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Adolescent social experiences and anxiety as predictors of adult romantic jealousy

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Adolescent Social Experiences and Anxiety as Predictors of Adult Romantic Jealousy

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

Tables

Figures

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Abstract

Romantic jealousy has been categorized as one of the most destructive emotions in romantic relationships, implicated as a significant predictor of negative relational outcomes such as domestic abuse, depression, and suicide (Pfieffer & Wong, 1989). Despite this, little research has examined the development of romantic jealousy, and, more specifically its connection to adverse social experiences in early adolescence. This study examines peer dislike, number of residential moves, and friend betrayal in early adolescence as predictors of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral jealousy in young adult romantic relationships. Anxiety-related factors of rejection sensitivity, general anxiety, and trust are also analyzed as potential mediators or moderators. Multi-reporter data were obtained from a 17-year study of 184 teens at ages 13, 16-17, and 20-28. Significant correlations were found between friend betrayal and trust, as well as between rejection sensitivity and both anxiety and trust. Friend betrayal was found to be the only significant predictor of adult romantic jealousy but was significant across all three dimensions of jealousy. When post-hoc analyses were performed, a number of significant interactions were found between the three dimensions of jealousy and social and anxiety factors. Limitations and implications of the findings are discussed.

Adolescent Social Experiences and Anxiety as Predictors of Adult Romantic

Jealousy

Jealousy has been categorized as one of the most destructive emotions in romantic relationships. Romantic jealousy is defined as "a negative emotion in which an individual resents a third party for appearing to take away (or being likely to take away) the affections of a loved one (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2019). Romantic jealousy has been implicated as a significant predictor of negative relational outcomes such as domestic abuse, depression, and suicide, which present great personal and societal costs (Pfieffer & Wong, 1989). Despite these potentially high costs of romantic jealousy, little is known about how early adolescent experiences in the peer domain may serve as developmental precursors of jealousy in young adult romantic relationships. This is notable given that adolescence is characterized by a shift in influence from parents to peers, suggesting that adversity within and among peer relationships may have a powerful impact on the emotional development of young teens (Erikson, 1968). Moreover, research has suggested that jealousy may be a multifaceted construct with three distinct types: emotional, cognitive, and behavioral (Pfieffer & Wong, 1989). Thus, this study aims to explore how adverse social experiences in early adolescence may predict the development of these dimensions of romantic jealousy in order to better understand how jealousy may arise in adult romantic relationships.

Jealousy and Anxiety

The existing literature suggests that jealousy is fundamentally related to, and often exists in conjunction with, feelings of anxiety. Such overlap may thus aid in understanding jealousy's development in romantic relationships as an anxiety-based construct manifest in a relational context. For example, in a study of young adults' attitudes on love, participants' self-reports of jealousy and trait-anxiety had a moderately strong positive correlation (De Moja, 1986). This finding was also corroborated in a study of participants diagnosed with pathological jealousy. In comparison to normal jealousy, which occurs as a reaction to a perceived threat to the relationship, pathological jealousy is based on unfounded suspicions of the partner's infidelity that eventually take over feelings, behaviors, and thoughts. Higher levels of pathological jealousy in these participants were associated with higher levels of both trait anxiety and anxious attachment styles (Costa et al, 2015). Still further evidence of a link between anxiety and jealousy was presented in a study of jealousy induction. Jealousy induction is defined as a strategic behavioral process designed to elicit romantic jealousy from a partner to achieve a specific goal. According to the study, the partner who induces jealousy in the other tends to experience both higher levels of their own jealous feelings as well as anxiety (Mattingly, Whitson, & Mattingly, 2012). In the book The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy, Robert Bringle explores a breadth of research on jealousy, and concludes that anxiety is one of three traits (the others being anger and sadness) most often correlated with jealousy in the literature, and therefore may compose the core of reactive jealousy (Bringle, 1991). Taken together, jealousy and anxiety are tightly linked, and understanding developmental processes that may contribute to anxiety may also thus help provide a better understanding for how jealousy develops in romantic relationships.

