



THE FRAGILE BONDS OF LOVE: EXAMINING PARTNER AFFIRMATION AND
COMMITMENT UNCERTAINTY PREDICT INFIDELITY AMONG MARRIED
INDIVIDUALS IN MALAYSIA

CHANG SHAN MEI

TAY SHI SWEN

WONG MING JIE

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The Fragile Bonds of Love: Examining Partner Affirmation and Commitment Uncertainty

Predict Infidelity among Married Individuals in Malaysia

Chang Shan Mei, Tay Shi Swen, and Wong Ming Jie

Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

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CHANG SHAN MEI

TAY SHI SWEN


WONG MING JIE

DECLARATION

We declare that the material contained in this paper is the end result of our own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources be they printed, electronic or personal.

Name: CHANG SHAN MEI


Student ID: 21AAB06103

Signed: 

Date: 1st Sep 2025

Name: TAY SHI SWEN


Student ID: 21AAB04606

Signed: 

Date: 1st Sep 2025

Name: WONG MING JIE


Student ID: 21AAB04864

Signed: 

Date: 1st Sep 2025

APPROVAL FORM

This research paper attached hereto, entitled “The Fragile Bonds of Love: Examining Partner Affirmation and Commitment Uncertainty Predict Infidelity among Married Individuals in Malaysia” prepared and submitted by Chang Shan Mei, Tay Shi Swen and Wong Ming Jie in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Social Science (Hons) Psychology is hereby accepted.



Supervisor
(Dr. Tan Soon Aun)

Date: 1 Oct 2025

Abstract

Divorce cases attributed to infidelity have increased significantly, raising a serious concern about the stability of marriages in Malaysia. Infidelity in marriage not only causes severe psychological pain and trauma to spouses, but also negatively impacts other family members, making it a broader social issue. This study examined the predictive role of partner affirmation on infidelity among married individuals in Malaysia and investigated the mediating role of commitment uncertainty. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was employed in this study. Data were collected through an online Qualtrics survey using purposive sampling. A total of 146 married Malaysians ($M_{\text{age}} = 36.47$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 10.07$, Females = 69.2%, Chinese = 50%) participated. Sexual and Emotional Infidelity Scale (SEI), Partner Affirmation Scale (PAS), and Commitment Uncertainty Short Scale (CUSS) were utilised to measure the variables of the study. The results indicated that partner affirmation significantly and negatively predicted infidelity among married individuals in Malaysia. Besides, commitment uncertainty significantly mediated the relationship between partner affirmation and infidelity. These findings provide important insights for both married couples and practitioners by highlighting the importance of partner affirmation and commitment certainty in reducing the likelihood of infidelity. They also fill a knowledge gap in Malaysia by highlighting partner affirmation predicts infidelity both directly and indirectly through commitment uncertainty. Meanwhile, the findings extend the Investment Model by incorporating partner affirmation and commitment uncertainty to capture broader aspects of infidelity.

Keywords: partner affirmation, commitment uncertainty, infidelity, married individuals, Malaysia

Subject Area: HQ806 Adultery

Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgement	i
Declaration	iii
Approval Form	iv
Abstract	v
List of Tables	x
List of Figures	xi
List of Abbreviation	xii
 Chapters	
1 Introduction	1
Background of the Study	1
Problem Statement	3
Research Questions	5
Research Objectives	5
Hypotheses	5
Significance of Study	6
Definition of Terms	7
Infidelity	7
Partner Affirmation	8
Commitment Uncertainty	9
 2 Literature Review	 10
Infidelity	10
Partner Affirmation and Infidelity	11
Commitment Uncertainty and Infidelity	14
Partner Affirmation and Commitment Uncertainty	15
Commitment Uncertainty as a Mediator	18
Gender as a Covariate Variable	20
Theoretical Framework	23

	Investment Model (Rusbult, 1980)	23
	Conceptual Framework	24
3	Methodology	26
	Research Design	26
	Population, Sample, Sample Size, Sampling Method	27
	Inclusion Criteria	27
	Sample Size	28
	Sampling Method	28
	Research Procedure	28
	Data Collection	28
	Ethical Clearance	29
	Pilot Study	30
	Measurements	30
	Sexual and Emotional Infidelity Scale (SEI)	30
	Partner Affirmation Scale (PAS)	31
	Commitment Uncertainty Short Scale (CUSS)	32
	Data Analysis Plan and Processing	32
4	Results and Analysis	34
	Overview	34
	Data Screening and Preparation	34
	Model Refinement	35
	Partner Affirmation	35
	Sexual and Emotional Infidelity	36
	Descriptive Statistics	37
	Demographic Characteristics	37
	Main Variable Characteristics	37
	Measurement Model Analysis	39

	Normality Test	39
	Reliability	39
	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)	40
	Convergent and Discriminant Validity	40
	Structural Model Analysis	44
	Coefficient of Determination (R^2)	44
	Hypothesis Testing	44
	Association between Partner Affirmation and Infidelity	44
	Mediating Role of Commitment Uncertainty	45
5	Discussion	47
	The Protective Role of Partner Affirmation Against Infidelity in Marriage	47
	Partner Affirmation as a Predictor of Commitment Uncertainty	49
	Commitment Uncertainty as a Predictor of Infidelity	49
	Commitment Uncertainty as a Significant Mediator	50
	No Significant Effects of Gender, Age, and Length of Marriage	52
	Theoretical Implication	54
	Practical Implication	55
	Limitations	56
	Recommendations	57
	Conclusion	58
	References	59

Appendices	79
Appendix A: Sample Size Calculation	79
Appendix B: Questionnaire	83
Appendix C: Ethical Clearance Letter	90
Appendix D: Reliability of Instruments in Pilot Study	92
Appendix E: Descriptive Statistics of Demographics	94
Appendix F: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables	95
Appendix G: Measurements Model Output	96
Appendix H: Structural Model Output	99
Appendix I: Final PLS-SEM Model Diagram	101
Appendix J: Turnitin Report	102

List of Tables

Tables		Page
4.1.1	Demographic Information	38
4.1.2	Descriptive Statistics for Main Variables	38
4.2	Normality Tests of Each Variable	39
4.3	Loadings, Reliability and Validity	42
4.4	Fornell-Larcker Criterion	43
4.5	HTMT Ratio	43
4.6	Direct and Indirect Effects of Partner Affirmation and Commitment Uncertainty on Infidelity, Controlling for Covariates	45

List of Figures

Figures		Page
2.1	Conceptual Framework of the Present Study	25
4.1	Direct and Indirect Effects of Partner Affirmation and Commitment Uncertainty on Infidelity	45

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations

1. AVE - Average Variance Extracted
2. CR - Composite Reliability
3. CI - Confidence Interval
4. HTMT - Heterotrait-Monotrait
5. PLS - Partial Least Squares
6. PLS-SEM - Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling
7. PTSD - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
8. VIF - Variance Inflation Factor
9. SEM - Structural Equation Modelling
10. SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background of the Study

A famous writer, Mu (2009) stated: Once upon a time, the carriage was slow, and there was only enough time in one's life to love one person. Nowadays, with the 'fast food' development of society, the adult world is full of noise and temptation, and it seems that love from the beginning to the end has become a luxury. This statement explained that a sense of nostalgia and a yearning for a simpler life was present. The poem told of a past era when the pace of life was slow; people had more time to appreciate and cherish the little moments of beauty in their lives, and they would only fall in love with one person in their lifetime. However, in this fast rapid era, people tended to pursue the love of their imagination and changed their love in a very fast period.

The American Psychological Association (APA) estimated that 20–40% of divorces in the US were the result of infidelity (Marin et al., 2014). A National Institutes of Health (NIH) research found that infidelity was a key contributing factor for one spouse in 88% of the marriages they looked at (Scott et al., 2013). Scott (2013) also explained that in most divorcing couples, only one partner cited cheating as a major issue. According to the American Sociological Association (ASA; 2002), 15% of males who relied on their spouse for financial support would be involved in infidelity. Specifically, some men who were financially dependent may feel inadequate or emasculated, which might have caused them to seek approval from people outside of their relationships.

The term "infidelity" describes the circumstance when one spouse or intimate partner engages in sexual or emotional activity with someone other than their husband, girlfriend, or boyfriend (American Psychological Association, 2018). The renowned relationship therapist, Esther Perel believed that infidelity involved three key elements: first, a secretive relationship

of betrayal; second, a certain degree of emotional connection; and third, sexual fantasy. Infidelity did not usually entail explicit cheating; it could take a variety of forms, each with its distinct traits (Perel, 2017). For instance, emotional infidelity and physical infidelity.

When discussing infidelity, partners' affirmation played an important role as it had a direct impact on relationship happiness, self-esteem, and emotional stability (Arquiza, 2020). Expressing gratitude, praise, and support for a partner through affirmation improved emotional ties and satisfied basic psychological needs, such as understanding and worth (Gordon & Chen, 2010). Frequent affirmation can help couples express their needs, frustrations, and weaknesses before they become bigger problems by fostering open communication, lowering insecurities, and fostering trust (Jeffers, 2017). A partner's commitment to the relationship and sense of self-worth increased when they felt appreciated, lessening the need to seek approval elsewhere. This reduced the likelihood of a person being involved in infidelity activities.

Commitment uncertainty, defined as doubt and lack of confidence in the relationship, was a key factor associated with infidelity in romantic relationships (Owen et al., 2014). Research revealed that people frequently engaged in alternative monitoring as a result of uncertainty, comparing their existing connection to possible alternatives, particularly if they were emotionally unhappy (Quirk et al., 2016; Sawicki & Agnew, 2021). Infidelity was associated with higher alternative monitoring, which frequently occurs as a reaction to unfulfilled emotional demands. Commitment uncertainty correlated with negative relationship outcomes like distress, avoidant communication, and lower commitment, which can have increased the likelihood of infidelity (Owen et al., 2014). Though uncertainty and commitment are distinct, uncertainty often moderates commitment, weakened the foundation of trust and stability essential for long-term relationship success (Fricker, 2006; Paska & Laka, 2024; Rokach & Chan, 2023; Urganci et al., 2021).

In summary, infidelity is a complicated issue with movable borders that is influenced by marital dynamics, cultural shifts, and technological developments. Married individuals may have preserved a dedicated, satisfying relationship in the face of the challenges of contemporary life by being aware of the mechanics of infidelity and placing a high value on emotional closeness and validation.

Problem Statement

According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2023), there was a 43.1% increase in divorce cases from 2021 to 2022, highlighting a growing concern among married couples in Malaysia. One of the significant reasons that led to the breakdown of marriage was infidelity. Marital infidelity involves concealed sexual or emotional relationships that can damage a couple's relationship once disclosed (Atapour et al., 2021). Reports showed that both Malaysian men and women attributed approximately 11.8% to 20.5% of divorce cases to partner infidelity (The Star, 2023). This aligned with previous research, which found that marital infidelity was a leading cause of divorce (Asadu & Egbuche, 2020; Darbandi et al., 2024). Ejeh (2022) stated that marital infidelity was a socio-ethical issue that brought devastating effects on spouses and other family members. This was because infidelity in marriage inflicted severe psychological pain and trauma on the betrayed partner, broke their trust, as well as diminished the next generation's confidence in marriage. Therefore, this highlighted a need to understand the factors that drive infidelity among married individuals to address this prevalent and critical issue in today's society.

Existing research in the field of romantic relationships had primarily examined various factors that influenced infidelity, such as attachment style, religiosity, and relationship satisfaction (Ghiasi, 2024; Maddock, 2022; Vowels et al., 2022). However, the partner's role was crucial when examining the reciprocal dynamics in marriage (Young & Seedall, 2024). This was because affirmation from a partner influenced how individuals

perceived their relationship as satisfying (Gordon & Chen, 2010). While partner affirmation had been studied in relation to relationship satisfaction and quality (Algoe & Chandler, 2024; Bühler et al., 2019; Li et al., 2023), the direct effects of both partner perceptual and behavioural affirmation on both sexual and emotional infidelity remained underexplored. Partner perceptual affirmation did not always bring partner behavioural affirmation, where actions aligned with the individual's ideal self (Kumashiro et al., 2006). This misalignment highlighted the need for a deeper understanding of how both types of affirmation influenced infidelity.

In addition, the mediating role of commitment uncertainty remained insufficiently explored. The study of commitment uncertainty was essential for understanding how doubts regarding a relationship's commitment influenced relational outcomes. It can stem from events that were perceived as meaningless (Owen et al., 2014), and even when commitment levels were high, individuals might still have experienced uncertainty about their desire to maintain that commitment (Rusbult, 1980; Rusbult, 1983). While the link between commitment and infidelity had been well-established (Fricker, 2006; Urganci et al., 2021), there was a gap in the literature regarding whether commitment uncertainty also contributed to the occurrence of infidelity. Commitment uncertainty was influenced by partner affirmation through communication styles, attachment types, and personal emotional security beliefs (Cruz, 2020; Vowels & Carnelley, 2020). It had also been identified as a critical factor in undermining commitment levels, fostering dissatisfaction, and influencing relational outcomes (Owen et al., 2014; Rokach & Chan, 2023; Sawicki & Agnew, 2021). However, its specific role as a mediator between both partner perceptual and behavioural affirmation and both sexual and emotional infidelity remained unexamined. This highlighted the need for further investigation into this mediating model.

Additionally, there was a methodological gap in the measurement of infidelity. Many studies relied on qualitative methods or simplistic close-ended questions (Bashirpour et al., 2018; Hatamy et al., 2011; Ritchie et al., 2021) rather than employing psychometrically validated infidelity scales (Allen et al., 2008; Scheeren, 2018). Therefore, it was crucial to apply the infidelity scale to measure both sexual and emotional infidelity to ensure the precision and reliability of findings regarding infidelity.

Research Questions

1. Does perceived partner affirmation (perceptual affirmation and behavioural affirmation) negatively predict infidelity (sexual infidelity and emotional infidelity) among married individuals?
2. Does commitment uncertainty mediate the relationship between perceived partner affirmation (perceptual affirmation and behavioural affirmation) and infidelity (sexual infidelity and emotional infidelity) among married individuals?

Research Objectives

1. To examine whether perceived partner affirmation (perceptual affirmation and behavioural affirmation) negatively predicts infidelity (sexual infidelity and emotional infidelity) among married individuals.
2. To investigate whether commitment uncertainty mediates the relationship between perceived partner affirmation (perceptual affirmation and behavioural affirmation)-and infidelity (sexual infidelity and emotional infidelity) among married individuals.

Hypotheses

H_{1a}: Partner perceptual affirmation negatively predicts sexual infidelity among married individuals.

H_{1b}: Partner perceptual affirmation negatively predicts emotional infidelity among married individuals.

H_{1c}: Partner behavioural affirmation negatively predicts sexual infidelity among married individuals.

