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If you wanna swing, you gotta have good foundations. Attachment style, relationship satisfaction, and attitude toward infidelity in swingers and in a monogamous group

Abstract: The swinging phenomenon is growing in popularity. Behaviors considered by most people as infidelity, e.g. sexual contacts with someone other than their partner, are normal for the swingers community, which makes the study of how infidelity is defined and of its determinants in this group an extremely important social issue. The aim of this research was to examine whether attachment style and relationship satisfaction were associated with the judgment of infidelity in swingers and monogamists. The study involved 120 respondents, including 49 self-declared swingers, compared with an equinumerous group of people with a preference for monogamous relationships. The results showed a difference in the understanding of infidelity between the groups. The analysis also indicates that a secure attachment style is conducive to engaging in swinging and enjoying it, which is in turn linked to relationship satisfaction.

Keywords: *Swingers, attachment style, relationship satisfaction, attitudes toward infidelity*

1. INTRODUCTION

Swinging refers to single individuals engaging in sexual activities with persons already in pair bonds or those within a committed relationship engaging in sexual activities with persons outside of their pair bond, much like the same individuals or couples would engage in any other social activity (Bartell, 1970; Rubin, 2001; D’Orlando, 2009; Andersson et al., 2021). As a form of open relationship, it involves consensual exchange of a partner for sexual purposes (Hangen et al., 2020). Swinger relationships can be thus included in a broader concept of consensual nonmonogamous relationships (CNM). The popularity of the CNM phenomenon in the US is estimated at approximately 4-5% of US citizens (Rubin et al., 2014). However, these data are also inclusive of other types of CNMs. There are few studies determining the exact provenance of people involved in swinging, and some of them do not provide accurate data. However, only an estimated number of swingers, ranging from 4 to 15 million

in the United States, indicates the significant scale of the phenomenon (Sloan, 2005). There are no studies indicating the popularity of this phenomenon in Poland. However, the increasing number of clubs and websites dedicated to swingers indicates its gaining popularity. Despite the swinging lifestyle becoming increasingly favoured (Kimberly & Hans, 2017), research on this phenomenon is still lacking. Therefore, the main goal of our study is to explore the factors that enable engaging in swinging relationships.

Our research is embedded in the grounded theory formed by Kimberly and Hans (2017), which explored how swinging relationships were initiated and maintained. Although existing research (Kimberly, 2019) generally supported theoretical model proposed by them (Kimberly & Hans, 2017), there is still a need to explain whether certain intrinsic qualities are necessary for an individual willingness to engage in swinging. Based on above the model developed in the current study includes antecedent steps taken to enter into the lifestyle, types of desires fulfilled, stated benefits of being in the lifestyle, and rules



that guide couples throughout the process. The effective use of verbal and non-verbal communication to increase sexual and marital satisfaction within these CNM couples was paramount to their experiences.

Overall, the present study contributes to our understanding of swingers' relationships in two ways. First, we assess the attachment style, relationship satisfaction, and attitude towards infidelity in swinging individuals. Second, we describe the differences between swingers and non-swingers. To our knowledge, so far no researchers have examined specific aspects of infidelity such as the reaction to infidelity, understanding infidelity, and the attitude towards infidelity, especially in the context of attachment style, in swingers and monogamists. There are studies on jealousy among swingers (e.g., Wilt et al., 2018), but they do not directly address the ways of understanding infidelity, attitudes towards it, and reacting to it. Moreover, they do not show the differences between swingers and monogamists. Our research may thus enrich the theory of Kimberly and Hans (2017) in terms of features conducive to entering into and functioning in a swinger relationship, such as attachment style or views on infidelity.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. People engaging in swinging

