

INTRODUCTION

The present study examined the correlation between existential isolation (EI; i.e., feeling alone in one's experience) and well-being in romantic relationships. More generally, higher EI is associated with detriments to well-being and mental health, such as greater feelings of anxiety, loneliness, sadness, and lower self-esteem and perceived meaning in life. Because of these associations, this study was interested if EI has an impact on romantic partnerships.

PARTICIPANTS

- ❖ One-hundred and eighty participants (30 men, 149 women, 1 non-binary; $M_{age} = 19.42$ years).
- ❖ All participants were recruited from the SONA participant pool at TCU.
- ❖ All in romantic relationships.

RESULTS

The results showed that high (vs. low) EI was associated with:

- ❖ Less relationship satisfaction, partner commitment, trust, and higher conflict and cheating attitudes.

CONCLUSION

- ❖ The results supported the hypothesis that high EI was associated with measures indicating a negative impact on romantic partnerships.
- ❖ This work, combined with future studies, should continue to explore the negative impact of EI on relationships (e.g., assess actual behavior).

Together, but Alone: Existential Isolation is Associated with Lower Well-Being in Romantic Relationships

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	EI	RS	RCM	RCF	TR	CI
EI	1.00					
RS	-.34**	1.00				
RCM	-.21**	.72**	1.00			
RCF	.30**	-.60**	-.39**	1.00		
TR	-.39**	.75**	.53**	-.59**	1.00	
CI	.13 [†]	-.22**	-.29**	.23**	-.26**	1.00

[†] = .09, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$

EI = Existential Isolation, RS = Relationship Satisfaction, RCM = Relationship Commitment, RCF = Relationship Conflict, TR = Trust, CI = Cheating Intentions

High EI is associated with lower relationship satisfaction, partner commitment, trust, and higher partner conflict and cheating intentions.

METHOD

Completed several measures in random order:

- Relationship Conflict Scale (RCS; Gordon & Chen, 2016). Six-items on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*; "My partner and I have a lot of disagreements").
- Investment Model Scale (IMS; Rusbult et al., 1998). Relationship satisfaction (5 items; e.g., "I feel satisfied with our relationship") and commitment (7 items; "I want our relationship to last for a very long time"). Responses to both subscales were made on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*).
- Trust within Close Interpersonal Relationships Scale (Rempel et al., 1985). Consisted of 17-items ("My partner has proven to be trustworthy, and I am willing to let him/her engage in activities which other partners find too threatening"). Responses were made on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*).
- Intentions Toward Infidelity scale (ITI; Jones et al., 2011; e.g., "I would be willing to be unfaithful to a partner if I knew I wouldn't get caught"). Responded on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*; 7 = *extremely likely*).