H_{1d}: Partner behavioural affirmation negatively predicts emotional infidelity among married individuals.

H_{2a}: Commitment uncertainty mediates the relationship between partner perceptual affirmation and sexual infidelity among married individuals.

H_{2b}: Commitment uncertainty mediates the relationship between partner perceptual affirmation and emotional infidelity among married individuals.

H_{2c}: Commitment uncertainty mediates the relationship between partner behavioural affirmation and sexual infidelity among married individuals.

H_{2d}: Commitment uncertainty mediates the relationship between partner behavioural affirmation and emotional infidelity among married individuals.

Significance of Study

The results of the study were expected to be useful for married couples, practitioners and policymakers. This study provided insight for married couples into the importance of strengthening emotional bonds through partner affirmation and addressing commitment uncertainty to reduce the risk of infidelity. Furthermore, these findings can guide marital counsellors in designing evidence-based interventions to strengthen relationships among couples facing a high risk of infidelity. Marital counsellors can provide tailored advice and preventive measures for married couples to reduce marriage dissolution. Additionally, policymakers can implement educational programs that encourage partner affirmation and commitment certainty to reduce the prevalence of marital infidelity and its associated societal impacts.

Besides, this study addressed a critical gap in understanding how both partner perceptual and behavioural affirmation influenced infidelity behaviours. By exploring their

direct effects on both sexual and emotional infidelity, the findings can highlight the partner's pivotal role in predicting infidelity. As partner perceptual affirmation did not guarantee partner behavioural affirmation, this study explored both aspects to fully understand how they contribute to infidelity. This extended existing knowledge of married individuals and contributed to the literature on marital dynamics and fidelity, as it provided new insights into the interplay between partner affirmation and fidelity.

In addition, this study explored the role of commitment uncertainty as a mediator between both partner perceptual and behavioural affirmation and both sexual and emotional infidelity, which contributed to the literature that was previously neglected. The findings explored how uncertainties about a relationship's commitment impacted relational outcomes. This study also offered a deeper understanding of how commitment uncertainty mediated the influence of partner affirmation on infidelity behaviours. This study also investigated the mediating mechanisms underlying infidelity and built a foundation for broader investigations into marital infidelity.

Furthermore, this study addressed a methodological gap in measuring infidelity. To address the limitations of previous studies that relied on qualitative approaches or simplistic measures, this study employed psychometrically validated infidelity scales to measure both sexual and emotional infidelity. This provided more accurate and generalisable conclusions in future investigations.

Definition of Terms

Infidelity

Conceptual Definition. Infidelity is defined as an act of being unfaithful to a partner that encompasses a wide range of behaviours (both physical and non-physical) that violate the romantic relationship norms (Bozoyan & Schmiedeberg, 2022). Infidelity has been classified into two categories: sexual infidelity and emotional infidelity. Sexual infidelity,

also called physical infidelity, refers to physical intimacy which contains kissing, fondling and other sexual involvement with another person in a romantic relationship (Guitar et al., 2016; Grigoropoulos, 2023; Rokach & Chan, 2023). Emotional infidelity is emotional involvement in the form of thoughts and behaviours, such as trusting another, sharing the deepest thoughts and falling in love with a third party (Morrissey et al., 2018; Rokach & Chan, 2023).

Operational Definition. Sexual and emotional infidelity was measured using the Sexual and Emotional Infidelity Scale (Pinto & Arantes, 2017). This scale consisted of two subscales: sexual and emotional infidelity. A higher mean score indicated higher levels of infidelity behaviour in each category.

Partner Affirmation

Conceptual Definition. Partner affirmation refers to a partner's support in helping an individual pursue personal goals and align with their ideal self. It fosters empathic understanding and promotes coordination toward shared goals, leading to perceived responsiveness, where the individual feels understood, approved of, and cared for by the partner. This perceived responsiveness enhances trust and strengthens commitment in the relationship (Rusbult et al., 2005; Rusbult et al., 2009). Partner affirmation includes perceptual affirmation, which refers to how closely a partner's perceptions of an individual align with that individual's ideal self, and behavioural affirmation, which refers to how well a partner's actions toward the individual align with their ideal self (Drigotas et al., 1999).

Operational Definition. Partner affirmation was measured using a Partner Affirmation Scale (Drigotas et al., 1999). This scale measured both partners' perceptual affirmation and behavioural affirmation toward the individual's ideal self. A higher mean score indicated greater partner affirmation in each dimension.

Commitment Uncertainty

Conceptual Definition. Commitment uncertainty is the extent to which individuals are uncertain about their willingness to commit to the current relationship (Owen et al., 2014). Quirk et al. (2016) state that individuals with commitment uncertainty feel unsure or ambivalent about their desire to persist within the relationship. It is characterised by a lack of sufficient information and confidence required to determine whether they want to remain in the relationship (Harris & Hall, 2020).

Operational Definition. Commitment uncertainty was measured using the Commitment Uncertainty Short Scale (Stanley & Rhoades, 2011). A higher mean score indicated greater personal commitment uncertainty within a romantic relationship.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Infidelity

The concept of infidelity has been discussed over the years, as it is a traumatic issue that is faced in a romantic relationship. According to Brammer et al. (2023), infidelity is linked with cheating and adultery, which is an action that is unfaithful to the other. Infidelity also results in feelings of betrayal and mistrust in the person who was cheated, which often leads to a breakup or divorce. Besides, McQueen (2021) claimed that sexual infidelity is a sexual activity in a romantic relationship with another person to satisfy sexual desire. Grigoropoulos (2023) claimed that emotional infidelity involves sharing emotional connections with a third party.

Brammer et al. (2023) indicated that different genders reacted to infidelity differently. He highlighted that sexual infidelity is the most painful for couples in short-term relationships. Bozoyan and Schmiedeberg (2022) emphasised that female and younger judgements were stricter compared to other population groups. Studies also indicated that different gender leads to different feelings as males perceived upset in sexual infidelity, whereas females perceived upset in emotional infidelity (Rokach & Chan, 2023). Sabini and Green (2004) indicated that sexual infidelity was associated with anger and blame among undergraduate couples, and people experience more upset, hurt, and angrier emotions when responding to sexual infidelity.

Several factors have been discovered to be linked with infidelity. For instance, Fincham and May (2017) explained a few factors in different aspects, such as demographic variations in terms of gender and age. Males have a higher intensity of infidelity compared to females, and the ages of 40 and 55 are predicted to have a higher tendency to commit to infidelity (Rokach & Chan, 2022). Also, the same study found that infidelity is the main

cause of divorce among married spouses in the United States and has a constant high peak during the summer seasons. Other than that, educational background, individual, and economic background were also found to positively predict infidelity (Mark et al., 2011). Mark and his colleagues also indicated that other emotional factors, such as low relationship happiness and low compatibility, such as sexual attitudes and values toward the partner, were significantly associated with infidelity. However, these studies highlight that the factors leading to infidelity are not well-justified. The relationship factors, such as lower relationship satisfaction and happiness in the relationship, are more contributing factors to infidelity compared to demographic factors, such as gender.

Various types of infidelity result in distinct negative effects on individuals who are betrayed. Rokach and Chan (2023) and Warach et al. (2019) emphasised the issue that infidelity causes health impacts in terms of mental issues such as depression and anxiety, promoting low self-esteem and affecting emotional well-being. Similarly, Roos et al. (2019) and Lonergan et al. (2020) also found that infidelity is associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and is highly correlated to perceived stress, depression and anxiety symptoms.

In short, infidelity can have severe consequences for the mental health of those who are betrayed, ranging from minor effects such as lowered self-esteem and insecurity to more serious conditions such as depression and PTSD. This highlights the crucial need for further investigation into the factors contributing to different types of infidelity and extends beyond the scope of existing studies. This further investigation is essential to prevent the escalation of mental health issues among those affected by both sexual and emotional infidelity.

Partner Affirmation and Infidelity

Heine et al. (2006) described affirmation as part of a psychological process in which individuals reaffirm existing meaning frameworks, including relationships, self-esteem, and

cultural worldviews, when their sense of coherence or meaning is disrupted. Affirmation helps individuals restore stability and mitigate the anxiety caused by perceived existential or social threats.

Rusbult et al. (2005) stated that partner affirmation is the degree to which the partner is supported in pursuing personal goals. Drigotas et al. (1999) indicated that partner affirmation has two dimensions, which are perceptual and behavioural. Perceptual affirmation describes the degree to which the partner's perceptions of the individuals are aligned with their ideal self, while behavioural affirmation describes the degree to which the partner's behaviour toward the individuals is congruent with their ideal self.

Rusbult et al. (2005) reported that perceptual affirmation enhances feelings of love by fostering acceptance, while behavioural affirmation promotes practical support and coordination toward shared goals. These forms of affirmation build empathic understanding and relationship satisfaction. Later, Rusbult et al. (2009) further showed that partner affirmation promotes perceived responsiveness, where the target feels understood, approved of, and cared for by the partner. This perceived responsiveness fosters trust and strengthens commitment, eventually enhancing relationship well-being.

Besides, some studies have reviewed partner affirmation from different viewpoints. Gordon and Chen (2010) categorised partner affirmation into two classifications: intrinsic and extrinsic affirmation. Intrinsic affirmation focuses on the affirming partner's inherent qualities such as appreciation, supportiveness and authenticity. On the other hand, extrinsic affirmation focuses on specific achievements or behaviours of the partners. Gordon and Chen (2010) showed that individuals who received and recalled partner intrinsic affirmation experienced greater relationship satisfaction and perceived higher relationship quality due to reduced defensiveness and enhanced feelings of acceptance. These findings highlight the importance of intrinsic affirmation from a partner, where the lack of such affirmation may

contribute to infidelity behaviours by creating emotional dissatisfaction and unmet relational needs.

This was supported by subsequent studies. Morrissey et al. (2018) reported that individuals with unmet emotional needs, including the need to be supported and validated, are more likely to engage in emotional infidelity to satisfy these needs from third parties. Allen et al. (2008) also found that couples who later experience infidelity tend to exhibit more problematic communication patterns before marriage, including reduced positive interactions and increased negative and invalidating interactions. This suggests that invalidation from partners is highly associated with infidelity behaviours.

Bühler et al. (2019) also found that a partner's perceptual affirmation is associated with a partner's behavioural affirmation, which is associated with progress towards the ideal self and eventually brings relationship satisfaction. Bühler et al. (2020) further reported that individuals with high levels of neuroticism perceived lower levels of perceptual and behavioural affirmation from their partners, which was linked to reduced relationship satisfaction. Previous studies have demonstrated that lower marital satisfaction is associated with increased infidelity behaviours (Haseli et al., 2019; McDaniel et al., 2017), suggesting that the absence of partner affirmation may indirectly increase the likelihood of infidelity by reducing relationship satisfaction.

In brief, existing research partner affirmation plays a crucial role in fostering relationship satisfaction, trust, and commitment by promoting empathic understanding, perceived responsiveness, and alignment with personal goals, which may mitigate infidelity risks. However, there remains a gap in the literature regarding the examination of both partner perceptual and behavioural affirmation as a predictor of both sexual and emotional infidelity. This is important to provide a deeper understanding of how unmet affirmation needs contribute to distinct infidelity behaviours.

Commitment Uncertainty and Infidelity

Commitment is one of the dominant factors in predicting the success of marital relationships. Commitment uncertainty, as defined by Owen et al. (2014), is the extent to which the individuals are uncertain about their willingness to commit to the current relationship. It is characterised by doubt and a lack of sufficient information about the relationship, making it difficult for the individual to determine whether they want to remain in the relationship (Harris & Hall, 2020; Quirk et al., 2016). Owen et al. (2014) identified commitment uncertainty as fluctuations in couples' identity, as well as changes in feelings of belonging and confidence in the durability of the relationship. This process triggers a sequence of thoughts (e.g., considering separation), emotional reactions (e.g., intense emotional responses), and behaviours (e.g., avoiding time with partners) that influence the infidelity.

A past study found that when people experience high levels of commitment uncertainty, they tend to engage in alternative monitoring—a process where they compare their current partner to potential alternatives (Quirk et al., 2016). Research has linked this process with infidelity. For example, Belu and O'Sullivan (2019) identified a relationship between attention to alternative partners and infidelity. Ritchie et al. (2021) conducted a longitudinal study that confirmed this finding, showing a significant increase in alternative monitoring over time preceding infidelity among unmarried individuals.

Relationship doubts play a central role in infidelity decisions. Perez et al. (2023) highlighted that individuals are more likely to engage in infidelity when they lack confidence in the relationship or feel emotionally unfulfilled. Similarly, Bashirpour et al. (2020) found that infidelity is associated with personal factors such as doubt, lack of adherence to marital commitment and failure to prioritise one's spouse and family members.

Uncertainty in romantic relationships is also related to broader negative outcomes, including depressive symptoms, relationship distress, avoidant communication, and even relationship dissolution (Owen et al., 2014). These dynamics often lead to increased dissatisfaction, which may drive individuals to engage in infidelity behaviours (Rokach & Chan, 2023). Commitment and uncertainty are distinct; individuals can feel committed yet uncertain, influencing relationship behaviours, though uncertainty often links to lower commitment (Owen et al., 2014). However, some studies also indicated that uncertainty is the moderator of commitment that undermines the relationship commitment process (Sawicki & Agnew, 2021; Tan & Agnew, 2016). Research consistently shows that lower commitment levels are linked to a higher likelihood of infidelity (Fricker, 2006; Rokach & Chan, 2023; Urganci et al., 2021). Paska and Laka (2024) explained that this phenomenon is due to the lack of foundational trust and sense of security needed for long-term stability in the absence of commitment.

In short, existing research underscores the association between commitment uncertainty and infidelity in romantic relationships. Studies indicate that commitment uncertainty contributes to alternative monitoring, dissatisfaction, and weakened commitment, all of which can increase the risk of infidelity. This highlights a critical knowledge gap in understanding the direct relationship between commitment uncertainty and infidelity, as most studies examine indirect links. By addressing the literature gap, this study provided deeper insights into whether commitment uncertainty directly predicts infidelity behaviour.

Partner Affirmation and Commitment Uncertainty

The idea of Chapman's Five Love Languages was presented by Chapman (2024) in his book *The Five Love Languages*. The premise is that, as everyone expresses and receives love differently, it is beneficial to identify the partner's major "love language" to improve emotional ties and fortify relationships (Chapman & Campbell, 2016). Accordingly, every

individual had a primary love language to connect with their spouse the most. To promote emotional intimacy and fortify the link between couples, these love languages include physical contact, quality time, receiving presents, acts of service, and words of affirmation. This study explored the specific role of words of affirmation (a language of love that includes verbal expressions of praise, support, and appreciation) in reducing commitment uncertainty.