Adolescent Social Experiences and Anxiety Vulnerability

The early years of adolescence are a pivotal time for social and emotional development. Eric Erikson (1968) categorized the adolescent years as the time when youths experience "identity versus role confusion" during which their idea of self is forming, largely based on the acceptance provided by friends and peer groups. If social connections and peer acceptance are not achieved during this stage, adolescents can experience a sense of social disconnection and be unable to develop into emotionally mature adults. According to Baumeister and Tice's (1990) social exclusion theory, such lack of social acceptance is a significant predictor of anxiety. Their theory builds from Maslow's famed hierarchy of needs and proposes that experiencing a lack of our basic need for belonging leads to feelings of anxiety related to insecurity, guilt, and even failure (Baumeister & Tice, 1990). As a result, adverse social experiences tied to social exclusion at this age may not only predict a lack of mature emotional development but also the development of anxious feelings.

One type of adverse experience that early adolescents may face is being disliked by others. Notably, research has shown that young teens who are rated as unpopular on sociometric scales by their peers and feel insecure about their social status experience more social withdrawal, hostility, and negative emotions than their more "popular" peers (McElhaney et al, 2008). It has also been shown that young teens who are not as sociometrically popular as their peers feel increased threat and competition for social status, heightening their feelings of insecurity (Li & Wright, 2013). Youth who are disliked by their peers also report higher levels of rejection sensitivity, which is defined as the tendency to anxiously expect social rejection (Downey & Feldman, 1996). Thus, the experience of being unpopular or excluded may give

way to general anxieties about rejection that have broader and longer-term implications for social and romantic functioning.

Another potentially consequential adolescent social experience is a residential move, particularly one that involves a change of school. Moving during early adolescence predicts negative social outcomes including difficulty making friends, social distress, and lessened social contact (Scanlon & Devine, 2001). Such negative experiences are notable predictors of low social status, which in turn may predict anxiety and jealousy in social situations (Leary, 1990). Moreover, according to a British study, adolescents who moved residences one or more times had increased anxiety scores compared to peers who did not experience a move (Brown et al, 2012). Another study examining the effect of residential moves on adolescent girls found a significant relationship between number of moves and the internalization of problems, characterized by reports of both anxiety and depression (Adam & Chase-Lansdale, 2002). Moving often during early adolescence may thus be accompanied by higher levels of general anxiety for youth that may even have the potential to be exacerbated over time based on the social experiences that follow.

An additional consequential adolescent social experience is betrayal by a close friend. By adolescence, most youth have expectations for their friends to be lasting companions, supportive, and trustworthy (MacEvoy & Asher, 2012). However, when these expectations are not met, it can cause a great deal of emotional stress, resulting in anger, sadness, and revenge goals (MacEvoy & Asher, 2012). Indeed, it has been suggested that anxiety concerning friendships is at its peak at ages 14-16 (Coleman, 1980). Experiencing a friend betrayal at this pivotal age can consequentially lead to anxiety surrounding giving trust in consecutive peer relationships (Rodriguez et al, 2017). For example, a study of high school students about the intricacies and

9

expectations of their friendships concluded that there are two different types of friend betrayal: secret reveal and backstabbing, and both types of betrayal resulted in reduced or destroyed trust in the other person. To elaborate, secret reveal is defined as the potentially non-malicious and/or non-intentional spread of true information to others, while backstabbing is the spread of either true or untrue information to others, purposefully and maliciously. The teens who experienced these betrayals either became much more cautious of to whom they gave their trust or traded deep friendships in for superficial ones out of fear of vulnerability (Rawlins & Holl, 1987). Experiencing a friend betrayal during early adolescence may thus lead to consequential issues in trust, having the potential to affect the quality of social relationships in the future.

