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Be Honest with Me: An Exploration of Lies in Relationships

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BE HONEST WITH ME: AN EXPLORATION OF LIES IN RELATIONSHIPS

by

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ABSTRACT
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This study used Bryant's (2008) lie typology to understand how types of lies (real, gray, and white) compare to one another from the perspective of the individuals engaged in deceptive communication and test whether lies have an impact upon relationship qualities. Data were collected from a total of 246 participants using an online survey. Consistent with the hypotheses, there were significant differences across perceived lie characteristics (intention, consequences, beneficiary, truthfulness and acceptability) across real lies, white lies, and gray lies. The relationship qualities of satisfaction, similarity, trust, and closeness were not associated with the type of lie a participant told. Real lies were found to be the most serious type of lie having malicious intentions, negative consequences, be more self-serving, zero truthfulness, and considered unacceptable.

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Introduction

Individuals are taught that lies are considered harmful and immoral (Saxe, 1991); however, lies are an everyday occurrence and a communication tactic often seen in our daily life (Camden, Motley, & Wilson, 1984; DePaulo, Kashy, Kirkendol, Wyer, & Epstein, 1996; Hample, 1980; Lippard, 1988; Turner, Edgley, & Olmstead, 1975). On average, college students report telling two lies a day, or one lie in every three social interactions (De Paulo, 2004). By the time individuals reach the age of 60, they have told approximately 43,800 lies (DePaulo et al.1996). Individuals who tell larger numbers of lies are perceived as more manipulative, irresponsible, hyper-conscious of what people think, and more extroverted than people who tell fewer lies (DePaulo, 2004).

There are a variety of reasons for engaging in this form of deception. Saxe (1991) theorizes that deception is a form of "social lubricant" (p. 414). Deception can play an important part in our social interactions, "and an individual obsessed with being totally honest, might, in fact, become a social isolate" (p. 414). Also, a lie may be able to help individuals achieve their desired goals but, according to Bok (1978), lies are often to the detriment or threat of society. Additionally, lies can be considered a social skill (DePaulo & Jordan, 1982; Nyberg, 1993) and lead to significant foundational developments early in an individuals life (DeVilliers & DeVilliers, 1978).

In order to understand lying, researchers have tried to categorize this form of deception in many different ways. In particular, Bryant (2008)

conducted a series of interviews and focus groups with the objective of understanding variations in different forms of lies, specifically white lies, real lies, and gray lies. Based upon the analysis, Bryant concluded that these lies vary along dimensions of intention, consequences, truthfulness, acceptability, and the beneficiary of the lie. By isolating the characteristics along which these forms of lies may vary, it may be possible to better understand how these types of lies work, the way that they are perceived by those who tell lies, and predict some of the consequences of these different types of deception.

The purpose of this study is to gain a clearer understanding of how types of lies are differentiated and the perspective of the individuals involved in the deceptive communication. Following a review of the deception literature, I will propose a series of hypotheses aimed at testing the lie typology as described by Bryant. I will begin by reviewing literature about deception and identify different definitions and lie typologies. Subsequently, I propose a study that will use a survey methodology to gather examples of real lies, white lies, and gray lies.

Deceptive Communication: Lying Definition and Typologies

DePaulo et al. (1996) and Goffman (1959) describe lies as a common communication strategy used to control impressions and manage social interactions. Also, lies can be a more extreme skill for managing impressions, used to cultivate an untruth rather than adjusting or editing something that is true. Although the definitions of lies vary, there are still some commonalities across all definitions. Ennis, Vrij, and Chance (2008) define a lie as a message

given to another individual in which the intent is to deliberately deceive. Metts (1989) explains that deception involves an intentional misrepresentation of information with the goal of persuading someone to believe something the deceiver knows to be false. Although other definitions are available, there is a common thread among them that points to the presence of false information. Because Millar and Tesser (1988) provide a comprehensive definition of lying that encompasses characteristics from many other definitions, this paper will use their definition by describing lying as *intentionally telling something that is false to another individual when the truth violates the other person's expectations*.

With this definition in mind, it is possible to explore some of the variations among different types of lies. First, researchers have concluded that lies vary in severity--some are less serious than others (Seiter et al., 2002; Turner et al., 1975). For example, an insignificant lie without a harmful intent differs from a lie that has a clearly malicious intent. Second, Ekman (1985) identifies two basic types of lies: concealment and falsification. From subjects' conversations, Turner et al. (1975) uncovered five types of deception from analyzing information control (e.g., distortion and control): exaggeration, lies, diversionary response, half-truths, and secrets. Bradac (1983) developed three categories of deception: lies, secrets, and evasions. Additionally, Hopper and Bell's (1984) analysis of words associated with deception revealed six groups: crimes (e.g., forgery), lies (e.g., fibs), playings (e.g., joke), fictions (e.g., white lies, exaggeration), unlies (e.g., distortion), and masks (e.g., concealment). Bryant's (2008) qualitative

study described white lies, gray lies, and real lies as three different types of lies individuals may disclose. Through interviews and focus groups, college students' perceptions of white lies were analyzed in comparison to other types of lies.

White Lies, Real Lies, and Gray Lies

The three forms of lie that are focused upon by Bryant (2008) are white lies, real lies, and gray lies. First, white lies, are considered common, have a benevolent intent, partial truth, and trivial consequences (e.g., "someone says they caught a hundred-pound fish when they caught a five-pounder"). White lies lack the malicious intent compared to gray lies and real lies. Additionally, they are considered acceptable because of their harmless nature. A white lie could be telling your grandmother you are never sick and getting plenty of rest, when really you are not. The purpose of the lie is not to inflict harm, but to keep her from worrying. In contrast, an example of a gray lie could be telling your daughter that her father is away on business, when really he is in jail. This is a full-blown lie, but it's meant to save the other person from pain. Lastly, a real lie could be telling your significant other you are busy with homework, but really you are being unfaithful because you are upset he/she is not giving you enough attention. This complete fabrication is only benefiting the individual telling the lie. The intent behind this lie is malicious and self-serving; therefore it would not be classified as white or gray.

Second, gray lies are lies too serious to be categorized as white lies, but still cannot be classified as real lies (Bryant, 2008). The boundaries of gray lies

are not clear-cut because the lies in this category cannot fit completely within real lies or in white lies. Therefore, Bryant broke down gray lies into two categories: ambiguous gray lies, and justifiable gray lies.

Ambiguous gray lies are lies that can be interpreted in many different ways. Bryant's (2008) participants found reasons to explain why a lie in the ambiguous category could be considered a lie or not. One of Bryant's participants said, "We were able to reason why it was a lie and we were also able to reason why it was a white lie. And to me that makes it a gray area if you can classify it in both" (p. 36). These lies can be in the gray area because they are completely false but they can also be used to help someone. For example, telling a full-blown lie to your employer in order to save someone his or her job for a justifiable reason.

The second form of a gray lie is the justifiable gray lie. These lies can take the appearance of a real lie, but can be justified within certain situations. One participant in Bryant's (2008) study said, "It's a lie, but it's acceptable because anyone would do it" (p. 37). The majority of the lies in justifiable gray lies were "full-blown" and completely fabricated but used to protect oneself or another person from serious consequences if the lie was discovered. For instance, a lie told to your boss in order to save someone from losing their job. Essentially, real lies that may be justifiable are categorized as gray lies.