As a psychological concept, commitment uncertainty describes emotions of confusion or doubt about the relationship's future or the depth of one's emotional engagement (Owen et al., 2014). Gordon and Chen (2010) emphasised that it is normal for people to occasionally feel doubtful or hesitant about the stability or permanency of their relationship, even while one person may feel committed and loyal to it. Frequent affirmations act as a stabilising factor in these situations, offering comfort and bolstering the relationship's sense of stability.

Further elaborating on the function of affirmations in reducing commitment uncertainty, Kadian's (2023) research highlights how vocal affirmations promote trust and boost self-esteem. According to Sawicki and Agnew (2021), partner affirmations' regularity and consistency are crucial in reducing commitment ambiguity since sporadic or absent affirmations can exacerbate emotions of uncertainty and emotional disengagement. According to Arriaga et al. (2018), he stated that when individuals feel that their partner does not give them enough affirmation, such as feeling undervalued or unsupported, it can undermine their confidence in their partner's commitment to the relationship, which in turn increases uncertainty about commitment.

The link between affirmation and commitment uncertainty is shaped by several psychological factors and the direct impact of affirmations. Prior research has emphasised the importance of communication styles, attachment types, and personal emotional security beliefs in influencing the influence of affirmations on commitment (Cruz, 2020; Vowels & Carnelley, 2020). These different psychological factors play different significant roles in the

relationship, which might directly reduce or strengthen commitment throughout the relationship. In contrast to those with anxious attachment styles, who might need more frequent or explicit affirmations to feel emotionally safe, people with secure attachment styles might be more open to affirmations since they see them as a logical progression of relationship intimacy (Fung, 2023). According to attachment patterns, communication styles, and emotional security beliefs, affirmations promote emotional safety and intimacy in relationships. People are less likely to turn to sexual or emotional infidelity as a means of obtaining approval or connection from others when they feel emotionally secure.

In relationships, affirmation often serves to fortify emotional ties by promoting closeness, trust, and security (Sels et al., 2016). When people receive affirmation of the relationship, such as emotional support, accomplishment or praise, this will give them a sense of security (Ahmed et al., 2008). People are more likely to stay devoted to a relationship when they feel recognised and validated by their partner. Therefore, this emotional support promotes more involvement. On the other hand, a lack of affirmations or erratic displays of affection might cause anger, emotional distance, and, eventually, a greater degree of insecurity about commitment. According to Weller et al. (2022), if affirmations are inconsistent or non-existent, people may feel insecure and uncertain about the relationship's future.

One of the main factors influencing relationship commitment and satisfaction is the emotional connection between partners. Emotional connection gives people a sense of belonging and emotional support, both critical for sustaining long-term relationships (Sels et al., 2016). Coppola et al. (2021) add that regular affirmations strengthen the emotional bond between spouses and help build this emotional worth.

The literature emphasises affirmations' potential to prevent infidelity by promoting emotional stability, lowering commitment uncertainty, and fortifying interpersonal ties.

However, there are still unanswered questions about how affirmations affect emotional and sexual infidelity both directly and indirectly, especially when it comes to the mediation effect of commitment insecurity in married relationships. Furthermore, there is still a need for more research into the precise impacts of affirmations on preserving the stability of long-term relationships, as the unique influence of affirmations on relational integrity has not been well examined in previous studies.

Commitment Uncertainty as a Mediator

Past studies demonstrated the association between partner affirmation and infidelity, yet the underlying mechanism or indirect effect is less investigated. Shimberg et al. (2016) found that empathy has been used to explain the relationship between partner affirmation and infidelity. Pereira et al. (2013) also stated that relationship satisfaction is the main mediator between loneliness and infidelity. Nevertheless, commitment uncertainty as a mediator is less likely to be investigated.

Arriaga et al. (2018) found that partner affirmation can strengthen the confidence of the partners when they receive concern, validation, and support within the relationship. This has explained how partner affirmation can lead to commitment uncertainty, in which individuals will doubt their relationship due to a lack of partner affirmation. However, infidelity can result from low partner affirmation, which occurs when people feel their spouse is not providing enough emotional support, recognition, or validation, as they may look for emotional connection and validation outside of the relationship to satisfy unfulfilled psychological needs (Drigotas et al., 1999). Part of the explanation for the relationship between infidelity and commitment uncertainty is acknowledging the importance of emotional attachment. Strong emotional reactions are more likely to occur in those who feel their relationship with a partner is stable and lasting (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005).

Although affirmation is often viewed as a nourishing and helpful energy in a relationship, it can backfire if given excessively or without sincere support for future commitment. The expectations attached to these actions may overwhelm or stress the affirmation recipient (Conradi et al., 2021). Affirmations are supposed to foster trust and stability; however, this excessive pressure can cause stress and emotional exhaustion (Thomas, 2016). In this situation, commitment uncertainty may be a major trigger for destroying marital trust and promoting behaviours that damage the relationship, such as emotional or sexual infidelity, if it is not addressed or reduced (Rokach & Chan, 2023). On the other hand, those who believe their relationship is less secure or close could respond more strongly to sexual infidelity, feeling anxious and deeply bereaved (Rodriguez et al., 2015; Rokach & Chan, 2023).

Furthermore, the relationship dynamic may become even more complicated if affirmation is not linked to concrete actions or specific future objectives. This is because the recipient may feel entitled to constant praise or validation, which can exacerbate narcissistic tendencies and unrealistic expectations (Cuncic, 2024; Nurzhynskyy, 2023). In these situations, affirmation plays a double-edged role, unintentionally intensifying the emotional upheaval and encouraging feelings of alienation rather than safety.

The relationship between partner affirmation and infidelity may be explained by the Investment Model (Rusbult, 1980), as commitment uncertainty acts as a mediator. The concept states that investment, quality of alternatives, and satisfaction all affect relationship commitment. Relationship satisfaction declines when partner affirmation is low, which raises problems about the partner's commitment (commitment uncertainty). This uncertainty weakens commitment and makes individuals more likely to consider and act on other behaviours or actions, such as infidelity (Rusbult et al., 1998).

In brief, the relationships between infidelity, commitment uncertainty, and partner affirmation provide important information about the longevity of relationships. Uncertainty about commitment, which erodes emotional stability, is particularly salient and plays a key role in making relationships vulnerable to infidelity by fuelling dissatisfaction and suspicion of the relationship. Furthermore, lacking research has been done on the complex connections between affirmation, the uncertainty of commitment, and different forms of infidelity, including emotional and sexual. Future research could examine at these relationships in a variety of demographics and explore the ways that different degrees of commitment uncertainty and affirmation interact to affect infidelity. Reducing these gaps can help develop more effective interventions to strengthen marital bonds and reduce relationship risk.

Gender as a Covariate Variable

Gender was a significant factor influencing relational behaviours and attitudes that have often been studied. Gender was a crucial covariate variable in this study as it often affects infidelity and commitment uncertainty. First, significant gender differences in attitudes and motivation toward infidelity have been well-documented. For example, evolutionary theories suggest that men's infidelity behaviour is to maximise the number of offspring and satisfy their need for sexual diversity, while women aim to seek practical support and adaptive benefits for raising offspring. Additionally, women faced greater disadvantages from infidelity compared to men due to men's privileged status in specific cultural norms (Wróblewska-Skrzek, 2021). Hence, females generally held more negative attitudes toward infidelity, which correlates with fewer extradyadic affairs (Silva et al., 2017). Arantes et al. (2020) further found that males reported higher levels of extradyadic behaviours than women, with stronger sexual desire, a greater focus on physical attractiveness, and a perception of lower relationship quality.

In terms of partner affirmation, women often experienced emotions more intensively and frequently than men (Kashdan et al., 2009). Women tend to have greater emotional needs within relationships, and their perception of partner support positively influences both their own and their partner's relationship satisfaction (Laslo-Roth & George-Levi, 2022; Mostova et al., 2022). These findings suggested that women may experience higher levels of partner affirmation, which could reduce the likelihood of infidelity. In contrast, Walker (2020) found that men are more likely to seek validation and emotional labour from women to reaffirm their masculinity, which may lead to infidelity if their needs are not met by their partner. On the other hand, research by Gadassi et al. (2016), Labonté et al. (2022), and Smallen et al. (2022) identified no gender differences in how partner support influences relationship satisfaction and, subsequently, infidelity behaviour, revealing some variability in the influence of partner support across genders.

When examining the influence of gender on commitment uncertainty, Lange et al. (2023) revealed that males exhibit greater commitment ambivalence than females, suggesting men's fear of commitment can lead to an increase in infidelity risk. Meanwhile, only highly committed men will maintain commitment and devalue attractive alternatives, while women do so even at a moderate level of commitment (Lydon et al., 1999), indicating a generally lower risk of infidelity for women. Starratt et al. (2017) further indicated that males' infidelity is influenced by their perception of partners' value, with committed men attracted to higher-value alternatives offering sexual access. Conversely, women with a strong desire for upward social mobility reported greater infidelity intentions, suggesting that social ambitions affected their commitment and infidelity behaviours. Notably, Lammers et al. (2011) presented a contrasting view, which suggests there were no significant gender differences in relationship commitment.

In brief, it is essential to control gender as a covariate variable in this study to accurately assess the relationship between infidelity, partner affirmation and commitment uncertainty. This ensures that any observed effects are not attributable to gender-related differences, which could overestimate or underestimate the prediction of partner affirmation and commitment uncertainty on infidelity. By controlling gender, this study can-better understand the underlying dynamics.

Theoretical Framework

Investment Model (Rusbult, 1980)

Rusbult (1980) introduced the Investment Model, a robust framework for predicting commitment and satisfaction within romantic relationships. Rusbult conceptualised commitment as individuals' psychological attachment to their partner, influencing their inclination to remain in the relationship over time. According to the model, commitment is shaped by three primary factors: relationship satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment size. An individual's higher investment size, greater relationship satisfaction and decreases in alternative value led to increased commitment to an ongoing relationship (Le & Agnew, 2003).

The Investment Model can theoretically fit into this study by explaining the relationship between infidelity, partner affirmation and commitment uncertainty. Drigotas et al. (1999) and Coy (2013) applied the Investment Model in predicting physical and emotional infidelity, identifying that commitment status is associated with the likelihood of infidelity in romantic relationships. Additionally, Juhari and Arif (2016) demonstrated that strong marital commitment can lead to positive marriage outcomes under the Investment Model. These findings suggest that when individuals perceive low relationship satisfaction and investment, along with higher alternative value, they are more prone to infidelity.

Moreover, the Investment Model accounts for partner affirmation as it affects the model's core components. Gordon and Chen (2010) found that partner affirmation, especially affirmation related to intrinsic qualities, enhances relationship satisfaction by fostering positive perceptions and responses. Segal and Fraley (2016) also identified that people who perceive their partner as responsive are more satisfied, invested, and perceive lower-quality alternatives. Partner behavioural-affirmation is also considered one of the partners' investments, and evidence suggests that partners' investment brings gratefulness, and people

will be motivated to commit to the relationships (Belu, 2021; Joel et al., 2013). This implies that perceived affirmation and investment from partners may deter infidelity by promoting commitment.

Furthermore, the interrelation of the three components within the Investment Model suggests that these factors can interact and compensate for each other to sustain commitment. Relationship commitment may persist despite lower satisfaction levels due to high investments and a lack of attractive alternatives. Conversely, even a satisfying relationship may end if an appealing alternative exists, and the investment levels are low (Rusbult, 1980; Rusbult, 1983). This dynamic framework identifies commitment uncertainty as a mediator between partner affirmation and infidelity. For instance, low partner affirmation (intrinsic investment) can heighten commitment uncertainty (Chapman, 2024; Sawicki & Agnew, 2021). Similarly, commitment uncertainty may increase when individuals perceive better alternatives or experience reduced relationship satisfaction, potentially leading to infidelity (Quirk et al., 2016; Ritchie et al., 2021; Rokach & Chan, 2023). By viewing commitment uncertainty as a mediating factor, this model shows how investments, satisfaction, and alternatives influence infidelity behaviours.

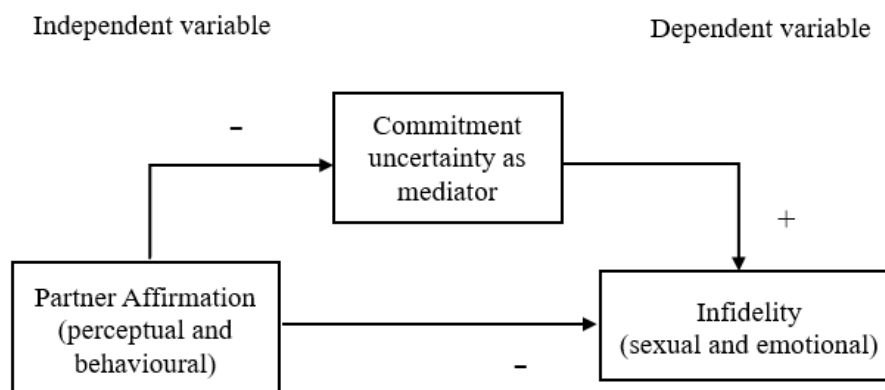
Conceptual Framework

This study applied the Investment Model as the foundation to understand the role of partner affirmation and commitment uncertainty in predicting both sexual and emotional infidelity in marital relationships. This framework consisted of outcome variables (i.e., sexual and emotional infidelity), factors (i.e., partner perceptual and behavioural affirmation) and a mediator (i.e., commitment uncertainty). As shown in Figure 2.1, both partner perceptual and behavioural affirmation negatively predicted both sexual and emotional infidelity. Furthermore, commitment uncertainty was hypothesised to mediate the relationship between partner affirmation and infidelity. Specifically, both partner perceptual and behavioural

affirmation negatively predict commitment uncertainty, which in turn may decrease the likelihood of both sexual and emotional infidelity.

Figure 2.1

Conceptual Framework of the Present Study



Chapter 3

Methodology

Research Design

Firstly, this study was conducted using a quantitative approach. Statistical analysis and numerical data collection were employed to assess the direction and magnitude of correlations among the variables (partner affirmation, commitment uncertainty, and infidelity). Standardised scales were used to ensure consistent measurement among participants. The participants responded to structured questions related to the study variables. Secondly, a cross-sectional design was utilised. A cross-sectional design allows data to be collected from different individuals at the same point in time (Wang & Cheng, 2020) and provides the opportunity to observe the variables (partner affirmation, commitment uncertainty, and infidelity) without influencing them. While it did not allow for determining causality, this design was useful for identifying correlations, such as whether partner affirmation affected commitment uncertainty and how this, in turn, related to sexual and emotional infidelity. Furthermore, compared to a longitudinal design, which would have required more time and resources, the cross-sectional approach was more economical and efficient. Participants' information was gathered all at once to evaluate the status of their relationships at that time. The survey was completed by individuals who were married. The dynamics of the participants' relationships (partner affirmation, commitment uncertainty, and infidelity) as they occurred during the survey period were captured by this method. For the correlational design, the focus was on identifying associations between partner affirmation and the two forms of infidelity (sexual and emotional), as well as the potential mediating role of commitment uncertainty. Additionally, an online survey method was used to collect the data. Online surveys offered several advantages, such as the ability to reach a wide and diverse group of participants and easy access to a geographically dispersed sample (Regmi et

al., 2016). They also provided a degree of comfort and anonymity that encouraged respondents to be more truthful and thoughtful in their responses—especially when addressing sensitive topics like infidelity and marital dynamics.