Swinging individuals, particularly couples, face the need to direct the introduction of new sexual partners into their relationships. In the context of monogamy-focused culture, it might cause some difficulties, e.g., feelings of jealousy and the judgment of others (e.g., De Visser & McDonald, 2007). Although engaging in swinging relationships or other forms of CNM is often negatively assessed by society (Conley et al., 2013), and swingers are commonly perceived as “deviant” (Conley et al., 2013), research indicates that they are average in many respects (Bergstrand & Williams, 2000; Bergstrand & Sinski, 2010). Jenks (2014) conducted an interesting study in 1985 and confirmed the results with replication in 2014, where he showed that they had an above average income and education and largely identified as middle-class swingers, moreover they were typically affiliated with a religious organization. The average or above-average nature of swingers is also confirmed by research conducted by O’Byrne and Watts (2011), which also indicated that the swingers surveyed were well-educated. More than 33% of the participants had a bachelor’s degree, and 10% had a master’s or doctoral degree. Over two-thirds of the participants had annual incomes greater than \$40,000, with more than a quarter of them earning above \$80,000 annually. Higher education and higher incomes among swinging practitioners are also confirmed by the research of Rozanski and Harrison (2019). In another study, more than half of the 2 thousand Dutch swingers were highly educated and declared higher economic status (Kampman et al., 2020).

Despite the widespread belief that swingers are deviant or have broadly understood mental problems, the

research points to a different direction. First, even though there is a social conviction about low satisfaction with such relationships (Cohen, 2016), many studies indicate swingers have the same or higher relationship and sexual satisfaction than monogamists (Fernandes, 2009; Bergstrand & Williams, 2000; Rubel & Bogaert, 2015; Brooks et al., 2022). Additionally, some studies indicate that swingers' activity and meetings increase satisfaction (Vaillancourt, 2006). In a study by Bergstrand and Williams (2000), nearly two-thirds of participants said their marriage had become happier after adopting this lifestyle. Thus, participating in the swingers' meetings, based on proper communication between life partners, may increase relationship satisfaction (Kimberly & Hans, 2017). However, such results may also be biased referring to the self-presentation issues, or need for social-approval (Conley et al., 2017; Conley et al., 2018). Secondly, swingers are characterized by the same or higher satisfaction with life and well-being as monogamous individuals (Rubel & Bogaert, 2015; Wilt et al., 2018). Thirdly, swingers, particularly men, experience higher or similar self-esteem compared to others (Ruzansky & Harrison, 2019). Last but not least, individuals in CNM, such as swinger relationships, report relatively high levels of trust, honesty, commitment, and intimacy (Morrison et al., 2013; Conley & Piemonte, 2021; St. Vil et al., 2021; Brooks et al., 2022). Thus, we assume that satisfaction differs among swingers and monogamous individuals. We hypothesize that the relationship satisfaction would be higher in swingers (cf. Hypothesis 1).

Hypothesis 1: Swingers are characterized by higher relationship satisfaction than monogamists.

2.2. Attachment style in monogamous and consensual nonmonogamous relationships

Attachment style is an essential part of the individual, predicting the quality of the latter’s relationships. A secure attachment style is associated with greater self-esteem, relationship interdependence, commitment, trust, and satisfaction (Feeney & Noller, 1990; Simpson, 1990). As related to communication style, conflict resolution, and jealousy (Domingue & Mollen, 2009; Levy & Kelly, 2010), it further promotes lower jealousy or relationship anxiety (Whitson & Mattingly, 2010). Contrarily, anxious and avoidant styles are associated with less frequent positive and more frequent negative emotions in the relationship (Simpson, 1990). These variables are essential for functioning in a non-monogamous relationship, which is confirmed by a few studies. An existing study (Moors et al., 2015) found that individuals in monogamous relationships with no prior experience in consensual non-monogamy (CNM) and with higher avoidant attachment reported more positive attitudes and a greater willingness to engage in CNM. However, avoidant individuals were still less likely to actually engage in CNM compared to monogamous relationships. Additionally, the comparative study (Morrison et al., 2013) on individuals engaged in either polygamous or monogamous partnership showed a higher secure and preoccupied attachment style, and

lower fearfulness, and dismissing in polygamous partners. Following, Ka et al. (2020) indicated that when individuals have low or moderate levels of avoidant attachment (i.e., they are securely attached), the relationship between sociosexual behavior and attitudes toward relationships, such as swingers, is strengthened. However, some studies also indicated a lack of links between the attachment style and the type of relationship (Nash, 2018).

Based on the above, a secure attachment style is more common in the CNM group. A secure attachment style might thus be essential to being able to engage in swinging relationship. Trust is important here, which is often emphasized in swingers' statements: "Eli believed that the sexual trust gained between him and his wife through swinging enhanced the overall quality of his marriage, which he said was based on 'trust, respect, love, and sex' or 'The fear of cheating isn't there; we always do everything together,' explained Amanda" (Kimberly & Hans, 2017, p. 794). Therefore, we expect a different level of attachment style among individuals engaged in a non-monogamous and monogamous relationship (cf. Hypothesis 2).