Third, real lies are defined as "unacceptable lies that are malicious, self-serving, complete fabrications of the truth, that hold serious consequences"

(Bryant, 2008, p. 37). Real lies have a clear intention to mislead or hurt someone and are commonly thought of as immoral, deceitful, and misleading. Lies have consequences, and identifying a lie as real means that it will have damaging effects. Real lies are thought to bear direct consequences and be of a self-serving nature; "these self-serving lies were described as being used to further a person's own interests, cover their own mistakes, or avoid responsibility for one's actions without regard for other people" (p. 33). The self-serving nature of real lies benefit the individual who initiated the lie. Bryant's participants identified real lies as being completely unacceptable regardless of the situation (Bryant, 2008). This acceptability factor adds to the distinctiveness of real lies because it addresses how permissible the lie is after it has been told. An individual uses white lies to make someone feel better, while with real lies have to be dealt with on a different level (e.g. feeling guilt) (Bryant). These different types of deception help us to understand the unique characteristics between lies. Also, Bryant's five factors help us to analyze the different fundamental components of a lie and assist in categorizing the nature of lying.

Lie Factors

As described above, different forms of lies vary along a set of common dimensions or factors: (a) intention, (b) consequences, (c) beneficiary of lie, (d) truthfulness, and (e) acceptability. First, intention is the motivation for telling the lie (Bryant, 2008). The intentions of a liar differ across real lies, white lies, and gray lies and may range from malicious to benign or deliberate to pure. This

range is important because intention can be "vastly different from lies told with the purpose of hurting someone or purposely misleading someone to your advantage or because you want to hurt them" (Bryant, 2008, p. 30) versus having a harmless intent.

The second factor that may be used to distinguish lie types is the severity of consequences that occur when a lie is uncovered. Therefore, the act of lying as well as the aftermath of the lie is evaluated. Consequences range from serious to trivial.

Third, the individual who benefits from a lie is described as the beneficiary of the lie (Bryant, 2008). When classifying lies according to the beneficiary, options range from self-serving to altruistic. Bryant identified a self-serving lie as one for which the intention is to benefit the person telling the lie. In contrast, an altruistic lie may protect someone or benefit another individual.

The fourth factor that Bryant (2008) uses to distinguish white, gray, and real lies is the degree of untruthfulness. Although all lies are, by definition, untruthful to some degree, the degree may vary. This level of truth in a lie is characterized as the truthfulness factor. Lies could have some partial amounts of truth, or could be completely made up. For example, telling someone about your weekend and adjusting some of the details, versus completely making up the entire weekend. In Bryant's study, white lies were commonly referred to as having a partial amount of truth, while real lies were completely fabricated and

had no amount of truth apparent in the lie. This factor ranged from a complete fabrication, to a lie with partial truth.

Last, the acceptability factor may be used to distinguish if a lie is reasonable. Bryant's (2008) participants identified some lies as being fair in some circumstances while other lies are intolerable in any given context. This level of justification within a lie is more commonly associated with white lies than real lies. These justifiable lies would therefore be considered more acceptable than those that are not as justified.

Distinguishing Lie Types

When used together, Bryant (2008) contends that the factors describing lies can be used to distinguish white, gray, and real lies from one another. Understanding why people interact a certain way in different contexts is important and necessary for the growing body of deception research. Being able to distinguish how people evaluate different types of lies will bring a unique understanding to deception research and provide a general assessment of the validity of the typology described by Bryant. Provided that the different types of lies are generally perceived as falling into the real, gray, and white categories, then the five factors of intention, consequences, beneficiary, truthfulness and acceptability should vary among the participants lies depending on what type of lie they have told. Examining the validity of Bryant's findings will help understand further research towards a universal typology of lies. Therefore, it is important to test whether the categorical system generated by Bryant is

consistent with the way people describe the lies they personally have told. Therefore, to better understand the types of lies, the following hypotheses are advanced:

Hypothesis 1: There are significant differences among Bryant's five factors of intention, consequences, beneficiary, truthfulness, and acceptability across real lies, white lies, and gray lies.

Hypothesis 2a: In comparison to white lies, real lies have higher levels of malicious intention, serious consequences, selfish beneficiary, untruthfulness and unacceptability.

Hypothesis 2b: In comparison to white lies, gray lies have higher levels of malicious intention, serious consequences, selfish beneficiary, untruthfulness, and unacceptability.

Hypothesis 2c: In comparison to gray lies, real lies have higher levels of a malicious intention, serious consequences, selfish beneficiary, untruthfulness, and unacceptability

Reasons and Implications for Lying

People lie for a variety of reasons. Using deception to conceal or hide information is described as a fundamental and sometimes a necessary part of many conversations (Turner, et al., 1975). Additionally, lying is often used to benefit the individual telling the lie (Depaulo et al., 1996). DePaulo and Kashy (1998) found that lies are typically told to facilitate positive interactions within different social relationships individuals possess; for example, telling someone you like their haircut when really you do not, or even saying someone has lost weight, when they have not. Individuals tell lies in order to handle their self-impressions and obtain rewards (Argo, White, & Dahl, 2006; Sengupta, Dahl, & Gorn, 2002), to present their emotional state in the most effective way within

different contexts (Andrade & Ho, 2009), and individuals use white lies as a tactic in order to be perceived as polite (Argo & Shiv, 2012).

McCornack and Levine (1990) found that deception commonly results in a negative emotional experience and could possibly lead to the termination of a relationship. Emotions regulate the effect that deception may have upon relationships. These reactions, which differ across situations, affect the way communication is developed (Hunter & Boster, 1978, 1987). Also, they influence the outcomes that are appropriate to the message (Hunter & Boster, 1978, 1987). Hendrick (1981) provided evidence that commitment and relational satisfaction are related to concealment and falsification. Deception and lying, if discovered, increase uncertainty (Planalp & Honeycutt, 1985; Planalp, Rutherford, & Honeycutt, 1988) in addition to provoking negative repercussions for the recipient of the lie (McCornack & Levine, 1990). These repercussions can vary based on the significance of the lie.

An individual's social goals play a large role in the use of deception. Lying is used to misrepresent the truth in order to attain these goals (Meibauer, 2011). The motivation an individual has to achieve social goals plays a part in the decision to tell a lie. These social goals may range from claiming a desired identity, supporting other's claims to an identity, and exchanging of emotions, opinions, or preferences (Depaulo et al., 1996). Additionally, lies may be used to gain something an individual would normally not be able to obtain, such as jobs, raises, promotions, or good grades (Depaulo et al., 1996).

Within the context of different relationships, lying may be used to avoid conflict, tension, and lessen the hurt of another individual's feelings (Lippard, 1988; Metts, 1989). Research has examined both the selfish and selfless motives for lying (Hample, 1980; Kalbfleisch, 2001; Metts & Chronis, 1986), although Camedon, Motley, and Wilson (1984) found that only 35% of lies are selfish in motivation. In fact, deception may have a modest positive impact on the relationship, particularly if the lie is not detected (Cole, 2001). Metts (1989) identified four potential reasons individuals lie: (a) protection of self, (b) save the face of another person, (c) protect relationships, or (d) accomplish one's goals during different interactions. Additionally, supporting Metts's previous research on reasons for lying, Kashy and DePaulo (1996) found that individuals lie for self-oriented and other-oriented reasons. Lies for self-oriented reasons are used to uphold the desired image of the liar whereas other-oriented lies seek to protect the recipient of the lie.

The decision to use deception when communicating and the discovery of deception have different impacts on individuals and relationships. Ennis, Vrij, and Chance (2008) explored the frequency of lying to strangers and close friends. This study found individuals told more lies to strangers than to close friends because of the importance for upholding their image and anxiety of how others will make judgments. Lying also occurs between individuals who are in romantic relationships. Additionally, love within a relationship, was not a

determining factor for how often an individual lied to their partner. Instead, commitment within the relationship determined the frequency of lies.

Since lying is a common tactic (Camden, et al., 1984; DePaulo, et al., 1996; Hample, 1980; Lippard, 1988; Turner, Edgley, & Olmstead, 1975), the individuals who are on the receiving end of the lie will, of course, vary widely for each individual. Depaulo and Kashy (1998) examined lying to close friends and strangers. Lying was found to be used less in close relationships than in casual relationships (e.g. acquaintances and strangers) because telling a lie can violate the ideals of a close relationship (Depaulo & Kashy, 1998).

