and/or emotional infidelity than women, as per previous literature (Chohaney & Panozzo, 2018). Marin, Gomez, and Hearts (1993) describe traditional *machismo* to include beliefs that men should have control over sexual behavior and have multiple sex partners, supporting the idea of *La Casa Grande y La Casa Chica* (i.e., the big house and the little house). In other words, men generally hold more permissive attitudes toward sexual infidelity. The percentage of sexual

infidelity identified by female study participants (i.e., 84.7% sexual infidelity and 81.7% emotional infidelity) suggest that highly sexualized beliefs, particularly those associated with traditional *machismo*, may account for the increased disparity between males and females who engaged in infidelity. Having a hypersexual drive is not isolated to Latinx culture; the normalization of being a sexually aggressive male, or *machista*, in the Latinx culture means it could be more likely that Latino men will engage in infidelity in a romantic relationship compared to Latina women.

Attachment and Forgiveness

The study concluded that secure attachment was a positive predictor of forgiveness after infidelity in Latinx romantic relationship ($p=.045$). One of the early studies on the link between attachment style and forgiveness concluded that securely attached participants had higher overall and affective forgiveness scores than the other three attachment groups (Davidson, 2000). Kachadourian, Fincham, and Davila (2004) assessed the link between forgiveness and attachment style in those offended by a romantic partner, and also concluded that individuals with a secure attachment style are a positive predictor of forgiveness. Gassin and Lengel (2011) reviewed the link between forgiveness and attachment and concluded that most studies on attachment and forgiveness find that attachment security is positively related to state forgiveness. In her research, Johnson (2007) concluded that secure attachment becomes a safe haven where couples can engage with one another. More recently a study done by Anderson-Mooney, Webb, Mvududu, and Charbonneau (2015) concluded that individuals who endorsed higher levels of secure attachment were likely to support lower levels of struggling and higher levels of enduring, as well as higher levels of forgiveness. Per previous research, having a securely attached

participant be more forgiving than other attachment styles is not a surprise. It appears that this generalization regarding secure attachment style can also be applied to Latinx individuals.

The current study also found that preoccupied attachment was a negative predictor of forgiveness ($p=.039$). Therefore, this study continues to support the literature on attachment and forgiveness. As previous research has suggested, individuals with an insecure attachment style are less likely to forgive a transgression. Therefore, it is not surprising that forgiveness becomes less probable among adults who are preoccupied in their attachment style (Finkel et al., 2007). For example, a study done by Gassin and Lengel (2011) analyze attachment classifications and found that individuals with a preoccupied attachment style are less merciful. Their study concluded that the only attachment style to predict an unwillingness to forgive were those that were preoccupied.

Preoccupied individuals see themselves as unworthy and needing approval of others, making them feel more anxious and that others are unwilling to love them because of their unworthiness (Ashy et al., 2010). According to Vuncannon (2007), individuals with an insecure attachment style viewed their partners as unforgiving, regardless of how high the commitment in the relationship was. Research has also concluded that insecurely attached individuals will experience more intense negative emotions, such as fear and anxiety, when there has been a breakup or to resolve conflicts with significant others (Greenberg, 2002). In other words, as the literature has shown, people with insecurely attached partners have more difficulty forgiving (Lawler-Row et al., 2006; Dwiwardani et al., 2014). There was no exception in this study with Latinx participants; those with an insecure attachment style were less likely to forgive their romantic partner after sexual and/or emotional infidelity. When sexual and/or emotional infidelity is added to the mix, because preoccupied attached individuals are highly anxious, they

protect themselves from abandonment in their close relationship. Therefore, it makes sense that they would be less forgiving after they have been betrayed by their partner.

This study aimed at investigating how attachment style would motivate avoidance, revenge, and benevolence in forgiveness after sexual and/or emotional infidelity in Latinx romantic relationships. When breaking down attachment style into the motivations of avoidance, revenge, and benevolence of the transgressor, the analysis revealed some interesting results.

The current study concluded that dismissing attachment style was a positive predictor of avoidance of the transgressor, therefore supporting the literature review of dismissing attachment style and avoidance of the transgressor. According to research, dismissing attachment style is to be dismissing of intimacy, maintaining independence, and detaching from others, similar to a dismissing attitude (Main et al., 1985). For example, Dewitte and De Houwer's (2008) research study concluded that individuals with anxious attachment style tend to seek out attention from their partners, while those with avoidant attachment style detach and isolate from their partners. Avoidant attachment may cause people to act in dismissive and condescending ways, especially under stress, which can increase arrogant behavior; these individuals also have a difficult time regulating their emotions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Dwiwardani et al., 2014).