Hypothesis 2: Swingers differ in attachment style from people in monogamous relationships.

2.3. Jealousy and attitude towards infidelity in swingers

The majority of the research is conducted on individuals engaged in CNM relationships. Although swingers are one of the CNM's subgroups next to polyamory and open relationships, there is still a need for studies concerning only the group of swingers. Some research shows that jealousy is a problem for swinging couples. For example, the effect of jealousy on primary relationships is the common reason for discontinuing swinging (Bergstrand & Williams, 2000; Denfeld, 1974). Although jealousy can be very harmful to romantic relationships (De Silva, 1997; Martínez-León et al., 2017), it can be appealing for swingers to experience their partner's jealousy. In studies conducted in Poland (Demczuk & Cudo, 2016), most swingers (60.7%) tend to be jealous of their partner. In addition, 75% of respondents attribute jealousy also to the other partner. Interestingly, 60.7% of respondents declared that they derived more or less pleasure from their partner's jealousy. It can therefore be assumed that experiencing of a partner's jealousy is to some extent an essential motive for engaging in swinging relationships. This was also confirmed by De Visser and McDonald (2007), who examined the management of jealousy among four active heterosexual swinging couples. Participants highlighted the importance of discussion, shared rules, and boundaries that allowed them to manage jealousy. Rather than seeking to eliminate feelings of jealousy, swingers may manage them to increase sexual excitement and arousal.

Despite earlier views based on evolutionary psychology that men are more jealous in response to sexual than emotional infidelity (Buss, 2000; Buss et al., 1992), a recent meta-analysis (Harris, 2003) has shown that both men and women are more jealous of emotional infidelity

than sexual infidelity. Furthermore, sexual and emotional infidelities often occur together because evoking one produces the other. Infidelity can be understood very narrowly as sexual intercourse or, more broadly, as behavior such as dating or spending time with a different partner and engaging in other sexual interactions with someone else, such as kissing, flirting, and petting (Roscoe et al., 1988). Even behaviors such as sexual fantasies, nonsexual fantasies about falling in love, sexual attraction, romantic attraction, or behavior in dyads, such as studying, having lunch, and going to a movie with someone other than one's partner, can also be acts of infidelity (Yarab et al., 1998). Interestingly, relationship satisfaction is associated with attitudes toward infidelity and its perception. Negative attitudes toward infidelity increased in high-quality committed relationships, but men who reported lower relationship quality had the most favorable attitudes toward infidelity. In addition, higher relationship satisfaction is associated with a broader understanding of infidelity (Silva et al., 2017). Moreover, the relationship status (Burchell & Ward, 2011) or household income (Zengel et al., 2013) may play a significant role in the perceptions and responses to infidelity. Thus, we assume swingers would be characterized by a greater consent to infidelity, a more narrow understanding of infidelity, and a less critical assessment of infidelity compared to individuals in monogamous relationships (cf. Hypothesis 3).

Hypothesis 3: Swingers differ in perceiving infidelity compared to individuals in monogamous relationship.

Attachment style is also important for experiencing jealousy and understanding of infidelity. For example, avoidant participants reported more jealousy regarding sexual infidelity than emotional infidelity, whereas secure participants reported more jealousy regarding emotional infidelity than sexual infidelity (Levy & Kelly, 2010). In another study, attachment avoidance was a significant predictor of distress at jealousy for men only (Burchell & Ward, 2011). Moreover, research also shows that individuals who display an insecure attachment style are more inclined to have sex outside of their primary relationship than people with a secure attachment style (Fricker & Moore, 2006; Lemelin et al., 2014). Accordingly, we hypothesize that there would be correlations between attachment styles and aspects of infidelity (cf. Hypothesis 4).