Potential Anxiety-Related Mediators/Moderators

As discussed above, there are strong documented associations between anxiety and jealousy, and also between certain types of negative social experiences during early adolescence and anxiety vulnerability. Given these links, this study focuses on examining three anxiety-related constructs that might serve as mediators or moderators of associations between early negative social experiences and later adult romantic jealousy: rejection sensitivity, anxiety, and trust.

Rejection sensitivity can be described as the tendency to anxiously await social rejection, have an increased perception of rejection, and/or overreact to experiencing rejection. Demonstrably, it has been found that rejection sensitive youth tend to experience more feelings of threat in their romantic relationships (Nowland, Talbot, & Qualter, 2018). Rejection sensitivity and its implications have deep roots in some of the earliest theories of personality. Horney (1937) theorized that negative orientations toward relationships come from our basic anxiety of rejection, Erikson (1950) proposed that mistrust of others compromises our personal

fulfillment, and Bowlby (1969) theorized that as children, we create mental models of ourselves and our peer relationships that continue to influence any subsequent relationships (Downey & Feldman, 1996). Further, it was found that those who experience higher levels of rejection sensitivity during mid-adolescence were less likely to have a romantic partner at age 22, had more negative interactions if they did have a partner, and experienced more avoidance and anxiety in their relationship (Hafen et al, 2014). Being both an anxiety-based emotional experience and having significant negative relational outcomes, rejection sensitivity may play a role in the development of adult romantic jealousy.

Additionally, general anxiety has shown to present great relational costs. One study in particular found a significant positive correlation between marital distress and general anxiety (Whisman, 2007). Another study found an association between longer duration of general anxiety symptoms and poor relational functioning (Yonkers et al, 2000). This could be because the relationship problems trigger feelings of anxiety in partners, or the anxiety itself could be what is triggering the problems in the first place, leading to a continuous cycle which has a detrimental effect on the relationship. Moreover, it has also been found that higher levels of social anxiety are related to higher levels of conflict avoidance in relationships, avoidance of emotional expression, and higher levels of interpersonal dependency (Davila & Beck, 2002). Avoidance behavior is typically associated with feelings of anxiety, and avoiding relationship aspects such as conflict resolution or emotional expression can be detrimental to the success of a relationship. Because of the potentially damaging effects anxiety can have on relationships, it may be a factor in developing romantic jealousy.

Finally, experiencing difficulty with trust can prove detrimental in romantic relationships. Trust is related to anxiety as well because trust is a type of judgment involving uncertainty and

risk, and anxiety itself is characterized by a high degree of uncertainty (Kenworthy & Jones, 2009). Years of research on trust has led researchers to the conclusion that when there are lower levels of trust in a relationship, positive and negative information concerning romantic relationships becomes compartmentalized and stored separately in the brain. Compartmentalization is a type of defense mechanism allowing two conflicting ideas to coexist without triggering cognitive dissonance, which is the mental discomfort of having conflicting ideas (Leary & Tangney, 2005). Because positive and negative information about relationships are stored separately, in any given situation the negative information regarding the relationship can activate without activating the positive information as well, resulting in negative attitudes and outcomes (Chaiken & Yates, 1985, Holmes, 1991, Rempel, Ross, & Holmes, 2001). This can also affect the way one perceives relationships as a whole; shifting relationship schemas to become more negative and pessimistic (MacKennon & Boon, 2012). It has also been shown that the lower one's level of trust is, the more he or she tends to ruminate upon how much their partner truly cares about them. This can lead to hyper-analyzing their partner's behaviors and treating negative behaviors as much more impactful than positive ones, altering attitudes toward the partner for the worse (Rempel, Ross, & Holmes, 2001). Because the anxiety surrounding trust can significantly affect relationship quality, this may be a factor in the development of romantic jealousy.