Avoidant attachment individuals tend to fear rejection and may abstain from becoming close to others to evade abandonment in relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The current study did not show a different result; in the study, participants who were more dismissing in their attachment were also more avoidant ($p=.04$). Dismissing is characterized with low anxiety but high avoidance, which manifests as evading intimacy and being intentionally distant from close relationships to protect oneself. Therefore, it makes sense that the participants who have a dismissing attachment style are protecting themselves and do not want to get hurt again,

especially those participants who have been in a relationship where they experience sexual and/or emotional infidelity.

In the current study, fearful attachment style was a positive predictor for seeking revenge of the transgressor. Participants with a fearful attachment style scored higher on the motivation to seek revenge towards the transgressor in this study ($p=.013$). This result continues to be congruent with previous literature where studies with highly anxious attached individuals (e.g., fearful attached) concluded that those individuals were more hostile towards their romantic partner (Simpson, Rholes, & Phillips, 1996). Simpson, Rholes, and Phillips (1996) suggested that highly anxious individuals who discussed a significant problem displayed more considerable stress and anxiety during their interactions and reported more considerable anger and hostility toward their partners. Previous research has suggested that insecurely attached individuals may judge the impact of an offense to be more severe than those who are securely attached.

Studies have shown that insecurely attached individuals, as compared to securely attached individuals, have difficulty with emotion regulation, especially anger, in times of threat (Mikulicer, 1998). Similarly, Burnette et al. (2007) concluded that insecurely attached individuals display higher depressive and anger rumination than secure individuals. Because letting go of anger is a significant component of forgiveness, it is easier for securely attached persons to forgive those who had hurt them (Burnette et al., 2007; Lawler-row et al., 2006; Wang, 2008). Individuals with insecure attachment perceive transgressions seriously and have more difficulty repairing the relationship after an offense occurs (McCullough et al., 1998). When sexual and/or emotional infidelity is added to the mix, individuals who are fearful of rejection and have a negative view of others and themselves will have a more difficult time forgiving and wishing good futures to the individual that has betrayed them in the relationship.

Lastly, this study also looked into benevolence in forgiveness after sexual and/or emotional infidelity. This current study identifies that securely attached individuals are more benevolent towards the unfaithful partner ($p=.007$). Research has indicated that individuals classified as having a secure attachment style have a more exceptional ability to harness and regulate their emotions, which can be predictive of forgiveness (Burnette et al., 2009; Burnette et al., 2007; Kachadourian et al., 2004; Lawler-row et al., 2006; Wang, 2008; Webb et al., 2006). Also, securely attached individuals experience less hostility, less anger, and a more exceptional ability to forgive others (Burnette et al., 2007; Lawler-row et al., 2006; Wang, 2008). Securely attached individuals hold a more positive view of themselves and others than those insecurely connected. Also, securely attached individuals have the maturity and cognitive flexibility to handle the difficulties that are common to adult relationships. Anxiously attached individuals typically have a skewed view of relationships and may not believe that forgiving another would lead to a better relationship.

As Brennan and Shaver (1995) concluded, people with secure attachment had the highest demonstration of proximity seeking behaviors in romantic relationships. Therefore, the results of this study regarding benevolence in forgiveness are congruent with previous research on attachment and forgiveness. Individuals who are secure exhibit trust of needs being met, a quality of intimacy, feeling a desire to be physically close to the attachment figure, a condition of passion, a willingness to seek emotionally safety from the specific attachment figure, and a quality of commitment in their relationships (Ainsworth & Witting, 1969; Bowlby, 1969; Bowlby, 1982). It is no surprise that securely attached individuals report less divorces (Hazan & Shaver, 1987) when compared to other attachment styles. Even in the midst of infidelity,

securely attached individuals are more likely to work on their relationship. The current study suggest that forgiveness and benevolence can be generalized to the Latinx population.

Acculturation and Forgiveness

The current study aimed to identify what role acculturation played in forgiveness after sexual and/or emotional infidelity in Latinx romantic relationships. The study concluded that *machismo* was a negative predictor of revenge but a positive predictor of benevolence towards the transgressor. The study also found that familism was a negative predictor of avoidance of the transgressor.