Hypothesis 4: Attachment styles are related to attitude towards infidelity.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Participants and procedure

A total of 197 people (120 women and 77 men) took part in the research, including 49 respondents declaring that they attended swingers' meetings. The results of 49 individuals declaring participation in swingers' meetings and 49 individuals from the remaining group not declaring participation in such meetings, i.e. monogamists, were subjected to further analyses. Forty-nine non-swingers individuals were chosen from the whole group regarding

age, gender, and length of relationship to match 49 swingers. Overall, women accounted for 45% in both groups, and the mean age was $M=36.8 \pm 9.4$ (swingers), and $M=36.4 \pm 9.4$ (monogamists). In both groups, 96% of the respondents were in a relationship. Of the swinging participants, 45% were married (monogamists: 55%), 8% engaged (monogamists: 10%), and 43% in civil unions (monogamists: 31%) with the mean duration $M=10.3 \pm 7.2$ years (monogamists: 11.1 ± 8.7). There were no significant differences between swinging and non-swinging participants in terms of age ($t = -.247$; $p=.806$) and duration of the relationship ($t = .464$; $p = .643$).

All swinging participants reported that their participation in swingers' meetings was voluntary and declared their informed consent before engaging in them. They participated in swingers' meetings 36.2 ± 143.3 times on average. The number of meetings held by them ranged from one to one thousand.

All data were gathered using the snowball sampling method. Invitations to take part in the survey were posted on social media, in the relevant themed groups (for swingers). All participants were residents of Poland. The inventories were provided in electronic form, using an online survey module. The questionnaires were completed voluntarily and no monetary compensation was provided. The participants were informed about the anonymity of data collection. They were assured that there were no wrong answers and that all their opinions were valid. Ethical approval for the study was granted by the Institutional Research Ethics Committee [blinded].

3.2. Measures

Attachment style. We measured the attachment style with the Attachment Style Questionnaire (KSP; Plopa, 2008), which consists of twenty four statements to which the survey participant responds using a 7-point scale (1 – strongly disagree; 7 – strongly agree). These questionnaires make it possible to identify three attachment styles: secure attachment, anxious-ambivalent attachment, and avoidant attachment. The scale has good psychometric properties. In this research, the secure attachment style subscale reliability was $\alpha = .84$; the anxious-ambivalent attachment subscale reliability was $\alpha = .86$; and the avoidant attachment subscale reliability was $\alpha = .87$.

The respondents' attitude towards infidelity were examined in two aspects: reaction to infidelity and understanding of infidelity.

Reaction to infidelity was analyzed using a four-item scale developed by Whitty and Quigley (2008), based on both the theoretical and empirical work of Buss et al. (1992): (1) Your partner engages in sexual intercourse with another person while in a relationship with you; (2) Your partner engages in cybersex with another person while in a relationship with you, but you are certain that they only interact online; (3) Your partner falls in love with another person while in a relationship with you; (4) Your partner falls in love with another person while in a relationship with you, but you are certain that the relationship is only developing online. The respondents

gave answers on a scale from 1 = the situation would not upset me at all to 5 = the situation would upset me a lot. The higher the score on the scale, the more upset the respondent was as a reaction to the infidelity. Tool reliability in this research was $\alpha = .86$.

Understanding of infidelity was analyzed using five items developed based on a review of research in the field (cf. Kruger et al., 2013; Thompson & O'Sullivan, 2016). The respondents were asked to take a position on statements designed to test what they considered as infidelity. The following items were presented to explore this: (1) Having sexual intercourse with another person with the consent of the partner one is in a relationship with is infidelity; (2) Watching pornography is equivalent to infidelity towards one's partner; (3) Kissing someone other than one's partner is infidelity; (4) Spending time with someone other than one's partner is infidelity; (5) Flirting with someone other than one's partner is infidelity. The respondents took a position on the items using a scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The higher the score, the more restrictive the understanding of infidelity. Tool reliability in this research was $\alpha = .77$.

Attitude towards infidelity was analyzed on the basis of six items developed based on a review of prior research on the moral, emotional, and relational dimensions of infidelity (cf. Wilson et al., 2011). The respondents were asked to take a position on statements designed to test their attitude towards infidelity. The following items were presented to explore this: (1) Infidelity is a reason to break up; (2) Infidelity can be forgiven (R – reverse coded); (3) Infidelity is morally wrong; (4) Low relationship satisfaction justifies infidelity (R); (5) Infidelity is spontaneous/happens on the spur of the moment (R); (6) Infidelity is planned. The higher the score on this scale, the more negative (critical) the judgment of infidelity. Tool reliability in this research was $\alpha = .76$.