Different Dimensions of Romantic Jealousy

Although romantic jealousy is a broad construct, it has been categorized by Pfeiffer and Wong (1989) into three distinct dimensions: emotional jealousy, cognitive jealousy, and behavioral jealousy. Emotional jealousy is characterized by an upset emotional reaction when exposed to a jealousy-evoking situation (Elphinston, Feeney, & Noller, 2011). An example of

this would be if a woman saw her partner flirting with another woman and becomes saddened and angered at the sight. In contrast, cognitive jealousy is characterized by anxious worries or suspicions of a romantic partner's infidelity, regardless of any actual threat (Pfieffer & Wong, 1989). An example of cognitive jealousy would be a man having persistent anxious thoughts about his partner being disloyal to him but having no actual evidence or behaviors to support these thoughts. The final dimension is behavioral jealousy, which is characterized by taking deceptive and protective actions when a real or imaginary rival in the relationship is perceived. *Deceptive* measures include questioning the romantic partner, checking his/her location, or even searching through his/her belongings. *Protective* measures include inserting oneself in between one's partner and the perceived threat or criticizing and belittling the perceived threat. Although these three different types of romantic jealousy have been identified, it is unclear which types of early social experiences or anxiety factors might predict the development of each type, which is what this study intends to investigate.

Hypotheses of Present Study

Taken together, it is hypothesized that different types of adverse social situations during early adolescence will play a predictive role in the development of multidimensional jealousy styles in adulthood. More specifically, it is hypothesized that being disliked, experiencing more residential moves, and being betrayed by a close friend in early adolescence will predict higher levels of romantic jealousy across the Pfieffer and Wong's (1989) three dimensions of jealousy in early adulthood. However, it is also hypothesized that these early adolescent social experiences will either predict jealousy via different markers of anxiety in later adolescence (e.g. rejection sensitivity, trait anxiety, issues with trust), or that their predictions to jealousy will be moderated by them.

Methods

Participants and Procedure

The sample used in this study is derived from a larger longitudinal study of adolescent and young adult social and emotional development. Participants included 184 youth (98 female, 86 male). The sample was ethnically and socioeconomically diverse (107 Caucasian, 53 African American, 2 Hispanic/Latino, 2 Asian American, 1 American Indian, 15 mixed ethnicity, and 4 "other"). Participants were first interviewed at approximately age 13, and then annually interviewed for 16 years following. Participants were initially recruited from a single public middle school drawing from both urban and suburban populations in the Southeastern United States. Students were recruited through a primary mailing to all parents of students in the 7th and 8th grades in the school that gave them the option to opt out of any further contact with the study (N=298). All but 2% of parents agreed to receive contact from the study. Of all families subsequently contacted by phone, 63% consented to the study and had an adolescent willing to come in with both a close friend and parent. The sample appeared generally comparable to the overall population of the school in terms of ethnic makeup (42% non-white in sample compared to 40% non-white in school) and socioeconomic status (mean household income of $43,618 in sample compared to $48,000 for the community).

Assessments in the present study were made at three main time points of data collection: age 13, ages 16-17, and ages 20-28. At age 13, participants completed questionnaires assessing their sociometric popularity, history of residential moves, and betrayal in friendships. At ages 16-17 participants completed questionnaires assessing rejection sensitivity, anxiety, and trust. Finally, participants were asked at ages 20-28 if they were involved in a romantic relationship, and if they could provide contact information for their partner. Ninety-seven participants

endorsed being in a romantic relationship and had partners who consented to the study. This subset of participants was demographically similar to the sample at large. Participants and romantic partners completed questionnaires about their experiences of jealousy within their relationships.

Measures

Peer Dislike (age 13)

At age 13, participants completed a two-section questionnaire where they named 10 students in their grade they with whom they would most like to spend their Saturday night with, and then 10 students with whom they would least like to spend their Saturday night with. From this information, the students were categorized as "liked" or "unliked" by adding the number of "most like to spend time with" and "least like to spend time with" nominations. This procedure has been shown to produce measures of social status that prove stable over time (Coie & Dodge, 1983), as well as across different situations (Coie & Kupersmidt, 1983).