Population, Sample, Sample Size, Sampling Method

Inclusion Criteria

This study's target populations were individuals who are married. Individuals must fulfil the qualifying conditions to take part in the study. For a relationship to have sufficient background to assess long-term issues like commitment uncertainty and infidelity, participants must be legally married. In addition, participants must be fluent in English to ensure accurate understanding and completion of questions. As this study focused on the Malaysian context, participants must be Malaysian citizens. There was no exclusion criterion in this study. Finally, the consent form was provided to the participants to ensure confidentiality and ethical conduct.

Sample Size

To examine the relationships among infidelity, commitment uncertainty, and partner affirmation, the sample size was calculated using Monte Carlo power analysis for the fundamental mediation model (Schoemann et al., 2017). Literature was reviewed to estimate the correlation coefficient (r) between variables for this study. To achieve adequate statistical power, a target power of 0.8 was selected (Serdar, et al., 2020). The Monte Carlo analysis included 10,000 simulations to provide a stable estimate of power (Burmester & Anderson, 1994). Based on the initial power analysis, a sample size of 122 was recommended. To account for potential exclusions and missing data, the sample size was increased by 20%. Therefore, this study aimed to collect data from 147 respondents. In total, 225 responses were collected, of which 79 responses were excluded during data cleaning. Thus, the actual sample size is 146 (response rate = 64.9%).

Sampling Method

Purposive sampling, a non-probability approach, has been used in this study to find individuals who fit the criteria and requirements of this study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where researchers deliberately select participants according to their expertise, relevance, or understanding of the research question. It is occasionally called selective or judgmental sampling (Hassan, 2024). Since this study focused on married individuals with specific relationship dynamics, specifically partner affirmation, commitment uncertainty and infidelity, it was suitable to utilise purposeful sampling to select a specific group that supported the goals of this study. In addition, an unrestricted, self-selected online survey method was utilised to broaden participation. This method allowed participants to voluntarily engage in this study by responding to an open call for participation (Campbell et al., 2020). The self-selection method ensured that the participants who met the study criteria and were able to share their experiences could easily participate and contribute to the study. Combining both purposive sampling and the self-selected online survey method allowed this study to obtain a targeted but diverse group of participants, thereby increasing the relevance and richness of the data collected.

Research Procedure

Data Collection

Data was gathered using an online survey hosted on a reputable platform, which was Qualtrics, to guarantee data security, usability, and accessibility. Alongside the three measurement instruments, demographic data such as age, gender, nationality, and relationship status were collected. A digital poster was produced to effectively publicise the study and recruit participants by clearly outlining the study objectives, eligibility requirements, and guarantees of anonymity. The poster specified that participants had to be married and emphasised the confidentiality of their responses. In addition, a QR code pointing to the

survey was included on the poster. Participants were directed to the survey by scanning the QR code from the posters. The survey link and the digital posters were shared on Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and other social media sites. Data was collected online to ensure efficient real-time monitoring, easy storage, and flexibility for participants to complete the survey at their convenience, thus increasing the accessibility of the study and the diversity of participants. Participant recruitment and data collection were conducted in five months, from March to July 2025.

To encourage participation and ensure survey completion, selected participants who completed the survey were offered financial incentives as a token of appreciation. The incentive structure involved a total of 50 winners, each receiving RM10. In the survey form, participants' telephone numbers were collected for the purpose of transferring financial incentives via TnG e-Wallet. The selection of winners was conducted through the Wheel of Names, where participants' phone numbers were entered for the lucky draw. Their contact information was used solely for the purposes of this lucky draw and remained confidential. All incentives were distributed upon the completion of data collection at the end of July 2025.

Ethical Clearance

Each and every participant gave their informed consent after being fully informed about the study's objectives, methods, possible risks, and rewards. Participants received assurances that their involvement in the study was entirely voluntary and that they could discontinue at any point without incurring any fees. Anonymity and confidentiality measures were taken for the study, including secure data storage and pseudonyms where necessary. A comprehensive risk-benefit analysis was conducted to minimise potential risks, such as psychological discomfort or privacy breaches, and participants were informed of what support resources were available to them if needed. The direct and indirect benefits of the study were clearly communicated to ensure equitable distribution across all groups. Data

protection protocols were strictly adhered to, and information was stored securely, retained only for the period approved by the ethics committee and then disposed of securely. The researchers were transparent about the purpose of the study and ensured adherence to ethical guidelines such as the Code of Ethics of the American Psychological Association. The ethical clearance was obtained from the UTAR Scientific and Ethical Review Committee before data collection, with approval granted under reference number U/SERC/78-415/2024.

Pilot Study

To improve the effectiveness and quality of the main study, a pilot study was performed on a smaller scale than the main study. The purpose of the pilot study was to perform all procedures of the main study and validate its feasibility (In, 2017). Additionally, this prevented the researchers from carrying out a large-scale study without having the necessary expertise regarding the suggested approach (Lowe, 2019). The pilot study involved a sample of 30 respondents, who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria (such as being married individuals). The recruitment process was conducted in person to ensure that the respondents in the pilot study were not the same as those in the main study. The same survey form used in the main study was administered to pilot respondents. A total of 30 responses was collected. After collecting the data, a reliability test using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 was conducted to determine the internal consistency of each measurement used. The findings revealed that all measurements used demonstrated acceptable reliability, with all Cronbach's alphas being more than .6 (Ekolu & Quainoo, 2019). Thus, this indicated that all the instruments were reliable and were able to proceed with the actual study.

Measurements

Sexual and Emotional Infidelity Scale (SEI)

Sexual and emotional infidelity were measured using the Sexual and Emotional Infidelity Scale (Pinto & Arantes, 2017). This scale was developed to measure both sexual

and emotional infidelity within a romantic relationship. It consisted of 14 items and was divided evenly into two subscales. Seven items measured sexual infidelity (e.g., “I kiss people (mouth, neck, etc.) other than my partner”), and seven items measured emotional infidelity (e.g., “I have romantic feelings for people other than my partner”). All items were randomly presented. Each item was rated on a 7-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 (*it never happens to me*) to 7 (*it happens to me often*). Overall, this scale demonstrated high internal reliability with a Cronbach’s alpha of .93 and strong construct validity, with two distinct factors for sexual and emotional infidelity explaining 69.39% of the variance. In this study, the mean score was calculated for each subscale. A higher mean score reflected greater self-reported infidelity behaviour in each category.

Partner Affirmation Scale (PAS)

Partner affirmation was measured using the Partner Affirmation Scale (Drigotas et al., 1999). This scale was developed to assess the degree to which a partner's perceptions and behaviours aligned with the individual’s ideal self. The scale consisted of 6 items, with three items assessing partners’ perceptual affirmation (e.g., “My partner sees me as the person I ideally would like to be”) and three items assessing partners’ behavioural affirmation (e.g., “My partner treats me in a way that is close to the person I would ideally like to be”). All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 (*do not agree at all*) to 5 (*agree completely*) (Bühler et al., 2019). The perceptual affirmation subscale showed Cronbach's alpha values of .86, .78, and .84, while the behavioural affirmation subscale demonstrated even higher reliability with alphas of .86, .93, and .95, indicating strong internal consistency for both subscales. The validity of the scale was supported by significant associations between self-movement toward the ideal self and the couple’s well-being. This study used both subscales to assess partner affirmation across different dimensions. The perceptual affirmation subscale measured how closely a partner's perception of an individual

aligned with the individual's ideal self, while the behavioural affirmation subscale measured how well a partner's actions toward the individual reflected their ideal self. In this study, the mean score was calculated for both subscales, with a higher mean score indicating greater partner affirmation in each dimension.

Commitment Uncertainty Short Scale (CUSS)

Commitment uncertainty was measured using the Commitment Uncertainty Short Scale (Stanley & Rhoades, 2011), which was designed to assess the degree of commitment uncertainty an individual experienced in a romantic relationship. This measure consists of two subscales: personal uncertainty and perceived partner uncertainty in the commitment. Only the personal uncertainty in commitment subscale was administered in this study. This subscale consisted of 4 items (e.g., "My commitment to this relationship goes up and down a lot"). Each item was rated on a 7-point scale, with 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The Cronbach's alpha of this scale is .82, which shows a high internal reliability (Quirk et al., 2016). The mean score was calculated for the personal uncertainty subscale, with higher mean scores indicating greater commitment uncertainty within romantic relationships.

Data Analysis Plan and Processing

This study aimed to examine the prediction of partner affirmation on infidelity, with commitment uncertainty acting as a mediator. The independent variable was partner affirmation, while infidelity served as the dependent variable. Commitment uncertainty is hypothesised as a mediating variable, which explains the indirect effect of partner affirmation on infidelity. All constructs were measured by multi-item Likert-type scales and point scale adapted from established instruments.

This study employed IBM-SPSS version 26 to examine the study's variables and demographic descriptive statistics. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to analyse inferential statistics. SEM was applied for the following reasons: (1) SEM considers the

measurement and structural errors, which can provide a more robust result estimation than multiple linear regression. In addition, (2) SEM provides the result for each connection between variables and simultaneously assesses complex relationships (i.e., direct and indirect).

The mediation model was tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS version 4. PLS-SEM is selected for this study for several reasons: (1) the study includes the mediator, which is suitable to analyse the complexity of the indirect relationship between variables, (2) the method is particularly good in optimising predictive power and explaining variance in the constructs, and (3) the lack of normality. Thus, SmartPLS is beneficial in supporting the mediation analysis and is suitable for a smaller sample size.

The data analysis consisted of two parts. First, the analysis process involved assessing the measurement model. Henseler et al. (2015) tested the following for measurement model assessment, which include indicator loading, composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha reliability, convergent validity using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity using the Fornell-Lacker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio.

Secondly, the structural model was used to test the hypotheses of the study. Collinearity using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Coefficient of determination (R^2) of the endogenous constructs was tested. The R^2 was reported to determine the predictive relevance of the model. Bootstrapping (10,000 subsamples) will be used to evaluate the importance of path coefficients, including the mediation effect of commitment uncertainty. Finally, indirect effects (mediation analyses) were analysed by bootstrapping, based on Zhao et al.'s (2010) procedure of comparing direct and indirect effects.

Chapter 4

Results and Analysis

Overview

The objective of this chapter is to present the results of this study. This chapter includes the presentation of data screening and preparation, model refinement, descriptive statistics (i.e., demographic information, descriptive statistics of each variable), and measurement model analysis. This chapter also presents the results for hypothesis testing, specifically on prediction and mediation analysis.

Data Screening and Preparation

A series of data screenings and data management have been conducted to prepare the dataset for subsequent analyses. Firstly, data checking has been conducted to identify the missing data. The listwise deletion method has been employed for the missing data due to a smaller missingness; at the same time, if any data is missing, the entire response will be deleted. In addition, cases were excluded if respondents (a) provided incompatible demographic information, (b) did not meet the study's inclusion criteria, (c) exhibited straight-lining behaviour (e.g., selecting the same option for all items in a section), or (d) had extreme scores suggestive of careless or non-serious responding.

As a result, a total of 79 respondents has been removed. As biased or untrustworthy responses might contribute to bias and lower the accuracy of parameter estimates, these exclusions were required to ensure the validity of the results. After data cleaning, a final sample of 146 valid responses was retained for further analysis.

Next, the computation with the mean score for each measure was calculated. Descriptive statistics were performed to determine the distribution of the scores for demographic characteristics and each scale by using SPSS. Indicators such as mean, standard

deviation, minimum, maximum and percentage were presented based on the level of measurement of the item or scale.

For hypothesis testing, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed (Hair, 2013). The structural model was assessed for validity and reliability, while the measurement model was examined using Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) to detect multicollinearity, as well as R^2 values to evaluate explained variance. All p -values were estimated using bootstrapping with 10,000 resamples to ensure robust significance testing.

Model Refinement

Partner Affirmation

Initially, partner affirmation was conceptualised and measured using multiple items that were grouped into two subdimensions: partners' perceptual affirmation and partners' behavioural affirmation. However, during the preliminary evaluation of the measurement model in SmartPLS, it was observed that these two subdimensions exhibited **high collinearity**, with inter-construct correlations exceeding recommended thresholds (e.g., $r > 0.70$) and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values which higher than 10, indicating multicollinearity (Dormann et al., 2012; Kim, 2019).

This high degree of overlap suggested that the two subdimensions were not empirically distinct in the sample. The significant degree of overlap indicated that there was no empirical difference between the two subdimensions in the sample. Consequently, the model is similar, and its discriminant validity has weakened. Due to this high level of collinearity, the two subdimensions were combined into a single higher-order construct of partner affirmation. The two original constructs were merged and combined to reflect a general partner affirmation.

In the revised structural model, the unified partner affirmation construct demonstrated strong and statistically significant path coefficients with other key variables, as well as improved model fit indices compared to the two-factor solution. These findings indicate that the single-factor model provides a more parsimonious and accurate representation of participants' perceptions of partner affirmation, while resolving the issue of high collinearity and enhancing the overall validity of the model.

Sexual and Emotional Infidelity

Initially, infidelity was measured using 14 items, with sexual infidelity and emotional infidelity conceptualised as two distinct latent constructs. However, during the preliminary evaluation of the measurement model in SmartPLS, results indicated that the two subdimensions exhibited a high degree of collinearity, suggesting substantial conceptual and empirical overlap. According to Hair et al. (2021), when two constructs are highly correlated and theoretically similar, it is advisable to combine them into a single construct to reduce redundancy, enhance discriminant validity, and improve model parsimony.

Following this recommendation, the items from both subdimensions were merged into a single infidelity construct, and the measurement model was re-estimated. During this process, indicator collinearity was evaluated using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). Several items were found to have VIF values exceeding the threshold of 10, which Hair et al. (2021) identify as indicative of severe multicollinearity. High multicollinearity among indicators is problematic in PLS-SEM because it inflates the variance of the estimated path coefficients, increases the standard errors of the study, and reduces the precision of the estimates. In extreme cases, it can also cause instability in the algorithm, leading to unreliable results. To address this issue and enhance the robustness of the construct measurement, items with excessively high VIF values were systematically removed. The final construct thus

retained only indicators that met the recommended collinearity criteria, ensuring conceptual clarity, statistical reliability, and methodological soundness in the measurement model.

