

Love and Deception: Exploring the Lived Experience of Deceptive Men in Romantic Relationships

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the statement “A central challenge for the psychology of romantic deception is that the phenomenon is heterogeneous”, please provide a concise typology or conceptual map to visually distinguish normative, ambiguous, and criminal forms of deception.

The transition from emotional intelligence to moral disengagement is conceptually important; however, the link between these constructs is implied rather than explicitly articulated. Please add a clarifying sentence specifying how emotional skills may interact with moral disengagement mechanisms.

The phrase “absence of personality disorders, assessed through MMPI” requires specification of which MMPI version was used and which scales were considered exclusionary.

The inclusion criterion “absence of drug and alcohol dependence” is stated without specifying assessment procedure. Please clarify whether this was clinically assessed, self-reported, or inferred from MMPI indicators.

When stating that deception “transforms the deceiver’s own beliefs about love,” consider referencing whether this transformation is viewed as adaptive, maladaptive, or both.

The phrase “identity-transforming process” should be supported by a brief explanation of which identity dimensions are primarily affected.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. *Reviewer 2*

Reviewer:

Several participants’ ages exceed the defined range of 20–30 years (e.g., Participant 3 aged 36). This discrepancy must be addressed explicitly in the text.

The description of interview development would be strengthened by including sample pilot feedback or an example of how questions were refined.

The reduction from 380 initial concepts to 100 final concepts is a major analytic decision. Please provide at least one example of this reduction process.

The claim “substantially increasing the stability and consistency of the coding process” would benefit from specifying whether intercoder agreement or audit trails were employed.

The six “victims” are analytically compelling. Please clarify whether this structure emerged inductively or was theoretically informed.

The assertion “love is nothing more than lust” should be explicitly framed as participants’ subjective construction rather than an interpretive conclusion of the researchers.

The alignment with Bandura’s moral disengagement framework is strong; however, please explicitly map each identified strategy to the corresponding theoretical category.

The claim that this study reveals “bidirectional harm” is significant. Please add a short conceptual clarification distinguishing intrapersonal from interpersonal damage.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.