Infidelity-related behaviors were studied using two questions: (1) Have you ever cheated on your partner?; (2) Have you ever suspected your partner (present or past) of cheating/being unfaithful to you? The respondents could answer yes or no.

The final question concerned the understanding of infidelity in the context of swingers' meetings: In your opinion, can attending a swingers club meeting together with your partner be considered as infidelity? The responses are listed in Table 3.

Relationship satisfaction was evaluated on the basis of the answers to one question: How would you rate your satisfaction with the relationship? The respondents gave answers on a scale of 1 – very satisfied to 5 – very unsatisfied. Using single-item measures is effective and more favorable in some respects than using multiple-item measures (Fülöp et al., 2020; Wanous, Reichers & Hudy, 1997); e.g., single-item measures are easier to understand, are completed more quickly, and require less effort. Higher scores indicated a higher level of satisfaction with current relationship.

Characteristics of swingers' meetings. In order to find out more about the specificities of swingers' meetings, five

close-ended questions were asked. Question (1) – How many times have you attended swingers’ meetings? – aimed to assess how much experience participants had with swinging. Question (2) – To what extent was your participation in swingers’ meetings voluntary? – was included for ethical reasons. The remaining three questions focused on emotional reactions to partner behavior during the meetings: (3) To what extent does the sight of your partner kissing another person make you feel uncomfortable/jealous?; (4) To what extent does the sight of your partner having sex with another person make you feel uncomfortable/jealous?; and (5) Do you think your partner feels uncomfortable seeing you kissing another person or having sex with another person?. These items were intended to capture perceived jealousy and emotional discomfort in partner-exchange situations, which are often emphasized in research on CNM (Table 3). In addition, four open-ended questions were asked of swingers, based on the qualitative approach used by Bentzen and Traen (2014): (1) What made you decide to participate in a swingers’ meeting?; (2) What impact do you think participating in swingers’ meetings has on your life? Is this impact positive or negative?; (3) Has attending swingers’ meetings changed the way you perceive yourself? How?; (4) Has attending swingers’ meetings changed the way you perceive your partner? How? (Table 5).

3.3. Data Analysis

First, we performed an a priori G*power analysis to calculate a sufficient sample size. The following parameters were applied: 90% power ($1-\beta$), $\alpha = .05$ (Faul et al., 2009). The results showed that a total of 98 participants were required for the study. Data analyses were conducted using JASP 0.14.3. We tested differences between groups (Welch’s *t*-test), Cohen’s *d* effect size, and Spearman’s correlations between variables, as well as performed Chi-Squared Tests.

4. RESULTS

Table 1 presents the results of a comparative analysis of the monogamist and swinger group. First, we analyzed the level of relationship satisfaction in both groups. The

results showed no significant differences in relationship satisfaction. Hypothesis 1 was not confirmed.

Following Hypothesis 2, we observed differences in attachment style intensity. Swingers demonstrated significantly higher levels of secure attachment style and lower levels of avoidant style compared to the non-swinger group, which confirmed our assumption. No significant differences were observed, however, in terms of anxious style.

Next, we tested Hypothesis 3, assuming different attitudes towards infidelity in the two groups. Based on the results (Table 1), swingers were characterized by a less negative reaction to infidelity, a more selective (narrower) understanding of infidelity, and a less critical attitude towards infidelity, which confirmed the hypothesis. Moreover, swingers differed from monogamists in terms of the remaining infidelity-related variables (see Table 2). The frequency of cheating on their partner and of suspecting their partner of cheating had been higher in their case. They also differed in their understanding of infidelity; swingers’ meetings did not define infidelity for any of the swingers.

Following the above results, we performed a more in-depth analysis of the attitudes towards infidelity. Based on the context of swingers’ meetings, we explored the perception of different forms of intimate contact in the swinging group. Table 3 illustrates the outlook on infidelity by individuals engaged in swinging activity.

Table 3 presents the results concerning swingers’ attitudes towards infidelity in the study group. The average number of meetings was 36, no one was forced to participate in them, 16% of the respondents had experienced discomfort/jealousy at the sight of their partner kissing another person, 10% of the respondents had experienced discomfort/jealousy at the sight of their partner having sex with another person, and 18% of respondents believed that their partner felt discomfort at the sight of them kissing another person or having sex with another person.