The results of the study appear to be congruent with previous research regarding the Latinx view on cultural gender roles and cultural traditions (i.e., *machismo* and *marianismo*) (Arredondo et al., 2014; Falcov, 2014; Smith & Montillo, 2006). The conclusion that *machismo* was not associated with motivation to seek revenge in this study was interesting ($p=.052$), as there is literature that supports that *machismo* is associated with violence and anger. However, when taken into consideration that more women participated in this study, it would make sense that those that endorsed more *machismo* items in the MACC-Short Form would be less acculturated and hold traditional gender role views; this means that Latinas expect Latino men to be more likely to engage in sexual and/or emotional infidelity, having the *Casa Grande y la Casa Chica*. Previous research suggests that Latina women and adolescents are taught at a young age that Latino men are more sexual, which normalizes this behavior. McLellan-Lemal, Toledo, O'Daniels, Villar-Loubet, Simpson, Adimora, and Marks (2013) studied African American and Hispanic women's perceptions about heterosexual relationships, noting that most Latinas have a script about relationships with men. Latina women have described an inherent expectation that their partners will participate in extradyadic involvement at some point

throughout the relationship, which differs from research with predominantly European American samples (McLellan-Lemal et al., 2013). Men who hold traditional gender view roles are characterized by physical prowess, aggression, toughness, and being in charge; intimate relationship behaviors associated with *machismo* include having multiple partners, infidelity, controlling one's partners by any means necessary, and sexual risk-taking (Stephens & Eaton, 2014).

In fear of pushing the male partner away, Latina women may become accepting and conforming with the unfaithful behavior. According to research, most Latina women do this as a fear of the partner leaving and not having a male partner that could provide for the family. Most Latina women will avoid conflict, resign themselves, and be thankful that he provides for her and their family. Parra-Cardona and Busby (2006) suggest that this perspective is related to the higher value Latinx couples place on the role of the man as the provider. When infidelity occurs, partners would rather preserve their existing positions than participate in the conflict that results from confronting the infidelity (Parra-Cardona & Busby, 2006). Similar to participants who endorsed more familism items in the survey, participants who were less avoidant in the study endorsed items on the familism subscale ($p=.09$). Many Latinx couples are cultural transitioning relative to gender ideologies, but powerful scripts for feminine and masculine behaviors still exist in Latinx couples. The traditional gender script of *machismo* portrays men as domineering, possessive, and unfaithful (Falcov, 2014). The conventional gender script for women (i.e., *marianismo*), portrays the woman as submissive, self-sacrificing, and modest (Falcov, 2014). Piña-Watson, Castillo, Jung, Ojeda, and Castillo-Reyes (2014) concluded in their study of 524 Mexican American adolescents that young men reported a statistically significantly higher level of endorsement of the belief that Latinas should be self-silencing to maintain harmony and

should be subordinate to others. The current study supports past literature regarding familism and avoidance. Participants in the study who endorsed more familism items were more likely to stay silent and not avoid the transgressor, even when sexual and/or emotional infidelity was added to the mix. What was surprising in the current study was that participants who endorsed the *machismo* items were less likely to seek revenge; this could have been because of the many female participants, although the endorsed *machismo* items their family values could have impacted the results here, and future researchers should take this into consideration. More women could also explain why the participants who endorsed *machismo* items were also more likely to have benevolence towards the transgressor ($p=.008$).

Similarly, Lorenzo-Blanco, Unger, Ritt-Olson, Soto, and Baezconde-Garbanati (2013) found that traditional gender role attitudes were linked with lower family conflict and increased family cohesion, particularly for girls. Furthermore, in conventional gender view roles, women are expected to be the primary source of strength for her family and are responsible for the family's wellbeing and spiritual growth. Similarly, being subordinate to others is characterized by the expectation that women should show obedience to patriarchal power structures and silencing self to maintain harmony by not expressing needs and being forgiving in all aspects (Castillo et al., 2010; Nuñez et al., 2015). Interestingly, Ertl et al. (2019) found that maintaining the harmony *marianismo* belief would predict increased acculturative stress; to reduce high levels of stress, recent immigrants would reduce their endorsement of *marianismo* beliefs over time, such that acculturative stress would predict reductions in support of these beliefs. Meaning that, over time, women and possibly men would change their understanding of these traditional gender view roles. These conclusions have also been made regarding other traditional cultural values after immigration (Dion & Dion, 2001; Villar & Concha, 2012; Dillon et al., 2013).