Individuals who have known each other for a long time (e.g. dating relationships, relationship partners, close friends, family), know more information about each other than individuals who interact less frequently and do not have this established close relationship (Depaulo & Kashy, 1998). Therefore the temptation to tell lies within these types of relationships is lower than in casual relationships because of the knowledge between the individuals and the fear of lie discovery (Nezlek, 1995). The satisfaction, length, and committed aspect of the relationship play a role in determining to whom an individual will tell a lie.

Millar and Tesser (1988) predict individuals will lie when their behavior does not meet the expectations an individual holds for them. This was supported within parent-child and employee-employer relationships. Millar and Tesser found that the amount of lying in close relationship is higher than with casual partners since the expectations are more realistic than the ones trying to

be upheld for acquaintances and strangers. And, in these relationships, the perception of this deceptive act is associated with lower satisfaction (Cole, 2001). When the initiator of the lie becomes dependent on lying, this results in a decrease of the individual's perceived understanding (Cole). Since it is known that lying increases uncertainty and may have negative outcomes on the relationship, the following research question is asked:

Research Question 1: How do relationship qualities differ across individuals who report telling a white, real, or gray lie?

Method

Participants

Data were collected from 246 individuals. The average age of the participants was 21.18 years (SD = 4.72) and ranged from 18 to 56 years. A total of 151 respondents were female (61.4%) and 94 were male (38.2%). The participants stated their education levels as freshman (*N* = 79; 32.1%), sophomore (*N* = 67; 27.2%), junior (*N* = 52; 21.1%), senior (*N* = 43; 17.5%), and five participants did not identify their age (*N* = 5; 2.0%). The majority of the sample indicated that they were single (*N* = 107; 43.5%) or single in a committed relationship (*N* = 80; 32.5%) with others single dating (*N* = 41; 16.7%), and a few in a married/legal partnership (*N* = 8; 3.3%), engaged (*N* = 7; 2.8%), and divorced (*N* = 1; 0.4%). Two participants identified their relationship status as other (*N* = 2; 0.8%). The majority of participants were Caucasian (*N* = 191; 62.4%). Other participants identified themselves as Asian/Pacific Islander (*N* = 19; 7.7%), African American (*N* = 16; 6.5%),

Hispanic (*N* = 10; 4.1%), Middle Eastern (*N* = 2; 0.8%), Native American (*N* = 1; 0.4%), and other (*N* = 7; 2.8%). The majority of participants identified their sex as heterosexual or straight (*N* = 235; 95.9%), with a few gay or lesbian (*N* = 7; 2.9%), bisexual (*N* = 2; 0.8%); and other (*N* = 1; 0.4%). Last, the majority of participants were part-time employees (*N* = 128; 52.0%), while others were not employed (*N* = 77; 31.3%), full-time (*N* = 31; 12.6%), and temporary employment (*N* = 10; 4.1%) (See Table 7).

Procedures

Students enrolled in introductory communication classes were asked to complete a survey in exchange for extra credit. Once they received information about the study and confirmed that they met the participation criteria (over the age of 18), they were provided with an email that linked to which contained information about the IRB approved study and a link to the online survey. The online survey that was designed using Qualtrics (Qualtrics Labs, INC., Provo, UT), began with an informed consent letter, a link to give consent, and then a set of instructions that explained how to select responses to answer questions. All participants were informed that the study was voluntary, answers were anonymous, and they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

The online questionnaire included a mix of open and closed questions. To generate a variation in the reported lie types, each participant was given a definition of a lie and characteristics for one of the three types of lies (real lie,

white lie, or gray lie) (See Table 1). The characteristics provided for a real lie were: (a) it was a genuine deception—you were not telling the truth and knew this to be the case, (b) your intentions were not necessarily positive, (c) there was a complete fabrication of the truth, (d) the lie (or discovery of it) held serious consequences, (e) you benefitted in some way from telling the lie, and (f) telling the lie helped you to avoid some level of responsibility for something. The characteristics provided for a white lie were: (a) held some amount of truth and could be used to save yourself or someone from embarrassment, (b) the lie held minor consequences, (c) generally thought to be okay and most people wouldn't have a big problem with it, and (d) a lie that may be told regularly (by you and/or others) or would be considered common. The characteristics provided for a gray lie were: (a) it was a serious lie and not one that you would hear/tell everyday, (b) it's a full-blown lie but you weren't telling the lie to be malicious or mean, and (c) you told the lie to protect yourself or another person from serious harm if the truth was discovered.

The purpose of these characteristics was to help the participant think of an example that would accurately fit the lie they were assigned. The first portion of the survey asked the participants to consider a time when they told a lie to one other person. The participants were then prompted to consider each lie, provide a brief description that explained the nature of the deception, the relationship to whom the lie was told (e.g., friend, family, co-worker, etc.), and any details they felt necessary in order to fully understand the lie they provided.

Participants were then asked to provide the initials of the individual to whom they told the lie. The initials were then automatically positioned into subsequent items that asked the respondent to provide responses about the characteristics of the relationship.

Measures

Lie factors. Bryant (2008) identified five factors to distinguish white, gray, and real lies from one another. In some cases, specific language was provided, that further detailed the nature of a particular factor. For example, under the category of intention, it was noted that lies may vary along a continuum of malicious to benign as well as from deliberate to pure. These descriptors were used to generate bipolar adjective pairs to which participants were asked to respond. Thus, the degree to which participants perceived each lie to have the characteristics associated with Bryant's lie factors was reflected in what was intended to be five separate measures---one set of five bipolar adjective pairs for each lie factor (See Table 4).

Prior to hypothesis testing, a factor analysis was computed to assess whether the adjective pairs clustered in a manner consistent with Bryant's typology. The analysis indicated a total of six factors, the first five were consistent with the intended measure: (1) Intention (α =. 87), (2) Consequences (α = .92), (3) Beneficiary (α = .88, (4) Truthfulness (α = .93, (5) Acceptability (α =) .88. The sixth factor was composed of two items from the intention scale (α = .66). Those items were, undetermined – purposeful, and unplanned –

planned. Because these items formed an independent factor they were labeled as premeditated (α = .66). This new factor was identified as *the degree to which the liar takes into consideration the timing or method of telling the lie in order to increase the likelihood of success*. Thus, each of the six factors was measured by positioning the descriptive terms (e.g., malicious to benign) as bipolar adjective pairs.

Relationship qualities. To measure participants' perceptions of their relationships, a set of pre-existing measures was modified for use in this study. The four relationship qualities assessed were satisfaction, trust, similarity, and closeness (See table 6). The similarity and closeness scales were based upon a modified version of the measure of relational closeness that was used by Vangelisti, Caughlin, and Timmerman (2001) in their research about revealing secrets. Reliability for the similarity scale was α = .91. The reliability for the closeness scale was α = .93. The trust scale was based upon a modified version of the Individualized Trust Scale (ITS) that was previously used by Wheeless and Grotz (1977). Reliability for these items was α = .93. Lastly, the satisfaction scale was based upon a modified version used by Vangelisti and Caughlin (1997). Reliability for these items was α = .93

Participant lie classification. The participants were given the option to describe their lies as a real lie, white lie, or gray lie. After the participants explained their lie, they were asked, "Sometimes lies are described as white lies, and other times they are described as real lies. If you had to classify the lie you

described on a continuum from white lies to real lies, how you classify?" The options that were provided were (1) a white lie, (2) in between a white lie and a real lie, and (3) a real lie. This was used to determine whether there were differences in participant's perceptions of the type of lie they described and the way the lies were categorized by coders (See Table 8).