Residential Moves (ages 10-15)

Participants were asked to recall and list the number of times they moved residences, including a change of school, between ages of 10 and 15 years old.

Friend Betrayal (age 13)

At age 13, participants completed the Friendship Quality Questionnaire, a 40 item self-report questionnaire of statements on six subscales: validation and caring, conflict resolution, conflict and betrayal, help and guidance, companionship and recreation, and intimate exchange (Parker et al, 1993). For this study, the conflict and betrayal subscale is utilized. Each report consisted of a score on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = not at all true, 2 = a little true, 3 = somewhat

true, 4 = pretty true, 5 = really true, as a reaction to a statement such as "we fight a lot" or "we can count on each other". This measure demonstrated very good internal consistency ($\alpha=0.75$).

Rejection Sensitivity (ages 16 and 17)

Participants were asked at ages 16 and 17 to consider brief vignettes about themselves and someone else (a peer, a partner, or a parent) and then report how concerned they would be about how the other person would respond. A Likert scale was used to score the answers, from 1 (very unconcerned/ very unlikely) to 6 (very concerned/very likely). Four subscales were created to assess rejection in different situations: parental, friends, romantic, and school/work. The friends subscale is being utilized in this study. This measure demonstrated very good internal consistency ($\alpha=0.78$ for age 16, $\alpha=0.70$ for age 17).

Anxiety (ages 16 and 17)

At ages 16 and 17, participants were asked to complete the 21-item Beck Anxiety Inventory. Participants used this scale to rate their experience of 21 anxiety-related symptoms on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0-3, 0 being not all, 1 being mildly, 2 being moderately, and 3 being severely. This measure has excellent internal consistency ($\alpha=0.9$ for age 16, $\alpha=0.94$ for age 17).

Trust (ages 16 and 17)

At ages 16 and 17, participants completed a set of reports regarding their attachment to their peers. Attachment to parents was measured by a 32-item questionnaire, and attachment to peers was measured by a 25-item questionnaire. After reading each statement, for example, "(s)he listens to what I have to say", teens were asked to report its accuracy on a 5-point Likert scale, being 1-Never true, 2-Seldom true, 3-Sometimes true, 4-Often true, 5-Almost always true

(Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). This measure has excellent internal consistency (α=0.93 for both ages 16 and 17).

Jealousy (ages 20-28)

Across ages 20-28, participants completed a 24-item questionnaire regarding their feelings of jealousy. These 24 questions were broken down into three subscales of 8 questions regarding each dimension of jealousy: emotional, cognitive, and behavioral. The emotional subscale asked participants how they would emotionally react to the following situations, an example being "X comments to you on how great looking a particular member of the opposite sex is". The cognitive subscale asked participants to report how often they have the following thoughts about X, for example "I suspect that X is secretly seeing someone of the opposite sex". Lastly, the behavioral subscale asked participants how often they engage in the following behaviors, for example looking through X's drawers or handbag. The emotional subscale was scored based on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 representing very pleased and 7 representing very upset. The cognitive and behavioral subscales were also scored based on a 7-point Likert scale, but with 1 representing never and 7 representing all the time (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989). This measure has excellent internal consistency for cognitive (α=0.91), behavioral (α=0.9) and total jealousy (α=0.91), and very good internal consistency for emotional jealousy (α=0.79).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Means and standard deviations for all primary variables are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 includes descriptive statistics of all social experience and anxiety factor variables, while Table 2 includes descriptive statistics for all dimensions of jealousy.