Therefore, it appears that acculturation does play a role in seeking revenge, avoidance, and benevolence in forgiveness. Latinx men and women who hold traditional gender view roles are more likely to self-silence, continue the relationship with the transgressor, and have goodwill for that individual. If this is true, one would also expect that those individuals who are more acculturated would change their family values and be less forgiving.

Clinical Implications

This study has several implications. More women than men participated in this study, signaling that more Latino men engage in sexual and/or emotional infidelity than Latina women, which is consistent with previous findings. The result of this study may provide counselors working with infidelity in Latinx couples more direction in treatment. Cultural norms and attachment style do not operate outside of romantic relationships. Instead, these features often drive interpersonal difficulties and how people respond to difficulties, such as sexual and/or emotional infidelity and how these cultural norms and attachment play out in the forgiveness of relationship betrayal. Counselors often find that treating infidelity can be filled with anxiety driven by feelings of ambiguity, lack of training, and an overemphasis on the infidelity itself. But as we know, more couples therapists often find that couples coming in for treatment are usually coming in because of infidelity. Commonly, counselors may focus solely on the act of infidelity rather than other factors that may help the couple gain awareness and insight into their relationships, themselves, and help them reconcile and restore the connection after sexual and/or emotional infidelity. Counselors working with Latinx couples who have experienced sexual and/or emotional infidelity should consider each client's attachment style as well as their understating of traditional gender view roles in their relationship. It would be necessary for the

counselor to walk the couple through the meaning of *machismo* and *marianismo*. Investigating the couple's acculturation level could indicate their views on traditional gender roles.

For example, in the interview session, counselors should consider questions that would assess the couple's view on gender roles, like *marianismo and machismo*, familism, *personalismo*, and acculturation. The counselor should ask questions such as: *Who has the last saying in the marriage? Are relatives more important than friends? Who is responsible for the children of the family? Is it better to self-silence in order to keep the harmony in the relationship than to bring things up that are hurting you? Does the father know what is best for the entire family? Are men stronger than women? Should daughters be treated different than sons in the family? Should a wife be submissive to the husband at all times? What generation are you in the United States? How long have you been in the United States? How do you think your family values have changed since moving to the United States?* Questions such as these could guide the counselor in his or her understanding of the couple and their relationship dynamics. It would also offer some insight into the struggles of the couple prior to the infidelity in the relationship. It is strongly suggested that counselors should consider probing and assessing the couple's Latinx culture values and beliefs and their acculturation level. Counselors should continue to educate themselves in Latinx culture, more specifically, *machismo*, *marianismo*, and familism. Lastly, counselors should be aware of their scripts regarding Latinx culture to avoid jumping to conclusions in treatment.

Limitations

There are substantial limitations when utilizing web-based surveys. The primary issue is sampling bias. While studies have demonstrated that participants answer web-based surveys similarly to how they answer traditional pencil and paper surveys, it remains possible that using

web-based samples are not representative of the general population (McCabe, 2002). In general, web users are going to be younger, more educated, and have a higher social-economic status. Therefore, while web-based recruiting has made it easier to gather data from ethnic minority populations, a sample likely differs in systematic ways from the general population of the group trying to be investigated. While this study aimed to gather samples that mirror the Latinx population in the United States, the demographics results suggest that this sample was more educated and reported higher income than the larger Latinx population.

Another potential limitation of this study is that the research was written in English and not in Spanish. The procedures, assessment, and information regarding the survey were in English and not in Spanish. By the nature of this study, all participants were bilingual, therefore omitting those potential participants that were Spanish speaking only. Another limitation of this study is the small sample of men compared to women; because of the lack of statistical power, the possibility of type-1 or type-2 error may have occurred for the results of the male sample.

Another potential limitation the researcher noted as the study went on is that some questionnaires would have measured attachment and forgiveness that were designed using Latinx participants. The questionnaires used in this study were designed and used previously with the general population. With this in mind, another potential limitation with the forgiveness questionnaire is that it is not a questionnaire that measures forgiveness in infidelity; rather, it is a questionnaire that measures an individual's willingness to forgive an interpersonal transgression. Therefore, the researcher in this study had the participants remember the infidelity and the transgressor as they answer the TRIM-18 in the study. Doing so could have been an effective way to measure forgiveness in infidelity; however, it could have also led to some errors in the analysis if participants did not read the instructions. Overall, the study used questionnaires that

have been used to measure attachment, acculturation, and forgiveness in other reviews, but it appears that some questionnaires are more culturally appropriate.