Finally, we tested Hypothesis 4 assuming relations between attachment styles and the given aspects of infidelity. As predicted, the results showed a relationship between attachment styles and aspects of infidelity. Since

Table 1. Swingers vs. comparison group with regard to the variables analyzed.

	Comparison group (<i>n</i> = 49)		Swingers (<i>n</i> = 49)		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Cohen’s <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
1. Relationship satisfaction	4.438	.712	4.458	.824	-.133	92.053	.895	-.027
2. Secure style	45.714	7.958	49.469	7.808	-2.358	95.965	.020	-.476
3. Anxious style	25.898	10.936	22.653	12.141	1.390	94.970	.168	.281
4. Avoidant style	19.408	11.150	14.347	6.559	2.739	77.667	.008	.553
5. Reaction to infidelity	17.878	3.276	13.694	5.245	4.736	80.511	< .001	.957
6. Understanding infidelity	14.857	4.453	8.408	3.547	7.929	91.422	< .001	1.602
7. Attitude towards infidelity	21.816	4.357	18.184	5.574	3.594	90.714	< .001	.726

Table 2. Swingers vs. comparison group with regard to infidelity-related questions (Chi-Squared Tests).

Comparison group (<i>n</i> = 49)			Swingers (<i>n</i> = 49)		<i>Value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%				
Cheating on one's partner in the past							
No	38	78	20	41	13.686	1	< .001
Yes	11	22	29	59			
Suspecting one's partner (present or past) of cheating/infidelity.							
No	30	61	19	39	4.939	1	.026
Yes	19	39	30	61			
Attending a swingers club meeting together with one's partner can be considered as infidelity.							
No	29	59	49	100	25.128	1	< .001
Yes	20	41	0	0			

Table 3. Attitudes towards infidelity in the swinger group.

	not at all		to a small degree		moderately		to a large degree		to a very large degree	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
The sight of my partner kissing another person makes me feel uncomfortable/jealous	27	55	13	27	1	2	2	4	6	12
The sight of my partner having sex with another person makes me feel uncomfortable/jealous	24	49	17	35	3	6	1	2	4	8
My partner feels discomfort/jealousy seeing me kissing/having sex with another person.	20	41	13	27	7	14	5	10	4	8

infidelity is understood and perceived differently by swingers and monogamists, we decided to perform the correlation separately in the two groups (Table 4).

As shown in Table 4, only the swinger group displayed positive correlations between a secure attachment style and attitudes towards infidelity. The higher the secure attachment style level, the more negative the judgment of infidelity. In turn, a positive correlation of avoidant style with the reaction to infidelity was only observed in the monogamist group. It can be argued that monogamists, along with a higher avoidant attachment style, were characterized by being more upset in response to imagined infidelity.

To strengthen the interpretation of our data, we carried out an exploratory qualitative study by adding open questions to the survey. We asked about the motivation to engage in swinging, and its effect on the respondent and their relationship. The questions were directed to the swinging part of our sample, recognized as having participated in swinging at least once. Five swinging participants answered the questions. Table 5 provides a grid of the participants' responses.

When the respondents were asked about what had made them engage in swinging, the unanimous response

was that they were curious. Three of the four respondents agreed it was a good experience, whereas one assessed it negatively. Nevertheless, all participants expressed the belief that their self-esteem and self-confidence had increased, and that they were more sensitive to other people's needs. Those respondents who appreciated their own participation in swingers' meetings were also satisfied with the relationship. They perceived a stronger connection with their partners. One person pointed out their partner's expectations as unrealistic. This assessment went along with negative feelings about the past meeting.

5. DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to identify the differences in attachment style, relationship satisfaction, and views on infidelity between swingers and monogamists. In general, our results confirm such differences, but not in all aspects. Hypothesis 1 stating that swingers would be characterized by higher relationship satisfaction was not confirmed. These results are particularly interesting because previous research confirmed higher scores on relationship satisfaction in swingers (Bergstrand & Williams, 2000; Brooks et al., 2022; Fernandes, 2009; Rubel & Bogaert, 2015).

Table 4. Correlation matrix between study variables in the swinger and non-swinger group.