Descriptive Statistics

Demographic Characteristics

A total of 146 valid responses was maintained for data analysis after data screening. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were summarised in Table 4.1.1

In terms of gender, the sample consisted of 45 males (30.8%) and 101 females (69.2%). With a mean age of 36.47 years ($SD = 10.07$) and a median age of 34 years, the respondents' ages varied from 20 to 75 years.

Regarding ethnicity, most participants identified as Chinese ($n = 73$, 50.0%). In terms of religion, most respondents were Muslims ($n = 65$, 44.5%).

For marital characteristics, respondents reported varying lengths of marriage. A total of 127 respondents (86.9%) has been married for more than 20 months. The mean length of marriage was 117.84 months ($SD = 111.58$), with a median of 80 months, reflecting a sample of both newly married and longer-term couples (see Table 4.1.1).

Main Variables Characteristics

Table 4.1.2 shows the main variables' characteristics of the study. Partner affirmation demonstrated a relatively high score ($M = 3.86$, $SD = .75$), which is well above the scale midpoint (3.00). In contrast, commitment uncertainty ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.81$) and infidelity ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 1.22$), which have shown a slightly lower from the midpoint, indicating moderate low and low respectively (see Table 4.1.2).

Table 4.1.1*Demographic Information (n=146)*

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	Median	Max	Min
Gender	Male	45	30.8	10.07	36.47	34.00	78	20
	Female	101	69.2					
Age	20-30	48	32.9					
	31-40	60	41.1					
	41-50	20	13.7					
	51-60	17	11.6					
	61-70	2	1.4					
	71-80	1	0.7					
Ethnicity	Malay	60	41.1	111.58	117.84	80.00	668	3
	Chinese	73	50.0					
	Indian	6	4.1					
	Others	7	4.8					
Religion	Muslim	65	44.5					
	Buddhist	53	36.3					
	Christian	22	15.1					
	Hindu	3	2.1					
	Others	3	2.1					
Length of marriage (month)	< 10	3	2.1					
	11-20	13	8.9					
	> 20	127	86.9					

Note. *n* = frequency, % = percentage, *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; Min = minimum; Max = maximum

Table 4.1.2*Descriptive Statistics for Main Variables (n=146)*

	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	Median	Max	Min
Infidelity	1.22	1.85	1.18	2.22	1.00
Partner Affirmation	.75	3.86	4.00	2.00	1.00
Commitment Uncertainty	1.81	3.53	3.67	7.00	1.00

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; Min = minimum; Max = maximum

Measurement Model Analysis

The PLS-SEM technique was then used to analyse the data in order to verify the validity and reliability of the measurement models' reflecting constructs before proceeding on to the structural model analysis. The reflective measurement model was assessed using SmartPLS 4 following the guidelines of Hair et al. (2013). To ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs, the analysis focused on indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. In addition, the significance of indicator loadings was tested using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS 4 with 10,000 subsamples.

Normality Test

Skewness and Kurtosis were used to examine the normality of the data. George & Mallery (2010) stated that the acceptable skewness value is ± 2 , and as suggested by West, Finch, & Curran (1995), the acceptable kurtosis is ± 7 when using SEM. Therefore, the skewness and kurtosis of each variable were within the acceptable range (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

Normality Tests of Each Variable (n = 146)

	Skewness	Kurtosis
Infidelity	1.35	.50
Partner Affirmation	-1.04	2.37
Commitment Uncertainty	.14	-.98

Reliability

As suggested by Hair et al. (2021), Cronbach's Alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR) were used to evaluate the internal consistency reliability for each construct. Compared to Cronbach's Alpha, which assumes equal indicator loadings and may understate reliability in PLS-SEM, CR takes the actual indicator loadings into consideration, making it a more accurate measure of construct reliability. To give a thorough evaluation, both values were

reported.

All constructions had Cronbach's Alpha values between .9 to 1.0, which was higher than the suggested cutoff of .70 and showed that each construct's pieces were internally consistent. The constructions' reliability was examined using Composite Reliability (CR). Every CR was greater than the suggested value of .70 (Hair et al., 2021). Therefore, all the measurements were reliable.

Cronbach's Alpha is the traditional measure of internal consistency, assuming equal indicator loadings, and is generally considered a conservative estimate of reliability. Composite reliability (ρ_a) introduced by Dijkstra and Henseler (2015), provides a balanced reliability estimate that typically falls between Cronbach's Alpha and Composite reliability (ρ_c) and is regarded as the most accurate coefficient for PLS-SEM applications. In this study, only Composite reliability (ρ_a) will be utilised, which can bring a good internal consistency and no evidence of redundant items. Table 4.3 shows that all values fall within the recommended range.

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

As part of the measurement model, there are several items that have been removed due to higher VIF values exceeding the critical threshold of 10 (SEI 9, SEI 13 and SEI 14). There are also several items that have been removed (PAS 6 and CUSS 2) due to the low and non-significant outer loading, as revealed by the SEM algorithm procedure. An indicator may not accurately measure the construct if its loading in the bootstrapping process is not statistically significant ($p > .05$). To increase the measurement and result validity, the value which is not significant will be removed.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

According to Hair et al. (2021), convergent validity was evaluated using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the indicators' outer loadings. An AVE value of .50 or higher

indicates that the construct explains at least 50% of the variance of its items, which is considered acceptable. Each construct in the model exceeded the suggested threshold, with AVE values ranging from .7 to 1.000. Additionally, the outer loadings for all retained indicators were greater than .70 and statistically significant ($p < .05$) based on 10,000-sample bootstrapping in SmartPLS 4 (see Table 4.3).

The Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations and the Fornell–Larcker criteria were used to assess discriminant validity. According to the Fornell-Lacker criteria, each construct shared more variance with its own items than with items of other constructs since the square root of the AVE for each construct was higher than its correlations with other constructs (see Table 4.4). On the other hand, most of the HTMT values between the range from **.03 to .35**, which are below the conservative threshold of .85 (Roemer et al., 2021), except the value from the total length of marriage, which has exceeded the threshold of .85 with the value of .91. This shows that age and length of marriage are highly correlated and may not be empirically distinct. Statistical significance was evaluated using 10,000-sample bootstrapping, and the 95% confidence interval (CI) bias-corrected confidence intervals for all HTMT values did not include 1.00, further confirming discriminant validity (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.3*Loadings, Reliability and Validity (n=146)*

	Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	AVE
Age	1.00			
CUSS_1	.89	.90	.93	.83
CUSS_3	.91			
CUSS_4	.93			
Gender	1.00			
PAS_1	.87	.89	.90	.70
PAS_2	.85			
PAS_3	.79			
PAS_4	.84			
PAS_5	.84	.96	.97	.73
SEI_1	.80			
SEI_2	.79			
SEI_3	.87			
SEI_4	.85			
SEI_5	.90			
SEI_6	.88			
SEI_7	.91			
SEI_8	.80			
SEI_10	.89			
SEI_11	.88			
SEI_12	.87			
TLOM	1.00			

Note. CUSS = commitment uncertainty; PAS = partner affirmation; SEI = infidelity; TLOM = total length of marriage

*One item has been removed from CUSS and PAS, respectively, due to not being significant; three items have been removed from SEI due to exceeding the VIF.

Table 4.4*Fornell-Larcker Criterion (n=146)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age	1.00					
2. CUSS	-.28	.91				
3. Gender	.08	.01	1.00			
4. PAS	-.06	-.15	.04	.84		
5. SEI	-.06	.33	.07	-.29	.86	
6. TLOM	.91	-.24	.06	-.07	-.04	1.00

Note. CUSS = commitment uncertainty; PAS = partner affirmation; SEI = infidelity; TLOM = total length of marriage

*Value in Bold represents the Square-root of AVE.

Table 4.5*HTMT Ratio (n = 146)*

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Age					
2. CUSS	.29				
3. Gender	.08	.08			
4. PAS	.07	.16	.09		
5. SEI	.06	.35	.07	.31	
6. TLOM	.91	.25	.06	.08	.04

Note. CUSS = commitment uncertainty; PAS = partner affirmation; SEI = infidelity; TLOM = total length of marriage

Structural Model Analysis

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to assess the model's explanatory power for the endogenous constructs. The R^2 value for infidelity was .17, demonstrating that partner affirmation and commitment doubt account for around 17% of the variance in infidelity. The R^2 value for commitment uncertainty was .11, reflecting weak explanatory power. According to Chin (1998), these values indicate weak predictive accuracy for the structural model.

Hypothesis Testing

This section presents the hypothesis testing, which includes: (1) perceived partner affirmation negatively predicts infidelity among married individuals; (2) commitment uncertainty mediates the relationship between perceived partner affirmation and infidelity among married individuals. Hypothesis testing was conducted using 10,000-sample bootstrapping in SmartPLS. Table 4.6 and Figure 4.1 present the results of the mediation analyses, including the direct and indirect effects of partner affirmation and commitment uncertainty on infidelity.

Association between Partner Affirmation and Infidelity

H₁: Perceived partner affirmation negatively predicts infidelity among married individuals in Malaysia.

The results showed that partner affirmation significantly and negatively predicted infidelity ($\beta = -.25$, $t = 2.73$, $p = .003$), with the 95% bias-corrected confidence interval $[-.43, -.07]$ and contributed a small effect ($f^2 = .07$). This indicated that higher levels of partner affirmation are associated with lower levels of infidelity. Thus, H₁ is supported.

Mediating Role of Commitment Uncertainty

H₂: Commitment uncertainty mediates the relationship between perceived partner affirmation and infidelity among married individuals in Malaysia.

The result shows the association of partner affirmation to commitment uncertainty was negative and significant ($\beta = -.17, t = 1.80, p = .036$) with a small effect size ($f^2 = .03$), and the association of commitment uncertainty to infidelity was positive and significant ($\beta = .29, t = .09, p = .036$) with a small effect size ($f^2 = .09$). The mediation analysis revealed that commitment uncertainty significantly mediated the relationship between partner affirmation and infidelity. The indirect effect was significant ($\beta = -.05, t = 1.52, p = .065$), with the 95% bias-corrected confidence interval $[-.11, -.01]$. This indicates that lower levels of partner affirmation increased commitment uncertainty, which in turn heightened the likelihood of infidelity. Thus, the mediation hypothesis is supported.

Table 4.6

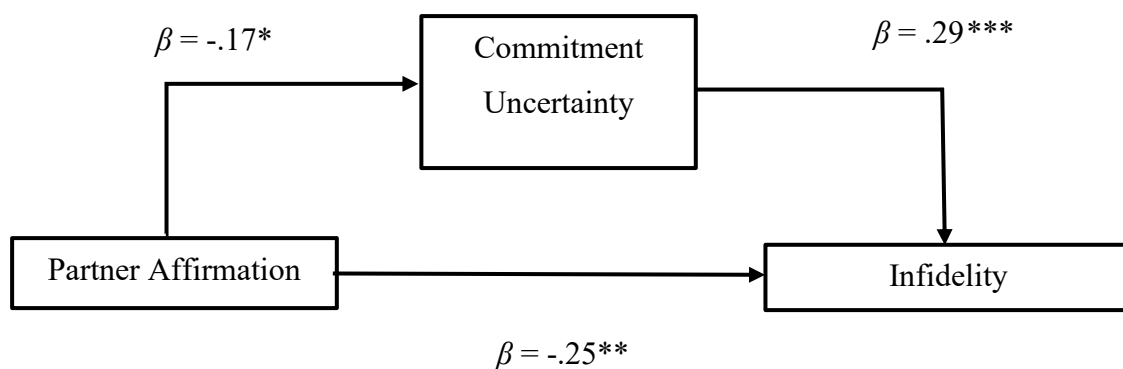
Direct and Indirect Effects of Partner Affirmation and Commitment Uncertainty on Infidelity, Controlling for Covariates (n=146)

Effect	Prediction	β	t	p	LCI	UCI
Direct	Age \rightarrow CUSS	-.39	2.16	.015	-.73	-.13
	Age \rightarrow SEI	-.04	.20	.420	-.43	.27
	CUSS \rightarrow SEI	.29	3.64	<.001	.15	.41
	Gender \rightarrow CUSS	.04	.54	.294	-.09	.17
	Gender \rightarrow SEI	.07	.93	.177	-.06	.21
	PAS \rightarrow CUSS	-.17	1.80	.036	-.33	-.02
	PAS \rightarrow SEI	-.25	2.73	.003	-.41	-.10
	TLOM \rightarrow CUSS	.11	.57	.284	-.17	.44
	TLOM \rightarrow SEI	.05	.25	.403	-.24	.40
	Age \rightarrow SEI	-.11	1.81	.040	-.23	-.03
Total Indirect	Gender \rightarrow SEI	.01	.53	.300	-.03	.05
	PAS \rightarrow SEI	-.05	1.52	.070	-.11	-.01
	TLOM \rightarrow SEI	.03	.55	.290	-.05	.13
Indirect	Age \rightarrow CUSS \rightarrow SEI	-.11	1.81	.035	-.23	-.03
	Gender \rightarrow CUSS \rightarrow SEI	.01	.53	.300	.03	.05
	PAS \rightarrow CUSS \rightarrow SEI	-.05	1.52	.065	-.11	-.01
	TLOM \rightarrow CUSS \rightarrow SEI	.03	.55	.291	-.05	.13

CUSS = commitment uncertainty; PAS = partner affirmation; SEI = infidelity; TLOM = total length of marriage; LCI = lower confidence interval; UCI = upper confidence interval; β = standardised coefficient; bootstrap 10,000 resamples

Figure 4.1

Direct and Indirect Effects of Partner Affirmation and Commitment Uncertainty on Infidelity



Note. The figure is extracted from the PLS-SEM structural model. The values shown are path coefficients. β = standardised coefficient. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between partner affirmation, commitment uncertainty and infidelity among married individuals in Malaysia. Findings revealed that Hypothesis 1: perceived partner affirmation negatively predicts infidelity among married individuals, and Hypothesis 2: commitment uncertainty mediates the relationship between perceived partner affirmation and infidelity among married individuals were both supported. These results provide empirical evidence on how partner affirmation and commitment uncertainty may predict marital infidelity within the Malaysian marital context.