Lastly, one of the questions that the researcher wishes he would have asked in the demographic's questionnaire is whether or not the participant in the study had forgiven and stayed with the romantic partner that had betrayed the relationship by engaging in a sexual and/or emotional infidelity. The researcher believes that this question could have provided insight into whether acculturation and attachment leads not only to forgiveness but reconciliation in the relationship. Therefore, future researchers should consider adding a question of whether or not the participant forgave and stayed with the partner who betrayed the relationship by engaging in a sexual and/or emotional infidelity.

Future Research

The data presented in this study provides evidence that cultural factors are related to forgiveness. However, there are several continuing needs to further assess the relationship between forgiveness after infidelity in the Latinx population in the United States. Further research is also encouraged to explore additional factors that may relate to forgiveness. Likewise, researchers are encouraged to examine mediators of the relationship between acculturation and forgiveness in the Latinx population. The ability to deconstruct the intersection and relationship involved in forgiveness and acculturation after infidelity with the Latinx population will hopefully increase skill and sensitivity when working with this emotionally toned relational difficulty.

Further research may want to assess the relationships between generations and forgiveness of infidelity. Some previous research has looked at acculturation between newly immigrated individuals and individuals who have been living in the United States for

generations. Previous research has found differences between these two group of individuals, and it would be best to consider researching infidelity with these two groups of individuals. It should also be found in future research the use of culturally sensitive questionnaires with the Latinx population. Although the questionnaires used in this study have had excellent reliability and validity, they have been used primarily with the general population and not the Latinx population. As noted in the limitations, the generalizability of this sample is limited; therefore, further research should also consider having the questionnaires be professionally and academically translated in Spanish, if they are not already.

Overall, future researchers should consider more research on attachment, acculturation, forgiveness, and Latinx in the United States, as forgiveness might be seen, interpreted, and given differently in Latinx than in the general population.

Conclusion

There is much to learn from this study regarding the Latinx population. The Latinx population continues to grow in the United States. It also appears that the Latinx population will only continue to grow in the United States. More recently, many immigrants from Central America have decided to make the journey to the United States. Immigration from Latin America continues and will continue to happen just like it did in the last couple hundred years. However, research with Latinx participants is little in number compared to studies done with other cultural groups, which is surprising since the Latinx population is the largest minority group in the United States.

It is essential for researchers to consider the Latinx culture just like any other culture, as Latinx are complex and have a different way of doing life and relationships. In the complexity of Latinx culture, we have *familismo*, *personalismo*, *machismo*, and *marianismo*. However, as complex as Latinx are, there are some everyday struggles that Latinx share with the general population, and one of those struggles is infidelity. Latinx, along with the general population, continue to have sexual and/or emotional affairs outside their primary relationship. According to this study, most women have experienced infidelity in their romantic relationship compared to men, since fewer men participated in the study. However, more concrete evidence could help with working with this population and topic.

There appears to be a lot of research on attachment with the general population. Some research has been done on how to do attachment work with individuals in therapy. However, the studies on attachment and Latinx participants are few. This study was congruent with previous research on secure attachment and its virtues. It appears that Latinx participants with a secure attachment are more likely to be more forgiving than those that are insecure in their attachment.

Therefore, it is important that clinicians consider using an emotionally focused approach in working with couples who are in a situation of sexual and/or emotional betrayal.

The overall results on acculturation and forgiveness of infidelity in Latinx romantic relationships indicated that acculturation does play a role in the forgiveness of infidelity. However, when looked at closer, it appears that motivation to forgive might be driven more from a cultural disposition and expectation than a genuine desire to be forgiven and reconcile the relationship. The study concluded that familism was a positive predictor of forgiveness. However, familism is characterized by the idea of putting family first. This also leads to a traditional view of gender roles involving both *machismo* and *marianismo*. *Marianismo* is characterized by self-silencing and *aguantar* which is putting up with whatever happens in their lives, relationships, and families. This leads one to wonder whether the women and men in this study who endorsed both *machismo* and familism are likely to forgive because they are forgiving in nature or because it is expected for them to move on even when they would not like to continue the harmony in the family. As other studies have pointed out, it appears that *marianismo* in immigrant women changes as they continue to acculturate in the United States, meaning their disposition to forgive might also change, with a willingness to risk the harmony in the relationship.