Initial analyses also examined associations of gender and income with study variables. Gender was dummy-coded as 1 representing Male and 2 representing Female. A significant positive correlation was found between income and dislike at age 13 ($r=0.27$, $p<0.01$), indicating that those youth who have higher incomes experience higher levels of dislike in early adolescence. Another significant positive correlation was found between gender and anxiety at ages 16-17 ($r=0.17$, $p<0.05$), as well as between gender and trust at ages 16-17 ($r=0.36$, $p<0.001$). These correlations indicate that females are more likely to experience anxiety, as well as be more trusting, during mid-adolescence than their male peers. When examining jealousy, a significant positive correlation was found between gender and emotional jealousy at ages 20-22 and 23-25 ($r=0.38$, $p<0.0001$, $r=0.22$, $p<0.05$), as well as total jealousy at ages 20-22 ($r=0.22$, $p<0.05$), indicating that females tend to experience more jealousy in early adulthood. There was also a significant negative correlation between income and emotional, cognitive and total jealousy at ages 23-25 ($r=-0.29$, $p<0.01$, $r=-0.21$, $p<0.05$, $r=-0.27$, $p<0.01$), indicating that those with lower incomes tend to experience more jealousy in early adulthood. These correlations are displayed in Table 3.

Given their associations with predictors and jealously outcome variables, these two variables were included as covariates in all regression analyses to control for their potential effects on jealousy outcomes.

Primary Analyses

Associations between Social Experiences and Anxiety Factors

Correlational analysis was first performed to examine associations between early adolescent social experiences and mid-adolescent anxiety factors. A significant negative correlation was found between betrayal at age 13 and trust at ages 16-17 ($r=-0.21$, $p<0.05$),

indicating that greater feelings of betrayal by a friend in early adolescence was associated with having less trust in peers in mid-adolescence. A significant positive correlation was found between rejection sensitivity and anxiety at ages 16-17 (*r=0.22, p<0.01*), indicating that greater rejection sensitivity was associated with greater anxiety in mid-adolescence, while a significant negative correlation was found between rejection sensitivity at ages 16-17 and trust at ages 16-17 (*r=-0.28, p<0.001*), indicating that greater rejection sensitivity was associated with having less trust in peers during mid-adolescence. These correlations are displayed in Table 4.

Associations between Study Variables and Jealousy

Cognitive Jealousy

Correlational analysis was performed to examine connections between adolescent social experiences and anxiety factors and cognitive jealousy. A significant positive correlation was found between betrayal at age 13 and cognitive jealousy at ages 20-22 (*r=0.20, p<0.05*) as well as cognitive jealousy at ages 23-25 (*r=0.28, p<0.01*), indicating that greater feelings of betrayal by a friend in early adolescence is associated with greater feelings of cognitive jealousy in early adulthood. When regression analyses were performed, betrayal at age 13 was a significant predictor of cognitive jealousy at ages 20-22 (β=0.22, *p<0.05*) and ages 23-25 (β=0.25, *p<0.001*). There was no evidence of mediation or moderation of early adolescent social experiences by mid-adolescent anxiety factors for predicting cognitive jealousy in regression models.

Emotional Jealousy

Correlational analysis was next performed to examine connections between adolescent social experiences and anxiety factors and emotional jealousy. A significant positive correlation was found between betrayal at age 13 and emotional jealousy at ages 20-22 (*r=0.22, p<0.05*), as

well as between trust at ages 16-17 and emotional jealousy at ages 20-22 ($r=0.20$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that both greater feelings of betrayal in early adolescence and being more trusting in mid-adolescence are associated with greater emotional jealousy in early adulthood. When regression analyses were performed, significance was found between betrayal at age 13 and emotional jealousy at ages 20-22 ($\beta=0.23$, $p<0.01$). There was no evidence of mediation or moderation of early adolescent social experiences by mid-adolescent anxiety factors for predicting emotional jealousy in regression models.

Behavioral Jealousy

Correlational analysis was performed to examine associations between adolescent social experiences and anxiety factors and behavioral jealousy. A significant positive correlation was found between betrayal at age 13 and behavioral jealousy at ages 20-22 ($r=0.23$, $p<0.01$), indicating that greater feelings of betrayal by a friend in early adolescence is associated with greater behavioral jealousy in early adulthood. When regression analyses were performed, significance was found between betrayal at age 13 and behavioral jealousy at ages 20-22 ($\beta=0.24$, $p<0.01$). There was no evidence of mediation or moderation of early adolescent social experiences by mid-adolescent anxiety factors for predicting behavioral jealousy in regression models.