Lie coding. After the data were collected, two independent coders were trained to use Bryant's (2008) coding system. A codebook was developed that explained Bryant's descriptions of the lie types and then coders were allowed, a practice run with a small subset of data. During this process, they were provided the opportunity to ask questions and confirm their understanding of each lie type. They then categorized the remaining lies.

Upon learning the coding system, coders reviewed the lies and categorized them in one of three ways: real, gray, white, or other. To be classified as a real lie, an example had to consist of an unacceptable lie that only benefit the individual telling the lie. This type of lie is a complete fabrication of the truth and when told, hold serious consequences. For example, one participant's lie example stated,

> I was cheating on my husband and lied about where I was going and what I was doing. We were having problems in our marriage and had been for many years. He was withholding intimate relations between us and I just could not handle it any longer. I needed to have some physical intimacy. I was still trying to work through our issues and was hopeful that my husband would eventually see the damage that he was doing and I was not planning on leaving, I just needed some physical intimacy. I ran into an old boyfriend from high school so it was an opportunity. I was not out loooking for someone or anything like that....it was just

> an opportunity that presented itself and I took advantage of it. If the lie was discovered I am not sure that it would cause physical harm to anyone, but it would cause emotional harm and it would have harmful effects on my marriage (R196).

From the data, this is an accurate example that was classified as a real lie. This participant was aware of her actions and knew it would have harmful effects on her relationship if the lie were revealed.

To be classified as a white lie, the example provided by participants had to be of a harmless nature and with trivial consequences (Bryant, 2008). For example, one participant's lie example stated, "I told my roommate that her outfit looked cute when I really thought it didn't look that nice. She asked me for my opinion so I lied to her. It wasn't a horrible outfit, but it could have looked better" (W41). This participant was sparing her roommates feelings. Additionally, this lie if told would be considered a common lie used to avoid unnecessary conflict, or save face.

To be classified as a gray lie, the example could be considered a real lie, but would provide some reason for justification. Or, a gray lie could be a completely fabricated lie but used to protect another person from a serious consequence. For example, one participant's lie example stated,

> When I was in high school, maybe five or six years ago now, one of my best friends was having a lot of trouble with her parents at home. She was always telling me how her dad hit her and her mom wouldn't do anything about it. One night, after an altercation with her dad, she ran away from home, and called me to pick her up. I did, without hesitation, and brought her to my house. Eventually, her parents decided to call the police when she didn't return for a few hours, and ended up giving them my address after

> they assumed she was with me. The cops came to my house, and questioned me as to where she was. She was sitting in my living room, but I lied and told them I hadn't seen her after I dropped her off somewhere and left. I was threatened with being charged with assisting a runaway, but I didn't care. Keeping my friend away from her abusive parents was more important to me (G167).

This participant's lie was a complete fabrication of the truth, but used to protect the participant as well as her friend from harm. Additionally, this gray lie may have held serious consequences but the participant lacked the malicious intent for telling the lie.

After the coding process, the lie types were compared to assess intercoder reliability. Given the ordinal nature of the lie categories (ranging from white to gray to real), a weighted version of Cohen's Kappa (Agresti, 1990; 2002; Weighted Kappa, Kappa ordered for categories. IBM, 2011) was used. Intercoder reliability was within the acceptable range, weighted $\kappa = .72$. After computing reliability, the coders met to resolve disagreements and provide the final lie classifications.

Results

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis one predicted significant differences among Bryant's five factors of intention, consequences, beneficiary, truthfulness, and acceptability across real lies, white lies, and gray lies. The hypothesis was tested using MANOVA with the three coded lie types as the independent variable and measures of Bryant's characteristics as the dependent variables. The omnibus test was significant, indicating the presence of significant differences in means,

Wilk's Lambda = .55, $F(12, 210) = 6.10$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .26$ (See Table 3). The follow-up univariate F test indicated significant differences in lie intention across the three lie types, $F(2, 110) = 7.50$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$. Post hoc analyses (Tukey) found that the mean for real lies ($M = 2.60$, $SD = .91$) was significantly greater than the mean for gray lies ($M = 2.11$, $SD = .53$), and white lies ($M = 1.94$, $SD = .53$). There were significant differences for the characteristic of beneficiary, $F(2, 110) = 6.2$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. The post hoc analyses found the mean of real lies ($M = 3.60$, $SD = .75$), was greater than the mean for white lies ($M = 3.00$, $SD = .99$). There was no significant difference between gray lies ($M = 3.13$, $SD = .66$) and white and real lies in terms of the beneficiary of the lie. The univariate F test for the characteristics of consequences, $F(2, 110) = 23.9$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .30$, truth, $F(2, 110) = 18.40$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .25$, and acceptability, $F(2, 110) = 19.0$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .26$, were significant. The mean perceived consequences for real lies ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 1.01$), was greater than the mean for white lies ($M = 2.09$, $SD = 1.02$). Additionally, the mean for white lies was less than the mean for gray lies ($M = 3.10$, $SD = .90$) and real lies. For the characteristic of truthfulness, real lies ($M = 4.18$, $SD = .1.00$) had a greater mean than gray lies ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.08$) and white lies ($M = 2.88$, $SD = .96$). Finally, the mean scores for the acceptability of a lie indicated that real lies had a greater mean ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.08$) than gray lies ($M = 2.42$, $SD = .88$) and white lies ($M = 2.09$, $SD = .90$). White lies and gray lies did not differ in the perceived levels of truthfulness or acceptability. There were a substantial

number of differences between the three lies of five of the six variables; therefore, Hypothesis 1 received support.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2a. Hypothesis 2a predicted that, in comparison to white lies, real lies have higher levels of malicious intention, serious consequences, selfish beneficiary, untruthfulness, and unacceptability. As indicated above, the real lie means for intention, consequences, and beneficiary were higher in comparison with white lies (See Table 3). Additionally, real lies had a lower level of truthfulness and acceptability. Results show that real lies are associated with having a more malicious intent, negative consequences, be more self-serving, have less truthfulness, and also considered less acceptable. Therefore, Hypothesis 2a was supported.

Hypothesis 2b. Hypothesis 2b predicted that in, comparison to white lies, gray lies have higher levels of malicious intention, serious consequences, selfish beneficiary, untruthfulness, and unacceptability (See Table 3). The above summary of the comparison of the means did indicate that gray lies are associated with having higher levels of intention, consequences and beneficiary, while having lower levels of truthfulness and acceptability. Therefore, Hypothesis 2b was supported.

Hypothesis 2c. Hypothesis 2c predicted that compared to gray lies, real lies would have higher levels of malicious intention, serious consequences, selfish beneficiary, untruthfulness, and unacceptability (See Table 3). As summarized in

the statistical analyses for Hypothesis 1, real lies were associated with higher levels of intention. Additionally, mean scores for beneficiary, truthfulness, and acceptability had higher mean scores for real lies versus gray lies and white lies. Consequences, although not statistically significant at $p<.05$ there was indication that real lies had a slightly larger mean than gray lies, $p<.10$. Therefore, Hypothesis 2c received only partial support.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 sought to determine how relationship qualities would differ across individuals who, in the context of a relationship, told a white lie, real lie, or gray lie (See Table 5). The MANOVA did not indicate that there were significant differences across lie types, Wilk's Lambda = .96, $F(8, 218) = .53$, $p > .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$.

Difference Between Bryant's Typology and Participant Lie Classification

In order to further assess the degree to which participants' perceptions of each lie type was similar to, or different from, the classification using Bryant's typology, I more closely examined all instances in which a participant's label for their lie type differed from that of the coders. In other words, this analysis sought to determine whether there were systematic variations in participant's perceptions of lie factors that might account for a difference in the way that a participant described their lie and the way that it would have been categorized by coders.