Swingers	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Relationship satisfaction	-					
2. Secure style	.590**	-				
3. Anxious style	-.418**	-.431**	-			
4. Avoidant style	-.671**	-.790**	.503**	-		
5. Reaction to infidelity	-.100	.147	.205	.002	-	
6. Understanding infidelity	-.042	-.055	.231	.169	.510**	-
7. Attitude towards infidelity	.128	.338*	-.005	-.162	.530**	.459**
Non-swingers	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Relationship satisfaction	-					
2. Secure style	.594**	-				
3. Anxious style	-.339*	-.452**	-			
4. Avoidant style	-.509**	-.731**	.695**	-		
5. Reaction to infidelity	.181	.222	-.109	.285*	-	
6. Understanding infidelity	.050	.084	.041	-.078	.444**	-
7. Attitude towards infidelity	-.002	.108	-.054	-.196	.317*	.488**

Notes. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 5. Participation in swingers' meetings and their impact on the individual.

1. What made you decide to attend a swingers' meeting?	
Participant 1	<i>Curiosity and a desire to expand boundaries.</i>
Participant 2	<i>Sexual development, mutual willingness to try contact with other people together.</i>
Participant 3	<i>Curiosity and fantasy.</i>
Participant 4	<i>Curiosity – my wife is my first and so far my only sexual and life partner :)</i>
2. What impact do you think participating in swingers' meetings has had on your life? Is this impact positive or negative?	
Participant 1	<i>Definitely positive.</i>
Participant 2	<i>For me personally, it has been a very positive impact. I became more intimate with my partner both sexually and psychologically. I also manage my jealousy better now.</i>
Participant 3	<i>Negative.</i>
Participant 4	<i>Positive. Sex is cool, after all.</i>
3. Has attending swingers' meetings changed the way you perceive yourself?	
Participant 1	<i>It has boosted my confidence and self-esteem.</i>
Participant 2	<i>My self-confidence has grown. I also allowed myself to indulge in bolder fantasies and I still derive a lot of pleasure from this today. I can now also manage jealousy more easily, which is something I used to have quite a problem with.</i>
Participant 3	<i>I am more aware of other people's interests.</i>
Participant 4	<i>I have learned to take life less seriously in the common-sense meaning of the word.</i>
4. Has attending swingers' meetings changed the way you perceive your partner?	
Participant 1	<i>I perceive my partner as more attractive as a result of how attractive she is to the other participants.</i>
Participant 2	<i>It has had a positive impact on sexual perception. I also see positive changes in his feelings towards me. I can see that he has grown closer to me.</i>
Participant 3	<i>It seems to me that he is imagining too much.</i>
Participant 4	<i>I am impressed by my wife's openness and know that she is completely honest with me. I love her even more because she is, above all, my true friend in the most beautiful sense of the word.</i>

This is worthy of interest especially in the context of confirmed Hypothesis 2, in which we assumed, on the basis of previous research, that swingers would be characterized by a higher secure attachment style (Morrison et al., 2013; Moors et al., 2015). A secure attachment style is known to be characterized by higher relationship satisfaction (Hammond & Fletcher, 1991; Tucker & Anders, 1999). Such data may result from the specific nature of the small group of swingers we were able to reach. Swingers indeed scored slightly higher there, but the difference was not statistically significant.

Swingers were characterized by a more frequent secure attachment style and a less frequent avoidant style. No differences in anxious style were observed. A secure attachment style is also related to styles of communication, conflict resolution, or jealousy (Domingue & Mollen, 2009; Levy & Kelly, 2010). Aspects related to communication may be fundamental here. Hoff and Beougher (2010) assessed how non-monogamous committed gay couples negotiated and regulated extra-relational sexual behavior. They found that those who had established shared rules were more satisfied in their primary relationships than those who had not set any rules. These factors can be very supportive when entering into and functioning in a swinger relationship. Additionally, a secure attachment style promotes less jealousy (Whitson & Mattingly, 2010) which is valuable during swingers' meetings. High intensity of jealousy would make planning, let alone actual swingers' meetings, impossible. Our results align with those obtained by Moors et al. (2015), where avoidance was linked to more positive attitudes and a greater willingness to engage in CNM, but the respondents were also less likely to actually engage in CNM relationships. Anxious style was not significant in these studies either. Research by Morrison et al. (2013) also confirms these links.