The Protective Role of Partner Affirmation Against Infidelity in Marriage

The results supported the first hypothesis, where partner affirmation significantly predicted infidelity among married individuals in Malaysia in a negative direction. Specifically, married individuals who reported high levels of affirmation had lower levels of infidelity. Partner affirmation, as defined by Drigotas et al. (1999), refers to the extent to which one's partner perceives and treats them in ways consistent with their ideal self. To the researchers' knowledge, this is the first study to directly examine the relationship between partner affirmation and infidelity, and the findings demonstrated the predictive effect of partner affirmation toward infidelity. Prior research has shown that partner affirmation strengthens relationship satisfaction, stability and promotes mutual growth (Chawaleemaporn & Isaranon, 2023; Rusbult et al., 2009). These benefits reduce the likelihood of marital breakdown, which supports the present finding that partner affirmation predicts lower infidelity.

There are two possible explanations for this significant result. First, partner affirmation may reduce the motivation to seek affirmation from other intimate relationships. By providing understanding, caring and supportive actions, partner affirmation offers

gratifying emotional experiences that reduce feelings of neglect, while enhancing relationship and sexual satisfaction (Drigotas et al., 1999; Mostova et al., 2022; Rokach & Chan, 2023).

When married individuals feel valued and emotionally supported, they may have less need to seek fulfilment outside the relationship. This is supported by the Michelangelo phenomenon, which suggests that partners who facilitate individuals' movement toward their ideal self can foster relational stability, whereas the absence of such affirmation may inadvertently drive individuals toward seeking self-fulfilment elsewhere (Drigotas et al., 1999; Rusbult et al., 2009). As partner affirmation fosters a sense of being accepted and supported as one's ideal self, fulfilling this key individual need and marital expectation may help to explain why higher partner affirmation is associated with lower levels of infidelity among Malaysian married individuals.

Second, the present findings can be explained by the Investment Model, which includes three components: satisfaction, investment size and perceived quality of alternatives (Rusbult, 1980). Partner affirmation promotes opportunities for moving closer to one's ideal self through validation and encouragement, which enhances relationship satisfaction (Bühler et al., 2019; Mostova et al., 2022). Meanwhile, affirmation may be perceived as an investment that enhances satisfaction, strengthens one's own investment, and reduces the perceived attractiveness of alternatives, in line with the investment model (Coy et al., 2019). This reflects the influence of partner affirmation on the model's components, which contributes to higher commitment levels, thereby lowering the likelihood of engaging in infidelity (Ogwuche et al., 2024; Rokach & Chan, 2023). Therefore, partner affirmation functions as a protective factor against infidelity among Malaysian married individuals that could be strengthened by relationship commitment.

Partner Affirmation as a Predictor of Commitment Uncertainty

The results indicated that partner affirmation significantly negative predicted commitment uncertainty. Specifically, individuals who received greater partner affirmation reported lower levels of commitment uncertainty in their marriage. This finding is aligned with previous studies, showing that partner affirmation reduces commitment ambiguity by promoting trust, emotional engagement and confidence (Arriaga et al., 2018; Kadian, 2023; Sawicki & Agnew, 2021). This indicates that married individuals are more willing to continue their commitment when partners actively validate and support each other's ideal selves. The significant prediction of partner affirmation on commitment uncertainty can be explained by Rogers's self-concept theory and the reciprocal effect.

First, according to Rogers's self-concept theory (1959), self-concept reflects the congruence between the actual self, the ideal self, and perceived evaluations from significant others. Partner affirmation reduces self-discrepancies by allowing individuals to better recognise their movement toward the ideal self, thereby fostering greater stability in their relationship commitment (McIntyre et al., 2018). Second, the reciprocal effect suggests that individuals tend to return benefits received from others (Gouldner, 1960). In this study, married individuals tended to commit more when they perceived higher partner affirmation, which promotes commitment stability. Thus, partner affirmation functions as a predictor that may reduce commitment uncertainty among married individuals in Malaysia. However, this result needs to be interpreted cautiously because the effect size was small.

Commitment Uncertainty as a Predictor of Infidelity

The results indicated that commitment uncertainty significantly predicted infidelity in a positive direction. Specifically, lower levels of commitment uncertainty resulted in a lower likelihood of infidelity. This is consistent with McDaniel et al. (2017), who showed that certainty in stable relationships is significantly linked to lower infidelity-related behaviours

on social networks. Certainty in commitment enhances relationship satisfaction and promotes pro-relational behaviours, thereby reducing the likelihood of infidelity (Lişman & Holman, 2023; Owen et al., 2014). On the other hand, when doubts about the future of the relationship remain unresolved, individuals may become more attentive to alternative partners, either as a potential source of fulfilment or as a strategy for initiating a dissolution (Quirk et al., 2016). This is consistent with the findings of Ritchie et al. (2021), showing that high commitment uncertainty is at-risk for infidelity. Extramarital partners often serve as substitutes for fulfilling sexual and emotional needs when marital satisfaction is not achieved with legal partners (Omarzu et al., 2012), especially during the vulnerable period of commitment uncertainty. Thus, commitment uncertainty serves as a significant risk factor for infidelity among married individuals in Malaysia. However, this finding should be interpreted cautiously, as partner affirmation only represents a modest effect size as a predictor of infidelity.

Commitment Uncertainty as a Significant Mediator

The findings support the second hypothesis, showing that commitment uncertainty significantly mediated the relationship between partner affirmation and infidelity among married individuals in Malaysia. Partner affirmation was negatively linked to commitment uncertainty, and in turn, commitment uncertainty was positively associated with infidelity. This suggests that commitment uncertainty functions as a negative mediator in the relationship between commitment uncertainty and infidelity. Commitment uncertainty indicates the extent to which individuals are willing to maintain their commitment in the relationship (Owen et al., 2014). These results highlight that infidelity may arise not only directly from unmet partner affirmation but also indirectly through doubt about one's desire to continue committing to the relationship.

There are three possible explanations for this significant mediation model. First, the mediation effect of commitment uncertainty can be explained through the Investment Model (Rusbult, 1980), which posits that partner affirmation strengthens commitment by enhancing satisfaction and investments, while lowering the quality of alternatives (Coy et al., 2019; Mostova et al., 2022). Although commitment and uncertainty are not direct opposites, they are closely related (Owen et al., 2014), with uncertainty undermining commitment levels, especially in response to negative relational events (Joel et al., 2021 & Tan & Agnew, 2016). The presence of partner affirmation may strengthen the Investment Model's components, leading to lower commitment uncertainty. For instance, increased relationship satisfaction reduces the fluctuations in the inclination to maintain a romantic relationship (Schoebi et al., 2012). Similarly, less appealing alternatives (quality of alternatives) are associated with lower commitment uncertainty, which in turn reduces the likelihood of infidelity (Quirk et al., 2016; Ritchie et al., 2021). Thus, commitment uncertainty functions as a crucial mediator that links higher partner affirmation to lower infidelity risk among married individuals in Malaysia.

Second, the significant mediating effect of commitment uncertainty may be understood through Interdependence Theory (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). Interdependence Theory proposes that when individuals perceive relational rewards as outweighing costs, they experience greater satisfaction, thereby promoting commitment and closeness (Reeder & Hart, 2019). Partner affirmation may function as a relational reward by supporting movement toward the ideal self, which enhances satisfaction and dependence on the partner. Within such nurturing dynamics, commitment uncertainty is less likely to emerge. Moreover, this theory suggests that in highly interdependent relationships, partners shape each other's dispositions, values and behaviours over time (Rusbult et al., 2005). This means that partner affirmation can have enduring effects on commitment uncertainty by shaping how individuals view their relationship as satisfying (Chawaleemaporn & Isaranon, 2022). While partner affirmation

produces better outcomes than other alternative relationships, and commitment uncertainty remains low, individuals are less likely to engage in infidelity. Therefore, commitment uncertainty mediates the association between partner affirmation and infidelity among married individuals in Malaysia.

Furthermore, the significant mediation model can be explained within the Malaysian cultural context. The Malaysian community often values collectivism and group harmony. Marriage is often guided by religious teachings that emphasise loyalty, sanctity, and lifelong commitment (Leavitt et al., 2024). When partner affirmation is unmet, individuals may refrain from immediately engaging in infidelity due to internalised moral obligations and societal expectations (Lişman & Holman, 2025). Instead, they may suppress their unmet emotional needs, which over time foster commitment uncertainty, along with negative emotional feelings and thoughts about the relationship's future. If this commitment uncertainty remains unresolved, the persistent suppression and gradual dissociation from commitment may eventually lead to infidelity-related behaviours (Langlais et al., 2017; Owen et al., 2014). Therefore, the cultural constraints explain why commitment uncertainty mediates the association between partner affirmation and infidelity among married individuals in Malaysia.

No Significant Effects of Gender, Age, and Length of Marriage

To ensure a statistically accurate effect of partner affirmation on commitment uncertainty and infidelity, this study controlled the possible covariate variables, which are gender, age and length of marriage in the mediation model. These findings are noteworthy because the demographic variables examined did not significantly predict infidelity and commitment uncertainty among married individuals in Malaysia, except for age, which showed a direct effect on commitment uncertainty and an indirect effect on infidelity.

The non-significant effects of gender and marriage length can be attributed to sociocultural factors and the increasing gender equality in Malaysia. First, cultural and religious norms apply across genders and marriage stages. As a collectivist and religiously guided society, Malaysia emphasises strong moral expectations of marital fidelity, which are shared equally by both men and women (Foong et al., 2020; Momtaz et al., 2010). Religious commitments, family influences, and community expectations further reinforce fidelity throughout marriage (Aman et al., 2021; Pavithran et al., 2025). Second, research shows that there is more equitable investment in female education, thereby reducing the gender gaps in higher education participation (Elhadary, 2025; Surianshah & Bridges, 2025). This suggests an increasing educational equality in Malaysia, which minimises traditional gender discrepancies in marital dynamics. Although previous studies indicate men are more vulnerable to infidelity and commitment uncertainty (Arantes et al., 2020; Lange et al., 2023; Silva et al., 2017), the pervasive influence of religious values, cultural norms, and the growing gender equality in Malaysia may address this gender difference. Thus, gender and marriage length were not significant predictors of infidelity and commitment uncertainty among married individuals in Malaysia.

Besides, age significantly and negatively influenced commitment uncertainty among married individuals in Malaysia. The findings also showed that age indirectly and significantly influenced infidelity through commitment uncertainty. Specifically, older married individuals tended to experience fewer doubts about their long-term commitment, which in turn reduced the likelihood of infidelity. Age may influence commitment uncertainty because younger couples are more likely to face challenges in marital adjustment, especially during the early transition into married life, which can increase doubts about long-term commitment (Nadeem & Mohamad, 2025). Moreover, older adults tend to exhibit higher tolerance for uncertainty compared to younger adults (Okayama et al., 2024), which may help

restore commitment confidence. However, age itself did not directly predict infidelity, since cultural and religious factors discourage extradyadic behaviour across all age groups. This suggests that in the absence of commitment uncertainty, the likelihood of infidelity remains low across all age groups

Theoretical Implication

The present findings addressed two objectives of the study. First, partner affirmation was found to significantly and negatively predict infidelity among married individuals in Malaysia. Second, commitment uncertainty significantly mediated the relationship between partner affirmation and infidelity. These findings support the study's theoretical framework, the Investment Model (Rusbult, 1980). Past research has shown that infidelity behaviours are strongly explained by the model's components, including commitment, satisfaction, investment and quality of alternative (Drigotas, 1999). The present study contributes to existing literature in three important ways.

First, the findings are consistent with the Investment Model, showing that partner affirmation plays an important role in strengthening commitment by enhancing satisfaction, increasing investment, and reducing the attractiveness of alternatives. This highlights partner affirmation as a meaningful predictor of infidelity and offers new insights into its role in sustaining marital fidelity. The study also extends the Investment Model by incorporating partner affirmation, a construct that has been rarely examined in relation to infidelity. Partner affirmation is shown to maintain marital commitment, thereby fostering marital fidelity.

Besides, commitment uncertainty functioned as a significant mediator between partner affirmation and infidelity. This finding contributes to existing knowledge by suggesting that the prediction of partner affirmation against infidelity may operate indirectly through doubts in the commitment process. As commitment uncertainty reflects fluctuations in satisfaction, investment and the perceived quality of alternatives, this mediation model

reinforces the explanatory value of the Investment Model in understanding relational stability. By highlighting the role of commitment uncertainty, this study refines the theoretical perspectives on how commitment is sustained within marital relationships.

Furthermore, this study advances theoretical understanding by examining the association between partner affirmation, commitment uncertainty, and infidelity within the Malaysian marital context. By focusing on married individuals in Malaysia, this study highlights the cultural and relational significance of partner affirmation in sustaining marital commitment and reducing the likelihood of infidelity. This study also provides valuable insight into how commitment uncertainty is linked to infidelity within a collectivist cultural context that places strong emphasis on religious teachings.

Practical Implication

This study provides insights for married couples and practitioners in dealing with marital conflicts, specifically on marital infidelity. Firstly, this study provides insights for married couples on the importance of recognising and supporting a partner's ideal self. Marital couples could strengthen emotional bonds by validating partner affirmation to prevent infidelity incidents. Generous partner affirmation fosters trust and mutual reinforcement, which nurtures relationship stability to reduce the likelihood of infidelity. Moreover, the married couples highlighted the significance of commitment uncertainty as a relational factor. The commitment uncertainty reflects doubts about the stability and future of marriage that encourage seeking validation from the partner. Thus, married couples are encouraged to practice partner affirmation consistently and weaken commitment uncertainty to strengthen marital stability.

In addition, this study is useful for practitioners, including marital counsellors and clinical psychologists, in designing targeted and effective interventions for married couples.

Partner affirmation, which involves recognising and validating a partner's strengths, fosters satisfaction and trust within the relationship. Similarly, addressing commitment uncertainty is a critical component in the therapeutic intervention to promote commitment stability over time. Based on these findings, practitioners are encouraged to design and organise psychoeducation programmes and workshops that focus on partner affirmation and commitment clarification, thereby supporting fidelity and marital longevity. By integrating these components into evidence-based interventions, practitioners can strengthen the relationship between married couples and reduce the likelihood of infidelity.

Limitations

There are four limitations in this study. Firstly, the research employed a cross-sectional study, which may only reflect the context and the understandings of marriage at the present. This has limited the temporal generalisability of the study. The study design only reflects the participants' current perceptions and experiences of partner affirmation, commitment uncertainty and infidelity. The study design does not determine if the observed patterns remain stable over time, leading to restrictions on the findings beyond the immediate content.

Secondly, the study employed purposive sampling, a common approach in exploratory research. However, this sampling method might restrict generalisability to the broader married population in Malaysia. The findings could introduce sampling bias as they do not reflect the perspectives of the married population in the Malaysian context in terms of cultural, regional, and socioeconomic backgrounds from specific criteria groups, rather than random selection.