To make the comparisons, independent samples t tests were used to assess whether the means for each participant's self-report of lie characteristics differed from the score on the characteristic from lies for which the coders and participants agreed. For example, if a participant described a lie as a white lie but the coders classified it as a real lie, I compared the mean for the characteristic to lies for which coders and participants agreed that the lie was a white lie to the mean for respondents who saw their lie as a white lie but coders saw it as a real lie. The following sections indicate the nature of each comparison and the significant t statistics for each lie factor comparison.

1. Real lies experienced as gray lies. There were significant differences in comparison of when a coder classified a lie as a real lie, and the participants experienced it as a gray lie (See Table 8). When a participant views a real lie as a gray lie, the characteristics that distinguish the two are intention $t(91) = 2.26$, $p < .05$, consequences $t(92) = 5.33$, $p < .05$, truthfulness $t(93) = 1.98$, $p < .05$, and acceptability $t(93) = 2.05$, $p < .05$. Among the lies for which the coders and participants similarly classified a lie as a real lie, the mean scores for intention were 2.60, ($SD = .91$). In cases for which the coders classified a lie as real but participants classified it as gray, the intention mean was 2.33 ($SD = .59$). Thus, one reason why participants may disagree with Bryant's classification of real lies and, instead, see the lie as a gray lie may be related to a lower perceived level of intention. Next, for the characteristic of consequences, there was a significant difference across Bryant-classified real lies ($M = 3.63$, $SD =$

1.02), and participant-classified gray lies (*M* = 2.48, *SD* = 1.07). The participants classified Bryant's real lie as a gray lie when associated with lower perceived consequences for telling the lie. For the characteristic of perceived truthfulness, when Bryant's (2008) typology would classify a lie as a real lie (*M* = 4.19, *SD* = .99), truthfulness was greater than when participants saw their lie as a gray lie (*M* = 3.81, *SD* = .79). There was a lower level of acceptability when participants experienced a real lie (*M* = 3.39, *SD* = 1.10) as a gray lie (*M* = 2.99, *SD* = .70).

2. Real lies experienced as white lies. When participants were asked to indicate a real lie (*M* = 3.63, *SD* = 1.02), participants distinguished white lies (*M* = 2.83, *SD* = 1.07) from real lies solely on the characteristic of consequences, $t(66) = 2.60$, $p < .05$. In terms of when coders and participants agreed that the lie was a white lie compared to lies that coders classified as white but participants classified as real; there were no significant differences (See Table 9).

3. Gray lies experienced as real lies. The mean scores for lie factors were compared across instances in which a lie would be classified by the Bryant typology as a gray lie but participants viewed as real lies (See Table 10). The mean perceived level of truthfulness differed for lies that Bryant's typology would classify as gray (and participants perceived similarly) (*M* = 3.30, *SD* = 1.08) from the perceived level of truthfulness for lies that Bryant's typology would classify as

gray but participants experienced as real (M = 4.27, SD = .79), $t(47) = -3.50$, $p < .05$.

4. Gray lies experienced as white lies. When a lie that was classified by both the Bryant typology and participants as a gray lie, this was compared to lies that would be classified by the Bryant typology as gray but were experienced by participants as white, there was one significant difference in the perceived lie characteristics (See Table 11). The mean perceived level of consequences was greater for the lies that Bryant's typology classified as gray (M = 3.10, SD = .90) than for the lies classified as white by participants (M = 1.90, SD = .78), $t(33) = 3.39$, $p < .05$.

5. White lies experienced as gray lies. The perceived mean of truthfulness was different for the lies Bryant's typology classified as white and was experienced as white (M = 2.92, SD = .96) when compared to the lies that were classified as white but experience as gray (M = 3.39, SD = 1.03), $t(69) = -2.00$, $p < .05$ (See Table 12).

Discussion

This study examined the way that types of lies (real, white, gray) differ from one another, the association between telling certain types of lies and relationship outcomes, and compared the way that lies are experienced relative to the way that research would classify the lies. Data were collected from a total of 246 participants and consisted of descriptions of lies, the way that participants described the lies, and measures of relationship properties. Results indicated that

there are significant differences in the degree to which Bryant's (2008) factors differed among real lies, white lies and gray lies—findings that help to provide some validation of Bryant's typology of lie characteristics. Specifically, real lies had less truthfulness and less acceptability than gray lies and white lies. In other words, when a lie is told, if it has limited truth and would be generally unacceptable, it would be associated with a real lie. However, there was no association between participant's reports of telling lie types and their perceived relationship qualities. Finally, for participants who would classify their lies differently than would be expected using the Bryant typology, there were differences in a range of perceived lie characteristics. The remainder of this paper situates these findings with the extant literature, provides implications for future research and practices, and then concludes by identifying limitations and future directions.

Conclusion

Overall, there were some unique findings as a result of this study. The intention of the lie did play a large role among the three types of lies. This is consistent with past research suggesting that lies may be viewed differently, depending on how the intention is perceived (Goffman, 1967; Walker, Wilkinson, Queen, & Sharpe, 2003; and Vangelisti & Young, 2000). The characteristic of consequences was significantly different for all three types of lies. Real lies had greater consequences than white lies. Additionally, telling a white lie had fewer consequences than telling a gray lie. Real lies were found to be less truthful and

less acceptable than gray lies or real lies. This is consistent with Bryant's research on real lies being more malicious, self-serving, zero truth, unacceptable, and when told they hold serious consequences. It is apparent in this study that real lies, in comparison with gray lies and white lies, have a higher level of severity.

Gray lies were found to be associated with a less malicious intent, hold more truth, and be more acceptable than real lies. There were some places for which the gray lies differed from real lies and white lies. Gray lies differed on the level of intention, truthfulness and acceptability in comparison with real lies. The severity of the lies consequences was the only characteristic that differed between gray lies and white lies. Bryant's (2008) research indicates that gray lies may not always be completely different than real lies and white lies because they are considered ambiguous. However, this data suggests that there may not be as much ambiguity within gray lies as previously thought because of the differences found within the data.

White lies were linked to having a less self-serving nature, positive intentions, greater truthfulness, more acceptable, and have less severe consequences than real lies and gray lies. This is consistent with past research on white lies that are told for many reasons, specifically to save face, guide social interactions, and avoid conflict (Millar & Tesser, 1988). For example, participant's lies about someone's appearance or food preference were common among white lies. These findings support Bryant's (2008), definition of white lies

as "sparing someone's emotions or feelings," are harmless, and considered trivial and common lies when told to another person. Overall, there was support for Bryant's typology. Real lies, white lies, and gray lies were found to be similar between what the participants thought a lie was and what Bryant's typology said. Additionally, Bryant's characteristics were similar with the way participants identified their lies.

The type of lie being told was not related to the relationship qualities of satisfaction, similarity, closeness, and trust within the participant's relationships. This may be because these were individual examples of lies rather than reporting more general patterns of lies told in relationships. Past research has found that lying is common and used everyday (Camden, et al., 1984; DePaulo, et al., 1996; Hample, 1980; Lippard, 1988; Turner, Edgley, & Olmstead, 1975).

Deception has been found to be a form of "social lubricant" (Sax, 1991), and can play an important role in the way that individuals interact within relationships. A single lie may not hurt the relationship and, in some ways, it may actually help the relationship (Bok, 1987; Devillers & Devillers, 1978; Sax, 1991). Therefore, individual examples of deception may not be associated with more general relationship perceptions that focus upon satisfaction, similarity, closeness, and trust.

Along with Bryant's five characteristics that encompass her definition of real lies, white lies, and gray lies, a sixth characteristic emerged from the data. This sixth characteristic, the degree of premeditation prior to telling the lie, may

expand our understanding of variations between real lies, white lies, and gray lies. The definition of premeditated is the degree to which the liar takes into consideration the timing or method of telling the lie. A lie could range from completely planned out to completely unplanned. A real lie had the strongest association between the lies and the premeditated characteristic, being completely planned out or purposeful. Although a white lie could be considered unplanned or not originally planned due to its fairly mundane and frequent presence in conversation (Bryant, 2008).