Overall, this study has provided an excellent first step in research done with Latinx participants in the topics of attachment and acculturation and their role of forgiveness after sexual and/or emotional infidelity in Latinx romantic relationships. With the Latinx population growing drastically in the next 30 years, it would be best for researchers to continue researching Latinx couples and participants to further the understanding of the Latinx culture and serve this population better when they come into a clinician's office.

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Appendix A Demographic Questions

Demographics: Please answer the following questions about yourself:

Gender: Male (1) Female (2)

Age: _____

Generation in the United States: _____

Are you currently involved in a romantic relationship? Yes No

Please indicate your yearly income rate.

What state do you live in?

Do you live in an urban or suburban setting?

Indicate highest level of education?

Do you have children?

If so, how many children?

What is the length of your current relationship? _____

In your current or past relationship did your partner, against your wishes, engage in a sexual relationship outside of your relationship? Yes No

In your current or past relationship did your partner, against your wishes, engage in an emotional relationship outside of your relationship? Yes No

Do you identify as Latinx? Yes No

Do you have a religious affiliation? Yes No

Appendix B Relationship Scales Questionnaire

Please read each of the following statements and responds to the extent to which you believe each statement best describes your feelings about close relationships.

	Not at all like me		Some what like me		Very much like me
1. I find it difficult to depend on other people.	1	2	3	4	5
2. It is very important to me to feel independent.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I find it easy to get emotionally close to others.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I want to merge completely with another person.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships.	1	2	3	4	5

Multiphasic Assessment of Cultural Constructs-Short Form (MACC-SF): English
(Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995)

Please tell us whether the following statements are “True” or “False.” (Bubble only one)	True	False
Familism Subscale		
1. All adults should be respected	○	○
4. The stricter the parents the better the child.	○	○
5. Some equality in marriage is a good thing, but by and large the father ought to have the main say so in family matters.	○	○
6. Even if a child believes that his parents are wrong, he should obey with question.	○	○
7. Relatives are more important than friends.	○	○
<i>Machismo Subscale</i>		
<i>32. A man should not marry a woman who is taller than him.</i>	○	○
<i>33. It is a mother’s special responsibility to provide her children with proper religious training.</i>	○	○
<i>34. Boys should not be allowed to play with dolls, and other girls’ toys.</i>	○	○

Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivation Scale-18 Item (TRIM-18)
(McCullough, Root, & Cohen, 2006)

For the following questions, please indicate your current thoughts and feelings about the person who hurt you; that is, we want to know how you feel about that person right now. Next to each item, circle the number that best describes your current thoughts and feelings.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly disagree
1. I'll make him/her pay.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am trying to keep as much distance between us as possible.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Although he/she hurt me, I am putting the hurts aside so we can resume our relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I want him/her to get what he/she deserves.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am finding it difficult to act warmly toward him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am avoiding him/her.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix E
INFORMED CONSENT FORM
Governors State University

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Luis San Roman, MA

CO-INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Shawn Patrick, Ed.D

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT: This consent form is a request and agreement for your participation in a doctoral research study completed by Luis San Roman, doctoral candidate at Governors State University. This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Shawn Patrick, Ed.D. You are being asked to be in a research study to examine attachment, acculturation and forgiveness for Latinx who have experienced sexual and/or emotional infidelity in their romantic relationships.

To participate, you must identify yourself as a Latinx and have experienced a partner engaging in a sexual and/or emotional extra-relational affair in a romantic relationship (i.e., past or present). You must be 18 years or older to participant in this study. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Ultimately, this research will be included in my dissertation and published for academic purposes.

PROCEDURES INVOLVED IN THIS STUDY: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to fill out a brief demographic questionnaire, the 30 item Relationship Questionnaire Scale (RSQ), the 29 item Multiphasic Assessment of Cultural Constructs-Short Form (MACC-SF), and the 18 item Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivation Scale-18 Item (TRIM-18) on Survey Monkey or paper format. The scales will take about 20-35 minutes total to complete.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS: There are minimal risks involved in this study. The process of forgiveness, attachment style, and acculturation may produce various emotional responses. If there are strong reactions to participating in this study, counseling referrals to <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists> and/or <https://therapyforlatinx.com> are provided to assist with processing your experience and information regarding the scales. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists> and/or <https://therapyforlatinx.com> is a website that allows people to browse therapists who provide counseling services to people around the county; participants would be able to choose a therapist of their own preference for in person, video or over the phone therapy. The financial responsibility for the therapy sessions is solely up to the participant. The link to the therapy services will also be provided on the "Thank you" page of the scales on Survey Monkey and attached as the last page on the paper format. Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Participants are free to refuse participation, withdraw from the study at any time, or skip any questions.