Thirdly, the study did not incorporate measures to minimise socially desirable responding within the self-report survey. As a result, participants might have underreported certain experiences or overemphasised the factors while answering the survey. Without

embedded validity checks (e.g., reversed items, attention checks), it is challenging to differentiate consistent responses or inattentive answering. This may result in response bias, which may obscure the relationships among partner affirmation, commitment uncertainty and infidelity, leading to reduced internal validity of the result.

Lastly, a methodological limitation was presented in the imbalanced gender distribution of the samples. The overrepresentation of one gender reduced the study's statistical power and restricted the sampling generalisability of the findings. As a result, the sample may not represent both genders adequately, which could affect the accuracy of covariate control. Although the results indicated that gender was not a significant covariate, this imbalanced gender distribution limits the generalisability of the findings to a broader married population in Malaysia.

Recommendations

Firstly, future studies should adopt a longitudinal or mixed methods design to enhance the study's temporal generalisability. A longitudinal design could examine the influences of partner affirmation and commitment uncertainty towards infidelity to ensure their stability and directionality over time. This methodological improvement would enhance the robustness and the generalisability of the research findings.

Secondly, future research should require a stratified sampling approach or quota sampling to ensure accurate representation of diversity across regions, ethnicities, and marriage durations. It is suggested to recruit different demographic groups, including rural communities and marriage organisations to enhance broader variations in marital dynamics. This could help to improve different understandings and perceptions towards the partner's affirmation and infidelity through different demographics in the Malaysian context.

Thirdly, response bias control is potentially suggested by adding the attention checks and reverse-coded items within the survey instruments. These screening assessments would

help to reduce the response bias and ensure the data quality in terms of reliability and validity.

Lastly, to overcome the issue of gender imbalance in the collecting sample, future studies can implement a dyadic sampling method during the sample collection stage. Dyadic sampling, in which the inclusion of both partners participated in the survey. A balanced gender distribution improves the generalisation by presenting the findings equally to couples, not just individuals. Also, this sampling method helps to mitigate common method bias by collecting both partners instead of relying on individual self-reports. This could reduce the risk of associations caused by single-source responses and improve the interaction power as the gender effects strengthen the validity of the gender similarities.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of partner affirmation in predicting infidelity among married individuals in the Malaysian context. The findings revealed that higher partner affirmation significantly reduced the likelihood of infidelity, while commitment uncertainty served as a significant mediator between partner affirmation and infidelity. Apart from that, age served as a significant covariate variable in commitment uncertainty towards infidelity. These results highlighted the importance of fostering partner affirmation and commitment uncertainty to enhance relationship satisfaction and marital stability, offering a deeper understanding of protective relational factors against infidelity and providing a foundation for culturally sensitive marital interventions in the Malaysian context.

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Appendix A: Sample Size Calculation**Infidelity and Partner Affirmation**

Toplu-Demirtaş, E., Akcaboza-Kayabol, N. B., Araci-Iyiydin, A., & Fincham, F. D.

(2022). Unraveling the roles of distrust, suspicion of infidelity, and jealousy in cyber dating abuse perpetration: An attachment theory perspective. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(3-4), NP1432-NP1462. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520927505>

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Sexual Infidelity	18.10	9.38	-							
Gender	1.43	.50	-.18***	-						
Age	36.72	7.26	.09*	-.31***	-					
Extraversion	25.57	4.18	-.08	-.18***	.11*	-				
Agreeableness	32.82	6.53	-.33***	-.12*	.08	.31***	-			
Conscientiousness	32.37	7.35	-.42***	-.10*	.02	.26***	.72***	-		
Neuroticism	24.57	4.32	.11*	.12*	-.06	.05	-.26***	-.29***	-	
Openness	30.06	6.05	-.25***	.04	.02	.28***	.55***	.55***	-.09*	-

Note. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; Gender Code: Male = 0 and 1 = Female

Infidelity and Commitment Uncertainty

Le, B., Korn, M. S., Crockett, E. E., & Loving, T. J. (2011). Missing you maintains us:

Missing a romantic partner, commitment, relationship maintenance, and physical infidelity. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 28(5), 653-667.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407510384898>

Table 1. Descriptives and correlations between study variables

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Time 1 Commitment	—					
2. Missing	.46**	—				
3. Positivity	.27*	.37**	—			
4. Openness	.37**	.58**	.21*	—		
5. Assurances	.57**	.62**	.42**	.71**	—	
6. Infidelity	-.27*	-.39**	-.12	-.17	-.43**	—
Mean	6.86	5.44	5.50	4.06	5.34	1.58
SD	1.73	.88	.63	1.20	1.21	1.35

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Note. Commitment was assessed prior to geographic separation; other variables were assessed during the separation.

Partner Affirmation and Commitment Uncertainty

Gonzalez, C. C. (2011). Personal and perceived partner commitment and trust as predictors of relationship satisfaction in long-distance and proximally close dating relationships of graduate students [Doctoral dissertations, University of Denver]. Digital Commons. <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/243>

Table 11: Long-Distance Visits Per Year and Relationships Between Primary Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Visits/Year	1.00					
2. Rel Satis	.296**	1.00				
3. Com	.236*	.698*	*1.00			
4. Partner Com	.027	.533**	.684**	1.00		
5. Trust	.138	.562**	.425**	.571**	1.00	
6. Partner Trust	.214*	.642**	.578**	.371**	.488**	1.00

* $p < .05$ level (two tailed) ** $p < .01$ level (two-tailed)

Monte Carlo Power Analysis

ModelOne Mediator

ObjectiveSet Power, Vary N

Target Power0.8

Minimum N50

Maximum N200

Sample Size Steps1

of Replications10000

Monte Carlo Draws per Rep2001

Random Seed1234

Confidence Level (%)95

X

M

Y

a

b

c'

Input MethodCorrelations

	X	M	Y
X	1.00		
M	-0.5	1.00	
Y	-0.11	0.27	1.00
Std. Deviation	4.32	1.73	1.35

graphic and input-value sections in the middle column will be altered.

2. Select Objective.

Once the desired model is chosen, the user should select the objective of the power analysis. Two options are permitted. The user can choose to estimate the statistical power for a given model and sample size ("Set N, Find Power"), or the user may choose to estimate the required sample size for a given model and desired level of power ("Set Power, Vary N"). Once an option is selected, an additional set of options will

Calculate Power

ab	124.00	0.79	0.80	0.81
ab	125.00	0.80	0.81	0.81
ab	126.00	0.80	0.81	0.82
ab	127.00	0.80	0.81	0.82
ab	128.00	0.81	0.82	0.82

Appendix B: Questionnaire



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DU012(A)

**Department of Psychology and Counseling
Faculty of Arts and Social Science
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman**

Introduction

We would like to conduct a research study to examine the predictors of romantic relationship among couples in Malaysia.

Procedures and Confidentiality

The following questionnaire will require approximately 15 minutes to complete. All information provided will remain as **private and confidential**. The information given will only be reported as group data with no identifying information and only use for academic purpose.

Participation

All the information gathered will remain anonymous and confidential. Your information will not be disclosed to any unauthorized person and would be accessible only by group members. Participant in this study is voluntary, you are free to withdraw with consent and discontinue participation in anytime without prejudice. Your responses will be coded numerically in the research assignment for the research interpretation. Your cooperation would be greatly appreciated.

If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all the questions as honestly as possible and return the completed questionnaire promptly.



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DU012(A)

Personal Data Protection Statement

Please be informed that in accordance with Personal Data Protection Act 2010 (“PDPA”) which came into force on 15 November 2013, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (“UTAR”) is hereby bound to make notice and require consent in relation to collection, recording, storage, usage and retention of personal information.

Notice:

1. The purposes for which your personal data may be used are inclusive but not limited to:-
 - For assessment of any application to UTAR
 - For processing any benefits and services
 - For communication purposes
 - For advertorial and news
 - For general administration and record purposes
 - For enhancing the value of education
 - For educational and related purposes consequential to UTAR
 - For the purpose of our corporate governance
 - For consideration as a guarantor for UTAR staff/ student applying for his/her scholarship/ study loan
2. Your personal data may be transferred and/or disclosed to third party and/or UTAR collaborative partners including but not limited to the respective and appointed outsourcing agents for purpose of fulfilling our obligations to you in respect of the purposes and all such other purposes that are related to the purposes and also in providing integrated services, maintaining and storing records. Your data may be shared when required by laws and when disclosure is necessary to comply with applicable laws.
3. Any personal information retained by UTAR shall be destroyed and/or deleted in accordance with our retention policy applicable for us in the event such information is no longer required.
4. UTAR is committed in ensuring the confidentiality, protection, security and accuracy of your personal information made available to us and it has been our ongoing strict policy to ensure that your personal information is accurate, complete, not misleading and updated. UTAR would also ensure that your personal data shall not be used for political and commercial purposes.

Consent:

1. By submitting this form you hereby authorise and consent to us processing (including disclosing) your personal data and any updates of your information, for the purposes and/or for any other purposes related to the purpose.
2. If you do not consent or subsequently withdraw your consent to the processing and disclosure of your personal data, UTAR will not be able to fulfill our obligations or to contact you or to assist you in respect of the purposes and/or for any other purposes related to the purpose.
3. You may access and update your personal data by writing to us at
Chang Shan Mei shanmei200316@lutar.my
Tay Shi Swen shiswen15@lutar.my
Wong Ming Jie mingjie0213@lutar.my

Acknowledgment of Notice

- ☐ I have been notified by you and that I hereby understood, consented and agreed per UTAR above notice.
- ☐ I disagree, my personal data will not be processed.

Lucky Draw

By completing this survey, you may enter a Lucky Draw and stand a chance to obtain RM10. There will be a total of 50 winners for this Lucky Draw, and the Lucky Draw will be conducted at the end of the data collection phase.

To join, you may need to provide us your VALID handphone number registered with TnG for us to transfer the token to you. Only responses that are complete and meet the participation criteria will be included in the Lucky Draw. The information that you have provided (such as phone number, name) will remain private and confidential and will only be used to for transferring the RM10 reward. It is alright if you do not want to join the Lucky Draw. In that case, you do not need to provide your phone number. We greatly appreciate your contribution and time to this study.

Please select ONE of the choices below.

- ☐ I do not want to join the Lucky Draw. I will not provide my phone number.
- ☐ I would like to join the Lucky Draw. I understand the terms stated above and will provide my phone number at the end of the survey.

Part A

Please fill in your personal details or circle ONE option.

1. Age: _____
2. Nationality:

1. Malaysian	2. Non-Malaysian
--------------	------------------
3. Gender:

1. Male	2. Female
---------	-----------
4. Ethnicity:

1. Malay	2. Indian
3. Chinese	
4. Others (please specify): _____	
5. Religion:

1. Islam	2. Buddhism
3. Christianity	4. Hinduism
5. Others (please specify): _____	
6. Highest level of Education:

1. Primary school	2. Secondary school
3. STPM / A-level / UEC	4. Diploma / Vocational
5. Bachelor	6. Master's
7. Doctoral	
7. Marital status:

1. Single	2. Engaged
3. In a relationship	4. Married
5. Others (please specify): _____	
8. Do you have children:

1. Yes	2. No
--------	-------
9. Are you (Is your partner) currently pregnant?

1. Yes	2. No
--------	-------
10. Length of marriage:

1. Years: _____	2. Months: _____
-----------------	------------------

Part B***Sexual and Emotional Infidelity Scale (SEI)***

For each of the following items please indicate the frequency that you perform those behaviors when you are in a close relationship, using a scale from 1 (*It never happens to me*) to 7 (*It happens to me very often*). Please answer having as a base all the close relationships you had throughout your life, that is, think about your current relationship (if you are currently involved in one) and on your past relationships.

It never happens to me	It rarely happens to me	It sometime happens to me	It moderately happens to me	It frequently happens to me	It often happens to me	It happens to me very often
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1	I send intimate photographs and/or maintain sexual relations via internet or phone with people other than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I think of people other than my partner in a romantic and/or sexual way.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I have sexual intercourse (vaginal) with people other than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I give more attention and prefer the company of people other than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I have sexual intercourse (anal) with people other than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	I have seduction behaviors (court, flirt) in person or on the internet with people other than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I have sexual intercourse (oral) with people other than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	I share secrets and/or important information with people other than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	I touch intimate parts of people other than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	I have intimacy (emotional and romantic) with people other than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	I kiss people (mouth, neck, etc.) other than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	I have romantic feelings for people other than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	I have more than one relationship (boyfriend/girlfriend or partner) at the same time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	I exchange seductive looks with people other than my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part D***Commitment Uncertainty Short Scale (CUSS)***

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess your thoughts and feelings about your current romantic relationship. Please respond to each statement based on your current romantic relationship.

(1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*)

1	I am unsure how committed I really am to the future of this relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	My commitment to my partner is a day-to-day thing at this point,	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	My level of commitment in this relationship has been wavering	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	My commitment to this relationship goes up and down a lot.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Lucky Draw

Please indicate your name and phone number to participate in the lucky draw. Tokens of appreciation will be distributed based on the outcome of the lucky draw. Only winners will be notified, and the credit will be transferred within 6 months. Your information will remain confidential and will be used solely for the purpose of this lucky draw.

Name (as per Touch'n Go): _____

VALID handphone number (as per Touch'n Go): _____

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.

Your response has been recorded.

Appendix C: Ethical Clearance Letter


UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

DU012(A)

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Re: U/SERC/78-415/2024

17 December 2024

Mr Tay Kok Wai
 Head, Department of Psychology and Counselling Faculty of
 Arts and Social Science
 Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman Jalan
 Universiti, Bandar Baru Barat 31900
 Kampar, Perak.

Dear Mr Tay,

Ethical Approval For Research Project/Protocol

We refer to the application for ethical approval for your students' research project from Bachelor of Social Science (Honours) Psychology programme enrolled in course UAPZ3013/UAPZ3023. We are pleased to inform you that the application has been approved under Expedited Review.