Next, the results from this study suggest that participants do not always feel their lies fit in the same place along the real to white continuum as Bryant (2008) identifies. Participant's experience of the lie they told did not always fit with Bryant's characteristics and classification. Therefore, differences in participant's perceptions of how they described their lie and the way coders classified the lie emerged.

There were difference in the participant's perceptions for when a coder classified a lie as a real lie, and participants classified it as gray. One reason participants may have disagreed with Bryant's (2008) classification is because of the perceived levels of intention, consequences, truthfulness, and acceptability. Participants may have viewed their lie as a gray lie because the lie was associated with more positive intentions, fewer consequences, more truth within the lie, and considered acceptable when compared to a real lie. When a lie was coded as gray, participants viewed the lie as white. Bryant explained gray lies

as, "not necessarily real lies, yet were too serious to be considered white lies." Consequence was the only characteristic with a highlighted difference between the coders and participant's experiences. The perception from the liar's point of view was a big determining factor in whether the coders and participants agreed. This is consistent with past research that lies are viewed differently depending on how the intention is perceived (Goffman, 1967; Walker, et al., 2003; Vangelisti & Young, 2000). It is possible that Bryant's classification of a real lie, white lie and a gray lie need to be further explored in order to have clear boundaries of what constitutes each type of lie.

Implications

This study contributes to a greater body of research on deception. Based on the findings in this study, people can recognize and distinguish the lie types and the lie characteristics that can help advance our knowledge on deception and lie telling. The general pattern of characteristics of this study did find that there are differences among the three types of lies. However, it's important to note that each characteristic did not differ for each lie type. Participants' perceptions can be influenced as they draw distinctions across various types of lies (Pope & Forsyth, 1986). Therefore, this could be because the actual lie told may not really matter, but how the lie is experienced and perceived in the relationship may be important in how it is categorized (Stoll, Becker, & Timmerman, 2012). Although, there is not evidence that real lies, white

lies, and gray lies have an influence on relationships, people should recognize that, if discovered, real lies generally are perceived as worse than are gray lies and white lies. Additionally, honesty should still be considered important, regardless if lies are a communication tactic and seen throughout our daily life. (Camden, Motley, & Wilson, 1984; DePaulo, Kashy, Kirkendol, Wyer, & Epstein, 1996; Hample, 1980; Lippard, 1988; Turner, Edgley, & Olmstead, 1975).

One of the most unique findings in this study is the idea of the premeditated characteristic. This supports Bryant's suggestions of future research to see the degree of how lies are planned out in advance (Hopper & Bell, 1984; Knapp & Comadena, 1979; Seiter et al., 2002).

Limitations & Future Research

As with any empirical investigation, this study has limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, self-reported data were collected from a fairly homogenous sample of university undergraduates. Although there were some students who were older and had longer relationship histories, it should be recognized that generalizations from this study will most directly apply to a population that is similar to this sample. Additional research addressing real lies, white lies, and gray lies should be conducted to see if systematic differences would remain with a larger, random sample.

Second, these data were based upon recall of the participants. The participants could have distorted their lie descriptions and evaluations because they could not thoroughly recall all of the details pertaining to the lie they told. Since they were providing retrospective data relying on their memory of the lie, more recent events that have transpired since the time the lie was told could have an impact upon their current perceptions.

Third, the participants were prompted to give one of the three types of lies. This was done in an effort to trigger some variation in the types of lies being reported. In construction of the survey, effort was made to separate the portion where the participant rated the lie characteristics from the page where the lie was explained. The participant's instructions were to "think of a certain type of lie" and then definitions were provided. The participant could have failed to interpret the lie in regard to the definition and therefore influenced the results.

Fourth, participants were asked to only provide one lie, compared to analyzing lies over a specific time period. It is possible that if each participant provided lies over a period of time and incorporating each lie type they would have been able to distinguish better the difference on a continuum between real lies, white lies, and gray lies. This should be compared with additional research focusing on deception. Also, specifically looking at lies over a designated time period.

In addition to efforts to address the aforementioned limitations, I see two areas of future research as especially beneficial. First, this study found that the

qualities of a relationship might not be associated with the type of lies that are told. It may be beneficial for future research to focus on the justification of the lie. According to Bryant (2008), the justifiable nature of a lie is a primary determinant in how a lie is classified. If relationship qualities play less into lying than previous research has thought, the justifications of why individuals tell a specific type of lie may be beneficial in comparing the qualities of a relationship within deception research.

Last, previous research has identified the content and outcome themes from Bryant's (2008) real lies, white lies and gray lies (Stoll, Becker, Timmerman, 2012). Looking at the results of this study, it is suggested that the difference between the liars experience and Bryant's experience may be advanced and the differences further understood by analyzing the content and outcome of the lies participants told.

Contributing to research on deception, this study provided an important look into how individuals classify different types of lies. Future research should advance these findings by integrating further knowledge on individual's perceptions and how it influences their decisions. Integrating different lie typologies, and looking at lies over a period of time will help to further analyze the validity of these findings and advance deception research by clarifying and expanding on lie classifications.

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Table 1: Bryant's (2008) characteristics of real lies, white lies, and gray lies

	Intention	**Consequences**	**Beneficiary**	**Truthfulness**	**Acceptability**
Real Lies	Malicious Deliberate Deceptive Deceitful	Serious Direct	Self-Serving Egotistical	Complete Fabrication Blatant Untruth Zero Truth	Unacceptable Not Justified
White Lies	Benign Pure	Trivial Meaningless Harmless	Altruistic Other-Focused Protecting Helpful	Partial Truth Half Truth Bending the Truth Stretching the Truth	Acceptable Justified Expected Common
Gray Lies	Ambiguous Intention Malicious	Ambiguous Consequences Direct	Ambiguous Beneficiary Self-serving	Ambiguous Level of Truth Complete Fabrication	Open to interpretation Justified Acceptable

Table 2. Correlation matrix of lie characteristics and relationship qualities Note: *= p<.05

	Mean	*SD*	Intention	Consequences	Beneficiary	Truth	Acceptability	Premeditated	Satisfaction	Closeness	Trust	Similarity
Intention	2.24	0.83	1									
Consequences	2.83	1.16	--	1								
Beneficiary	3.29	0.77	--	--	1							
Truth	3.68	1.04	--	--	--	1						
Acceptability	2.75	1.03	--	--	--	--	1					
Premeditated	3.56	1.14	--	--	--	--	--	1				
Satisfaction	1.92	1.08	--	--	--	--	--	--	1			
Closeness	2.25	1.26	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1		
Trust	1.91	1.11	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	
Similarity	2.29	1.01	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
Intention	2.24	0.83	1									
Consequences	0.19*			1								
Beneficiary	.43*			.23*	1							
Truth	.19*			.29*	.25*	1						
Acceptability	0.47*			0.41*	0.47*	0.45	1					
Premeditated	0.31			.14*	.14*	.15*	-0.07	1				
Satisfaction	.23*			-0.01	-0.01	0	0.07	0.06	1			
Closeness	.23*			0	0	0.05	0.03	0.09	.75*	1		
Trust	.25*			-0.01	-0.01	0.06	-0.03	0.1	0.72*	0.72*	1	
Similarity	.25*			0.12	0.07	1	0.02	0.07	.58*	.68*	.55*	1

Table 3: Lie means and characteristics

	Real Lie Mean *(SD)*	**Gray Lie Mean *(SD)***	**White Lie Mean *(SD)***
Intention	2.6ab .91	2.11a .53	1.94b .40
Consequences	3.6a 1.01	3.1b .90	2.09ab 1.02
Beneficiary	3.58a .75	3.13 .66	2.99a .99
Truth	4.18a 1.00	3.3a 1.08	2.88 1.00
Acceptability	3.36ab 1.08	2.42a 1.88	2.09b .90
Premeditated	3.67 1.21	3.8 1.01	3.3 1.12