YOUR PARTICIPATION AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT: Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time. Your decision will not result in any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the study at any point during the process. Additionally, you have the right to request that the researcher not use any of your response material. It is important

to note that if you chose to withdraw or do not complete the assessments entirely, you will not be eligible to participate in the raffle.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The researchers will not be collecting any information about your identity. The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using password protected files. The researchers will not include any identifying information in any reports that may be published in the future. Records will be erased permanently once the dissertation is completed.

CONTACT FOR INQUIRIES AND REPORT CONCERNS: You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during, or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, please contact investigators Dr. Shawn Patrick at 708-534-4053 or spatrick3@govst.edu and Luis San Roman at lsanroman@student.govst.edu. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigators, you may contact Governors State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, Dr. Renée Theiss, by phone at 708-2350-2147 or by email at irb@govst.edu. If any problems or concerns occur as a result of your participation, you can report them to the number above. Alternatively, concerns can be reported by completing a Participant Complaint Form, which is found on the IRB website at <http://www.govst.edu/IRB/>

CONSENT: I have read and understand the above explanation of the study. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without any penalty. I have been able to express any questions and/or concerns which have been satisfactorily addressed by the research investigator and/or his/her staff. I believe I understand the study. A record of this consent will be kept by the researchers for three years beyond the end of the study.

Signature (Participant or Legally Authorized Representative)

Date

Appendix F

Mar 22, 2019 11:24 AM CDT

Shawn Patrick, Luis San Roman
Psychology and Counseling

Re: Exempt - Initial - IRB-FY2019-68 Te Perdono: Constructs that Influence Forgiveness after Infidelity in Latinx Romantic Relationships

Dear Dr. Shawn Patrick and Luis San Roman:

The Governors State University Institutional Review Board has granted exempt approval for your project titled "Te Perdono: Constructs that Influence Forgiveness after Infidelity in Latinx Romantic Relationships." You may begin your research.

- * All research related to this project must be conducted exactly as stated in the approved research protocol
- * If you would like to make any changes to research personnel or to the way that this research is conducted, you must complete a Modification submission and wait for IRB approval to enact any changes.
- * Please be advised that you may only distribute the GSU IRB approved text, forms, documents, and materials to all participants.
- * After you have completed the project, please complete a Project Closure submission.
- * Please include the assigned IRB project number, PI name, and exact title of your project in any correspondence about this project.

Decision: Exempt

Selected Category: Category 2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Sincerely,
Governors State University Institutional Review Board
irb@govst.edu



Institutional Review Board
Room G353
1 University Parkway
University Park, IL 60484
www.govst.edu/irb

Appendix G
Letter of Invitation to Participate

Dear Potential Participant,

My name is Luis San Roman. I am a doctoral candidate at Governors State University in University Park, Illinois. I am conducting a research project in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education in Counselor Education and Supervision program.

The purpose of my research project is to identify what constructs influence forgiveness after sexual and/or emotional infidelity in Latinx romantic relationships. The title of the research project is *Te Perdono: Constructs that Influence Forgiveness after Infidelity in Latinx Romantic Relationships*.

Eligible participants for this study meet the following criteria: **a) 18 years or older, b) identify as Latinx, and c) must have been in a previous or current relationship where there was sexual and/or emotional infidelity.**

Participation requests that you complete a short demographic form and a 15-20-minute online survey. You may withdraw from this study at any time with no penalty to yourself.

I can be reached out at lsanroman@student.govst.edu. My dissertation chair Dr. Shawn Patrick can be reached at spatrick3@govst.edu. The research project has been approved by Governors State University's Institutional Review Board (Approval IRB-FY2019-68). The results may also be used in publications or conference presentations.

You may find the informed consent document and survey at this link:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Latinosandforgiveness>

Please also share this request with anyone else who may qualify for the research project.

With gratitude,

Luis San Roman, MA/TS, MA, LPC, NCC
CES Doctoral Candidate
Governors State University