Total Jealousy

Correlational analysis was performed to examine connections between adolescent social experiences and anxiety factors and total jealousy. A significant positive correlation was found between betrayal at age 13 and total jealousy at ages 20-22 ($r=0.27$, $p<0.01$), indicating that greater feelings of betrayal by a friend in early adolescence is associated with greater total jealousy in early adulthood. When regression analyses were performed, significance was found

between betrayal at age 13 and total jealousy at ages 20-22 (β=0.29, *p<0.001)*. There was no evidence of mediation or moderation of early adolescent social experiences by mid-adolescent anxiety factors for predicting total jealousy in regression models. The correlations for all dimensions of jealousy discussed are displayed in Table 5.

It is important to note that throughout all of these analyses, number of residential moves had no significant relationship to any of the study variables.

Ancillary Analyses

To further examine the variables of interest, ancillary analyses were performed. All social experience and anxiety factor variables were examined at ages 16-17 alongside all dimensions of jealousy across ages 20-28 collectively. These analyses were conducted given consideration that mid-adolescence is a time of peak peer influence and social concern (Erikson, 1968), and that examining both social experiences and anxiety factors at this time point may yield effects that have not yet come online during early adolescence as initially hypothesized. Descriptive statistics for these new variables are displayed in Table 6.

Correlation analyses. Correlational analysis was performed to examine connections between the post-hoc social experience variables and post-hoc anxiety and jealousy variables. A significant positive correlation was found between dislike and anxiety at ages 16-17 (*r=0.19, p<0.05),* indicating that those who are more disliked at ages 16-17 also experience higher levels of anxiety at the same age. A significant negative correlation was found between betrayal and trust at ages 16-17 (*r=-0.52, p<0.001),* as well as between betrayal and emotional jealousy at ages 20-28 (*r=-0.22, p<0.01),* indicating that those who experience betrayal by a friend at ages 16-17 tend to be less trusting at the same age, and experience less emotional jealousy at ages 20-28. These correlations are displayed in table 7.

Interaction analyses. While no significant interactions were found in the primary analyses, a number of significant interactions were found when examining both social experiences and anxiety factors at ages 16-17 and jealousy dimensions across ages 20-28. A significant interaction was found between trust and betrayal predicting cognitive jealousy (β=0.24, *p<0.01,* see Figure 1*)*. This interaction shows that those who are more trusting and experience more betrayal will experience a higher level of cognitive jealousy than those who are less trusting and experience more betrayal. Another significant interaction was found between betrayal and rejection sensitivity predicting emotional jealousy (β=0.16, *p<0.05,* see Figure 2). This interaction shows that someone who has experienced more betrayal and has a higher level of rejection sensitivity will experience a higher level of emotional jealousy than someone who has experienced less betrayal and low rejection sensitivity. A significant interaction was also found between trust and rejection sensitivity predicting behavioral jealousy (β=0.17, *p<0.05,* see Figure 3). This interaction shows that those who are less trusting and who have low rejection sensitivity will experience a higher level of behavioral jealousy than someone who is more trusting with higher rejection sensitivity. Another significant interaction was found between dislike and rejection sensitivity predicting total jealousy (β=0.18, *p<0.05,* see Figure 4). This interaction shows that someone who is less disliked and experiences lower rejection sensitivity will experience more total jealousy than someone who is more disliked with higher rejection sensitivity. Finally, a significant interaction was found between trust and betrayal predicting total jealousy (β=0.19, *p<0.05,* see Figure 5). This interaction shows that someone who is more trusting and experiences more betrayal will experience more total jealousy than someone who is more trusting and experiences more betrayal. These interactions are displayed in Tables 1-5, where high and low values represent one standard deviation above and below the mean.