The details of the research projects are as follows:

No	Research Title	Student's Name	Supervisor's Name	Approval Validity
1.	The Influence of Valence, Behavioural, and Cognitive-Emotional Maturity to Parenthood on Fertility Intention: Examining the Moderating Role of Gender	1. Chew En Jee 2. Yong Wen Hui	Dr Tan Soon Aun	17 December 2024 – 16 December 2025
2.	The Fragile Bonds of Love: Examining How Partner Affirmation and Commitment Uncertainty Predict Sexual and Emotional Infidelity Among Married Couple in Malaysia	1. Chang Shan Mei 2. Tay Shi Swen 3. Wong Ming Jie		
3.	Sensitivity and Relationship Commitment Among Unmarried Couples in Malaysia: Attachment Styles as Mediator	1. Daphne Voon Kai Yen 2. Ng Yi Xuan		
4.	Pornography Consumption and Relationship Satisfaction Among Married Couples: A Moderated Mediation Model of Sexual Satisfaction and Gender	1. Tay Xue Jie 2. Wong Wei Zhong		

The conduct of this research is subject to the following:

- (1) The participants' informed consent be obtained prior to the commencement of the research;
- (2) Confidentiality of participants' personal data must be maintained; and
- (3) Compliance with procedures set out in related policies of UTAR such as the UTAR Research Ethics and Code of Conduct, Code of Practice for Research Involving Humans and other related policies/guidelines.
- (4) Written consent be obtained from the institution(s)/company(ies) in which the physical or/and

Kampar Campus : Jalan Universiti, Bandar Barat, 31900 Kampar, Perak Darul Ridzuan,
 Malaysia Tel: (605) 468 8888 Fax: (605) 466 1313

Sungai Long Campus : Jalan Sungai Long, Bandar Sungai Long, Cheras, 43000 Kajang, Selangor Darul Ehsan,
 Malaysia Tel: (603) 9086 0288 Fax: (603) 9019 8868

Website: www.utar.edu.my



Should the students collect personal data of participants in their studies, please have the participants sign the attached Personal Data Protection Statement for records.

[Handwritten signature]

c.c Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Science
Director, Institute of Postgraduate Studies and Research

Appendix D: Reliability of Instruments in Pilot Study**Partner Affirmation Scale (PAS)***Perceived Perceptual Affirmation***Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.641	.645	3

*Perceived Behavioural Affirmation***Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.758	.743	3

Commitment Uncertainty Short Scale (CUSS)**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.754	.785	4

Sexual and Emotional Infidelity Scale (SEI)***Sexual Infidelity*****Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.964	.965	7

Emotional Infidelity**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.937	.944	7

Appendix E: Descriptive Statistics of Demographics

Statistics						
		1. Age	3. Gender	4. Ethnicity - Selected Choice	5. Religion - Selected Choice	TLOM_month
N	Valid	146	146	146	146	146
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		36.47	.31	2.18	1.81	117.84
Std. Error of Mean		.833	.038	.086	.075	9.234
Median		34.00	.00	3.00	2.00	80.00
Std. Deviation		10.066	.463	1.037	.912	111.581
Minimum		20	0	1	1	3
Maximum		78	1	4	5	668

Appendix F: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

		Statistics		
		MEAN_CUSS _new	MEAN_PAS_n ew	MEAN_SEI_n ew
N	Valid	146	146	146
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		3.5274	3.8603	1.8487
Std. Error of Mean		.14998	.06182	.10088
Median		3.6667	4.0000	1.1818
Std. Deviation		1.81216	.74699	1.21894
Skewness		.140	-1.038	1.353
Std. Error of Skewness		.201	.201	.201
Kurtosis		-.977	2.371	.493
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.399	.399	.399
Minimum		1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum		7.00	5.00	5.55

Appendix G: Measurements Model Output

Cronbach's Alpha

Construct reliability and validity - Overview					Copy to Excel
	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (A...	
CUSS_	0.898	0.927	0.936	0.829	
PAS_	0.894	0.898	0.922	0.702	
SEI_	0.963	0.966	0.968	0.733	

Composite Reliability

Composite reliability (rho_a) - Mean, STDEV, T values, p values						Copy to Excel/Word	Cr
	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values		
Age	1.000	1.000	0.000	n/a	n/a		
CUSS_	0.927	0.940	0.108	8.599	0.000		
Gender	1.000	1.000	0.000	n/a	n/a		
PAS_	0.898	0.913	0.039	23.157	0.000		
SEI_	0.966	0.970	0.007	147.484	0.000		
TLOM_MONTH	1.000	1.000	0.000	n/a	n/a		

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Collinearity statistics (VIF) - Outer model - List		
	VIF	
Age	1.000	
CUSS_1	2.521	
CUSS_3	2.944	
CUSS_4	2.887	
Gender	1.000	
PAS_1	2.895	
PAS_2	2.617	
PAS_3	1.816	
PAS_4	2.403	
PAS_5	2.618	
SEI_1	3.336	
SEI_10	4.204	
SEI_11	7.092	
SEI_12	6.723	
SEI_2	2.817	
SEI_3	5.024	
SEI_4	4.047	
SEI_5	8.542	
SEI_6	6.350	
SEI_7	7.837	
SEI_8	3.076	
TLOM_MONTH	1.000	

Outer Loadings of Each Variable

Outer loadings - Matrix						
	Age	CUSS_	Gender	PAS_	SEI_	TLOM_MONTH
Age	1.000					
CUSS_1		0.890				
CUSS_3		0.908				
CUSS_4		0.932				
Gender			1.000			
PAS_1				0.870		
PAS_2				0.847		
PAS_3				0.786		
PAS_4				0.842		
PAS_5				0.842		
SEI_1					0.803	
SEI_10					0.878	
SEI_11					0.882	
SEI_12					0.874	
SEI_2					0.787	
SEI_3					0.837	
SEI_4					0.854	
SEI_5					0.896	
SEI_6					0.875	
SEI_7					0.914	
SEI_8					0.807	
TLOM_MONTH						1.000

Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Average variance extracted (AVE) - Mean, STDEV, T values, p values						Copy to Excel/Word	C
	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values		
Age	1.000	1.000	0.000	n/a	n/a		
CUSS_	0.829	0.828	0.032	26.146	0.000		
Gender	1.000	1.000	0.000	n/a	n/a		
PAS_	0.702	0.696	0.043	16.164	0.000		
SEI_	0.733	0.733	0.036	20.399	0.000		
TLOM_MONTH	1.000	1.000	0.000	n/a	n/a		

Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Discriminant validity - Fornell-Larcker criterion						
	Age	CUSS_	Gender	PAS_	SEI_	TLOM_MONTH
Age	1.000					
CUSS_	-0.283	0.910				
Gender	0.084	0.010	1.000			
PAS_	-0.059	-0.151	0.035	0.838		
SEI_	-0.060	0.326	0.066	-0.291	0.856	
TLOM_MONTH	0.905	-0.235	0.056	-0.069	-0.037	1.000

Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio

Discriminant validity - Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) - Matrix						
	Age	CUSS_	Gender	PAS_	SEI_	TLOM_MONTH
Age						
CUSS_	0.294					
Gender	0.084	0.080				
PAS_	0.070	0.163	0.091			
SEI_	0.061	0.347	0.070	0.306		
TLOM_MONTH	0.905	0.245	0.056	0.076	0.038	

Appendix H: Structural Model Output

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

R-square - Mean, STDEV, T values, p values						Copy to Excel/Word	Copy to R
	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values		
CUSS_	0.112	0.142	0.049	2.297	0.011		
SEI_	0.172	0.208	0.052	3.315	0.000		

Direct Path Coefficients

Path coefficients - Mean, STDEV, T values, p values						Copy to Excel/Word	Copy to R
	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values		
Age -> CUSS_	-0.392	-0.406	0.181	2.160	0.015		
Age -> SEI_	-0.043	-0.062	0.212	0.202	0.420		
CUSS_ -> SEI_	0.287	0.285	0.079	3.639	0.000		
Gender -> CUSS_	0.043	0.042	0.080	0.542	0.294		
Gender -> SEI_	0.073	0.075	0.079	0.928	0.177		
PAS_ -> CUSS_	-0.169	-0.179	0.094	1.804	0.036		
PAS_ -> SEI_	-0.249	-0.259	0.091	2.730	0.003		
TLOM_MONTH -> CUSS_	0.105	0.115	0.184	0.570	0.284		
TLOM_MONTH -> SEI_	0.048	0.066	0.195	0.246	0.403		

Indirect Path Coefficients

Total indirect effects - Mean, STDEV, T values, p values						Copy to Excel/Word	Copy to R
	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values		
Age -> SEI_	-0.113	-0.116	0.062	1.813	0.035		
Gender -> SEI_	0.012	0.012	0.024	0.525	0.300		
PAS_ -> SEI_	-0.048	-0.051	0.032	1.517	0.065		
TLOM_MONTH -> SEI_	0.030	0.033	0.055	0.550	0.291		

Total Indirect Path Coefficients

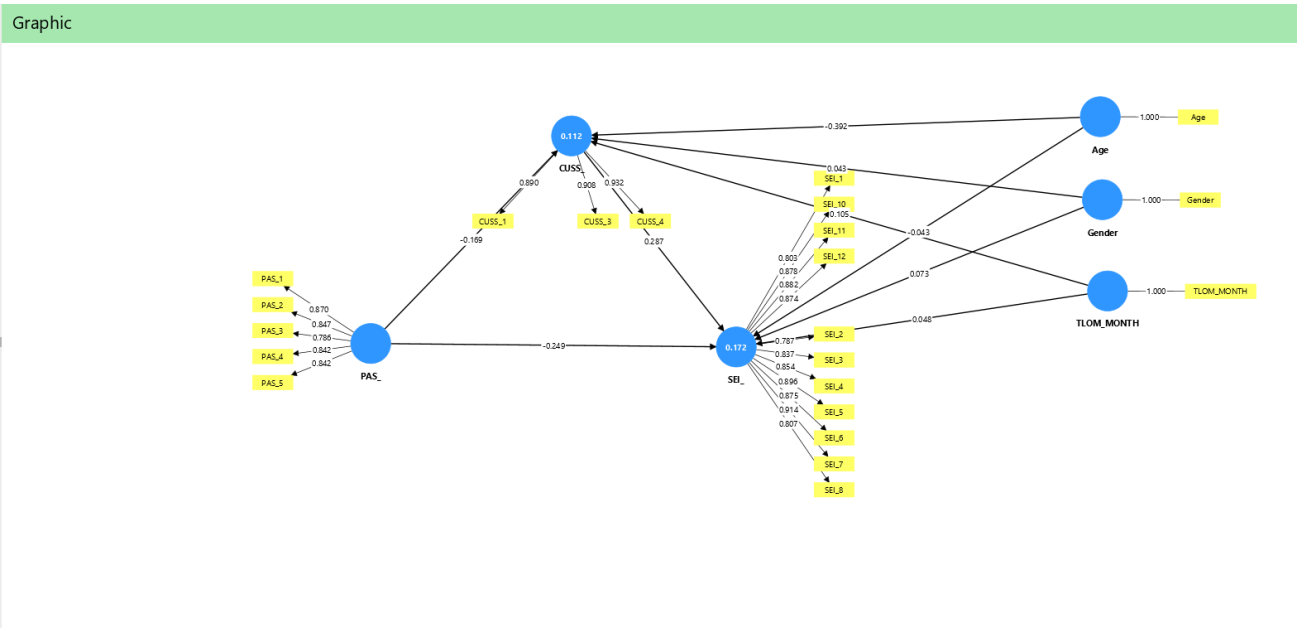
Specific indirect effects - Mean, STDEV, T values, p values						Copy to Excel/Word	Copy to R
	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values		
Age -> CUSS_ -> SEI_	-0.113	-0.116	0.062	1.813	0.035		
Gender -> CUSS_ -> SEI_	0.012	0.012	0.024	0.525	0.300		
PAS_ -> CUSS_ -> SEI_	-0.048	-0.051	0.032	1.517	0.065		
TLOM_MONTH -> CUSS_ -> SEI_	0.030	0.033	0.055	0.550	0.291		

Effect Size (f²) Results

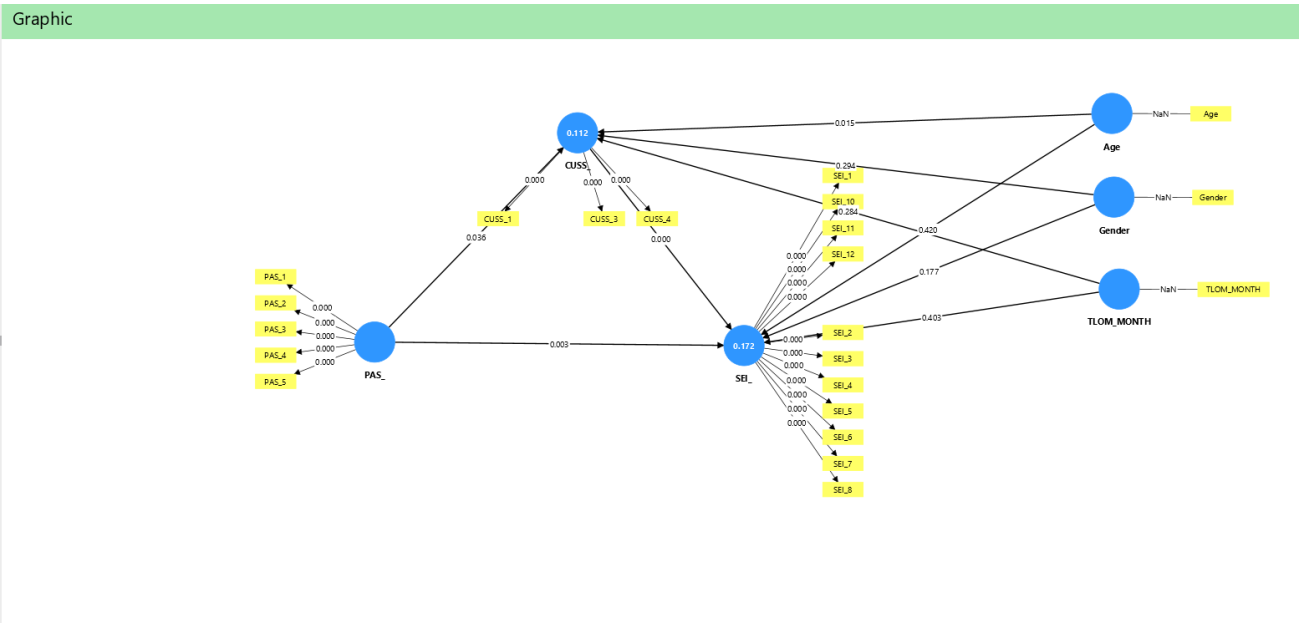
f-square - Mean, STDEV, T values, p values						Copy to Excel/Word
	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	
Age -> CUSS_	0.031	0.039	0.030	1.046	0.148	
Age -> SEI_	0.000	0.010	0.014	0.027	0.489	
CUSS_ -> SEI_	0.088	0.096	0.053	1.675	0.047	
Gender -> CUSS_	0.002	0.009	0.013	0.160	0.436	
Gender -> SEI_	0.006	0.015	0.019	0.341	0.367	
PAS_ -> CUSS_	0.032	0.048	0.043	0.736	0.231	
PAS_ -> SEI_	0.072	0.092	0.063	1.136	0.128	
TLOM_MONTH -> CUSS_	0.002	0.009	0.012	0.183	0.427	
TLOM_MONTH -> SEI_	0.001	0.009	0.013	0.039	0.485	

Appendix I: Final PLS-SEM Model Diagram

PLS-SEM Algorithm



Bootstrapping Results



Appendix J: Turnitin Report

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