Table 4: Lie characteristics

Characteristics			
Variable and Items	**Mean**	***SD***	**α**
Intention			
When I told the lie to…my intentions were…	2.24	0.83	0.87
Loving -- Malicious	--	--	--
Kind-hearted -- Mean-spirited	--	--	--
Gentle -- Cruel	--	--	--
	--	--	--
Premeditated			
Undetermined -- Purposeful	3.56	1.14	0.66
Unplanned -- Planned	--	--	--
	--	--	--
Consequences			
When I told this lie to…I felt the consequences would be…	2.82	1.16	0.92
Trivial -- Serious	--	--	--
Meaningless -- Significant	--	--	--
Harmless -- Damaging	--	--	--
Safe -- Dangerous	--	--	--
Innocent -- Hurtful	--	--	--
	--	--	--
Beneficiary			
When considering who would benefit from the lie, I was feeling…	3.36	1.07	0.88
Generous -- Selfish	--	--	--
Altruistic -- Egotistical	--	--	--
Other-focused -- Self-focused	--	--	--
Selfless -- Self-serving	--	--	--
	--	--	--
Truthfulness			
When I think about the degree to which this lie was truthful or untruthful, I feel that it was…	3.68	1.04	0.93
True -- Untrue	--	--	--
Honest -- Dishonest	--	--	--
Fact -- Fabrication	--	--	--
Real -- Unreal	--	--	--
Sound -- Unsound	--	--	--
	--	--	--
Acceptability			

When I think about how acceptable my lie was, I feel that it was…	2.74	1.03	0.88
Acceptable -- Unacceptable	--	--	--
Justified -- Unreasonable	--	--	--
Common -- Abnormal	--	--	--
Respectable -- Disreputable	--	--	--
Proper -- Unfitting	--	--	--

Table 5: Lie means and relationship qualities

	Real Lie Mean ***(SD)***	**Gray Lie Mean** ***(SD)***	**White Lie Mean** ***(SD)***
Satisfaction	2.11 1.25	2.07 1.01	1.86 1.00
Closeness	2.44 1.39	2.46 1.29	2.16 1.15
Trust	1.95 1.20	1.98 .96	1.86 1.18
Similarity	2.41 .93	2.61 1.11	2.16 1.00

Table 6: Relationship qualities

Variable and Items	**Mean**	***SD***	**α**
Satisfaction	2.58	0.54	0.93
I am happy with my relationship…	--	--	--
I am satisfied with my relationship…	--	--	--
I like…	--	--	--
As far as relationships go, my relationship with…is more satisfying than most…	--	--	--
I do not like the relationship that I have with…	--	--	--
I have a difficult relationship with..	--	--	--
	--	--	--
Trust	1.91	1.11	0.93
…is trustworthy	--	--	--
I think that… is honest…	--	--	--
…is reliable	--	--	--
I really do trust…	--	--	--
	--	--	--
Similarity	2.29	1.01	0.91
…and I like a lot of the same things	--	--	--
…and I have similar attitudes about things	--	--	--
…and I are very similar	--	--	--
…and I often share perspectives	--	--	--
	--	--	--
	--	--	--
Closeness	2.48	0.84	0.93
I am very close to…	--	--	--
…'s opinion is very important to me	--	--	--
I often discuss personal things with…	--	--	--
The relationship that I have with…is distant…	--	--	--
I have a tight-knit relationship with…	--	--	--
	--	--	--
Note: Response options range from completely agree to completely disagree on a five pt differential scale			

Table 7: Demographics

Age	21.18	4.72
	--	--
Relationship Status	**Frequency**	**%**
Single	107	43.5%
Single dating	41	16.7%
Single in a committed relationship	80	32.5%
Engaged	7	2.8%
Married/legal partnership	8	3.3%
Divorced	1	0.4%
Other	2	0.8%
Ethnicity	--	--
Asian/Pacific Islander	19	7.7%
African American	16	6.5%
Caucasian	191	77.6%
Hispanic	10	4.1%
Native American	1	0.4%
Middle Eastern	2	0.8%
Other	7	2.8%
Student Status	--	--
Freshman	79	32.1%
Sophomore	67	27.2%
Junior	52	21.1%
Senior	43	17.5%
Other	5	2.0%
Current Job Status	--	--
Part-time	128	52.0%
Full-time	31	12.6%
Temporary employment	10	4.1%
Not employed	77	31.3%
Sexual Orientation	--	--
Heterosexual or straight	235	95.9%
Gray or lesbian	7	2.9%
Bisexual	2	0.8%
Other	1	0.4%
Gender	--	--
Male	94	38.2%
Female	151	61.4%
Prefer not to respond	1	0.4%

Table 8: Bryant's Classification and Participants Experience: Real Lie-Real Lie Vs. Real Lie-Gray Lie

	Real Lies (Bryant) (*SD*)	**Gray Lies (Participant (SD)**
Intention	2.60* .91	2.23* .59
Consequences	3.63* 1.02	2.48* 1.07
Beneficiary	3.6 .76	3.42 .56
Truthfulness	4.19* .99	3.81* .79
Acceptability	3.39* 1.10	2.99* .70

Note: Coders and participants agreed it was a real lie vs. participants who said it was a gray lie. * = p <.05

Table 9: Bryant's Classification and Participants Experience: Real Lie-Real Lie Vs. Real Lie-White Lie

	Real Lies (Bryant) (*SD*)	**White Lies (Participant) (SD)**
Intention	2.69 .91	2.21 .93
Consequences	3.63* 1.02	2.83* 1.07
Beneficiary	3.60 .76	3.54 .48
Truthfulness	4.19 .99	3.96 .78
Acceptability	3.39 1.10	3.26 .83

Note: Coders and participants agreed it was a real lie vs. participants who said it was a white lie.

Table 10: Bryant's Classification and Participants Experience: Gray Lie-Gray Lie Vs. Gray Lie-Real Lie

	Gray Lies (Bryant) (*SD*)	**Real Lies (Participant) (SD)**
Intention	2.11 .53	2.44 1.02
Consequences	3.10 .90	3.43 .93
Beneficiary	3.13 .66	3.20 .77
Truthfulness	3.30* 1.08	4.27* .79
Acceptability	2.42 .88	2.65 1.10

Note: Coders and participants agreed it was a gray lie vs. participants who said it was a real lie.

Table 11: Bryant's Classification and Participants Experience: Gray Lie-Gray Lie Vs. Gray Lie-White Lie

	Gray Lies (Bryant) (*SD*)	**White Lies (Participant) *(SD)***
Intention	2.11 .53	2.46 .50
Consequences	3.10* .90	1.90* .78
Beneficiary	3.13 .66	3.28 .58
Truthfulness	3.30 1.08	3.58 .75
Acceptability	2.42 .88	2.33 .93

Note: Coders and participants agreed it was a gray lie vs. participants who said it was a white lie.