Swingers were characterized by a less negative reaction to infidelity, by a more selective understanding of infidelity, a less critical attitude towards infidelity. Additionally, the frequency of cheating on their partner and of suspecting their partner of cheating was higher among swingers. This is due to their more liberal views on sexual life.

It is worth noting that swingers also differed in their understanding of infidelity; for none of them did swingers' meetings define infidelity, as such encounters take place with the mutual knowledge and consent of all those involved. These findings are significant because, despite many studies concerning swingers or CNM, none of them show differences in the perception, definition and acceptance of infidelity among monogamists and swingers.

The swinger group displayed positive correlations between a secure attachment style and attitudes towards infidelity. The higher the secure attachment style level, the more critical the judgment of infidelity. No such relationship was observed in the monogamous group, although they generally judged infidelity more critically. Perhaps, since a secure attachment style promotes trust, honesty and good communication (Feeney & Noller, 1990; Simpson,

1990), it is associated with a strict judgment of infidelity in swingers' relationships. In such a setting, infidelity understood as a transgression against one's partner may be judged particularly negatively and considered unacceptable.

Along with a higher avoidant attachment style, monogamists were characterized by being more upset in response to imagined infidelity. Our findings are consistent with those obtained by Burchell and Ward (2011), where attachment avoidance was a significant predictor of distress at jealousy, particularly among men.

When asked why they engaged in swinger relationships, curiosity and the realization of sexual desires or fantasies were stated as the most common reasons. In responses to the question concerning impact on life, positive terms prevailed, but there were also some negative ones. When asked about self-perception after starting to engage in swinging, respondents most often emphasized boosted self-esteem and self-confidence. Responses to the final question concerning the change in perceived attractiveness of one's partner also indicate a boost in the perceived attraction of one's partner and a feeling of greater closeness after participating in swingers' meetings.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The present study is not without limitations. First, the research should have been conducted on a larger group of swingers, unfortunately this is difficult due to the traditional views of people in Poland and the negative judgments of CNM relationships (Grunt-Mejer, 2014). Although research indicates that this phenomenon occurs also in Poland (Demczuk & Cudo, 2016), encouraging swingers to respond to the survey is difficult. The swinging group is complex due to the tendency of the participants to hide their relationships, the need for privacy, or the fear of negative social evaluation. For this reason, the sample size in previous studies was often small (Serina et al., 2013; Vaillancourt & Few-Demo, 2014; Kimberly, 2016). Second, a larger and more balanced sample of individuals in CNM relationships would allow for analyses of gender differences, which were not possible in the current study due to limited statistical power. Such comparisons could be particularly informative in light of evolutionary psychology theories, which suggest that men and women may differ in their sexual strategies, emotional responses to infidelity, and motivations for engaging in consensual non-monogamy.

Thirdly, it would be particularly important to survey people who have stopped attending swingers' meetings to ask them about their reasons for stopping and to compare them in terms of attachment style and reaction to infidelity. Fourthly, an expansion could be considered of the questions concerning jealousy and its pleasant aspect, i.e. moderate jealousy displayed by the partner, with the potential effect of making the partner feel more attractive; the Actor Partner Interdependence Model (Kenny et al., 2006) would be valuable in this case. Fifthly, although studies such as Fülöp et al. (2020) confirm the effective-

ness of single-item measurements, we encourage using complex tools to measure various aspects of relationship satisfaction in future research. Moreover, the study focused primarily on sexual behaviors, and non-sexual aspects of swingers' meetings were not systematically assessed; however, participants could address these aspects through open-ended questions, which partially compensates for this limitation. Sixth, future studies should measure the sexual orientation of the participants. This may provide important data on the intensity of jealousy and perceptions of infidelity. To sum up, despite the above limitations, the current study has shed new light, especially on comparing perceptions, attitudes, judgments, and behaviors related to cheating between swingers and monogamists.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Our results demonstrate that engaging in swinging relationships, in a way that is harmless for both partners, is based on attachment style. Although swingers declared a different and more liberal understanding of infidelity compared to monogamists, if they did perceive their partner's behavior as cheating, they tended to judge them more critically. Moreover, to take advantage of a swinging relationship, they need to have a firm basis, provided by a secure attachment style.

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