Table 12: Bryant's Classification and Participants Experience: White Lie-White Lie Vs. White Lie-Gray Lie

	White Lies (Bryant) (*SD*)	**Gray Lies (Participant) *(SD)***
Intention	1.91 .84	2.05 .74
Consequences	2.06 1.02	2.43 .95
Beneficiary	2.99 .99	2.99 .81
Truthfulness	2.92* .96	3.39* 1.03
Acceptability	2.06 91	2.37 .82

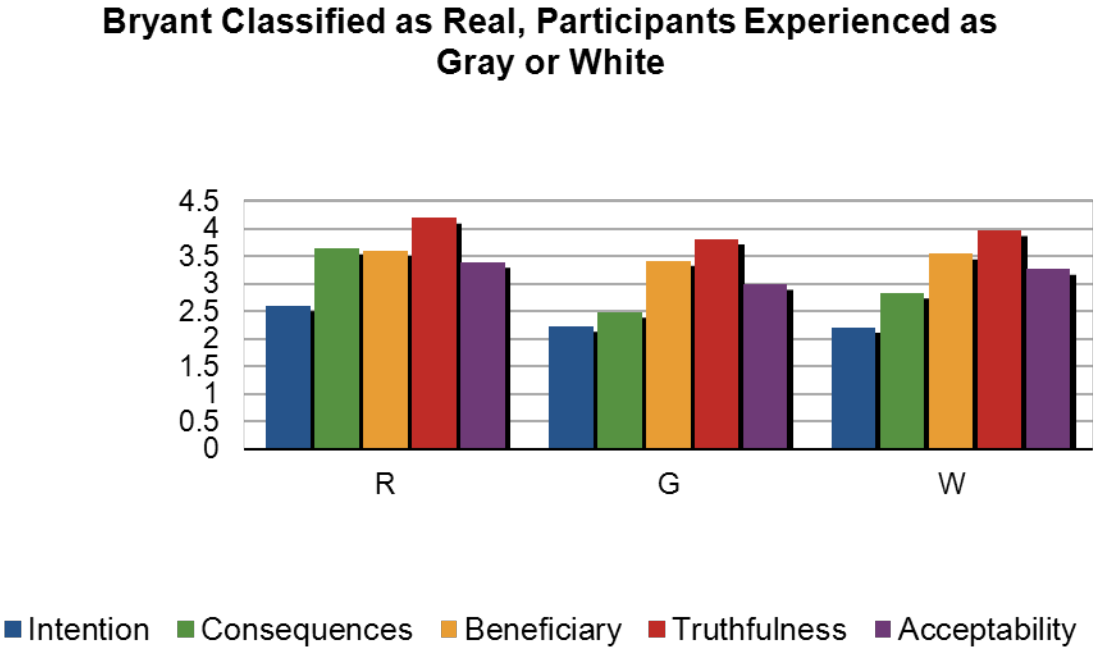
Note: Coders and participants agreed it was a white lie vs. participants who said it was a gray lie.

Table 13: Bryant's Classification and Participants Experience: White Lie-White Lie Vs. White Lie-Real Lie

	White Lies (Bryant) (*SD*)	**Real Lies (Participant) (*SD*)**
Intention	1.91 .84	2.34 1.20
Consequences	2.06 1.02	2.31 1.52
Beneficiary	2.99 .99	3.34 .75
Truthfulness	2.92 .96	3.57 1.31
Acceptability	2.06 91	2.49 .94

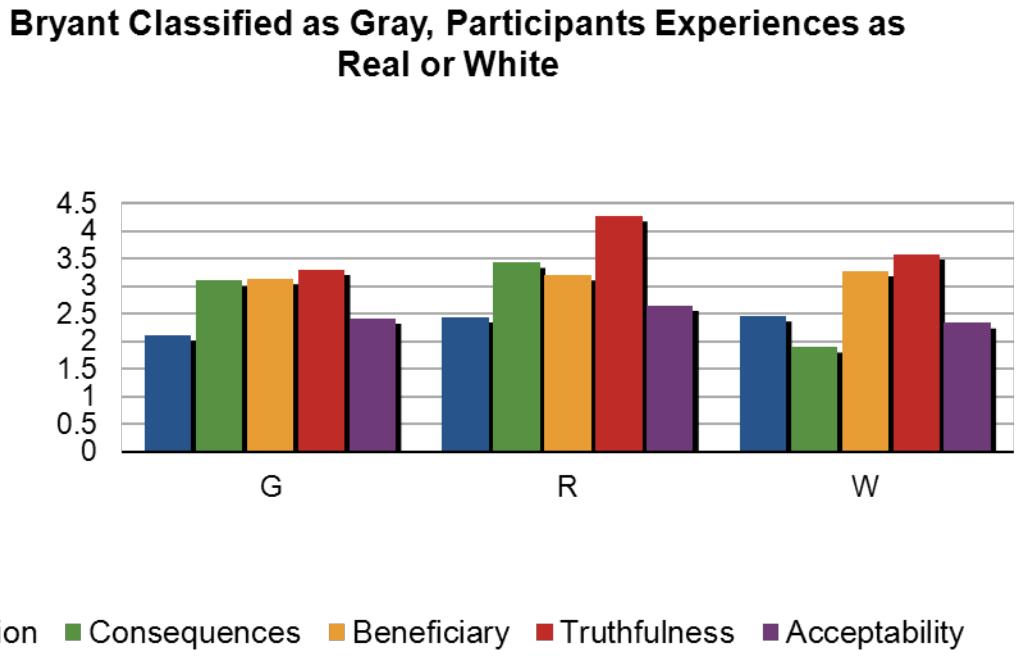
Note: Coders and participants agreed it was a white lie vs. participants who said it was a real lie.

Figure 1: Bryant's Classification of Real Lies and Participants Experienced as Gray Lies or White Lies



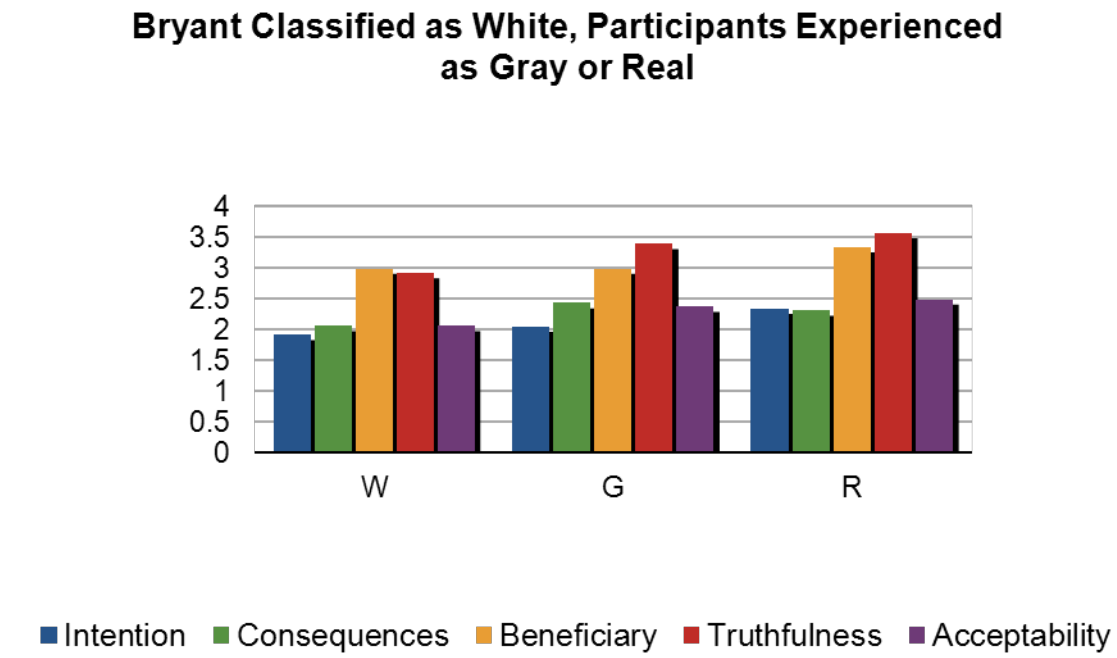
Note: Coders and participants agreed it was a real lie vs. participants who said it was a gray lie or white lie.

Figure 2: Bryant's Classification of Gray Lies and Participants Experienced as Real Lies or White Lies



Note: Coders and participants agreed it was a gray lie vs. participants who said it was a real lie or white lie.

Figure 3: Bryant's Classification of White Lies and Participants Experienced as Real Lies or White Lies



Note: Coders and participants agreed it was a white lie vs. participants who said it was a gray lie or real lie.