Discussion

This study provides evidence for links between early adolescent social experiences, anxiety factors, and adult romantic jealousy. Dislike, residential moves, and friend betrayal were measured at age 13, rejection sensitivity, anxiety, and trust were measured at ages 16-17, and adult romantic jealousy was measured at ages 20-28.

Though not originally hypothesized, a number of interesting correlations were found between gender, income, and the study variables. These variables were examined out of curiosity to gain as much information possible about the study variables and jealousy's effect on young people. Those who had a higher income were more likely to be disliked by their peers; research shows that money envy, including low self-esteem and a desire for status, is linked to having negative feelings about others and their money (Prince, 1993). This could also explain why those with lower incomes tend to experience more emotional and total jealousy in relationships. If seeing others have more than you do triggers a feeling of insecurity, it could lead to worries of your partner leaving you for someone else who may have more than you, resulting in a more intense reaction to a real or perceived threat in the relationship. Interestingly, it was also found that females tend to experience more anxiety, tend to be more trusting, and experience more emotional jealousy than their male peers. Research shows that females tend to show signs of anxiety disorders earlier in life; more specifically, at age 6, females are twice as likely to have experienced an anxiety disorder than males (Lewinsohn et al, 1998). It's also been shown that females tend to trust more, regain trust more easily, and tend not to lose trust after a violation when compared to males. This could be due to a concept of relational investment, in which women are often characterized by a desire to create and maintain relationships, even if it risks their personal well-being (Haselhun et al, 2015). This could also explain the tendency for women

to experience more emotional jealousy; if women are so fully invested in maintaining a relationship, any perceived threat to the relationship could trigger an upset emotional response.

As for the correlational relationships between social experiences and anxiety factors, the results were perhaps unsurprising. Given that rejection sensitivity is characterized by anxiously awaiting a social rejection (Downey & Feldman, 1996) and that trust is related to anxiety due to making decisions based on risk and uncertainty (Kenworthy & Jones, 2009), a positive correlation between rejection sensitivity and anxiety and a negative correlation between trust and anxiety is strongly supported in previous literature. If one tends to harbor anxious thoughts, having those same thoughts concerning social rejection is more likely than in someone who doesn't typically experience anxiety. Similarly, if one experiences anxiety, battling with risk and uncertainty is a difficult task, explaining why trust may not come as easily. Trust was also found to have a negative correlation with betrayal. Rodriguez et al (1997) explained how a friend betrayal during adolescence can result in hesitance toward giving trust in consecutive peer relationships, so it makes sense that if someone experiences a friend betrayal in early adolescence, they may find it more difficult to be trusting in mid-adolescence.

Betrayal was the most significant predictor of romantic jealousy in this study. Positive correlations were found between friend betrayal in early adolescence and emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and total jealousy at ages 20-22, as well as with emotional jealousy at ages 23-25. Previous research in this area would support this finding, given that friend betrayal has been found to be associated with extreme anger, stress, sadness, and thoughts of revenge, and that lack of trust leads to suspicious feelings (MacEvoy & Asher, 2012; Rodriguez et al, 2017). Being directly betrayed by a friend causes a very intense and intentional feeling of pain, so it's not surprising at all that not one, but all three dimensions of jealousy surface from such an

experience. It is interesting, however, that as the participants continue throughout their twenties, the significant relationship between early-adolescence friend betrayal and jealousy seems to disappear. This could be due to more mature adult friendships and relationships helping to restore their trust in others, or a successful and healthy relationship as a young adult making feelings of jealousy dissipate. Interestingly, Ferrara and Levine found that positive communication strategies such as apologies and acceptance of responsibility in college relationships actually increase with the severity of the betrayal (Ferrara & Levine, 2009). Possibly, betrayal by a friend in the past leads to more negative relational outcomes because a guard goes up from the beginning of the relationship, while betrayal in the current romantic relationship serves as a motivator to create positive change and eliminate any further betrayal, resulting in positive outcomes and lessened feelings of jealousy.

When the post-hoc analyses were performed with the social and anxiety variables measured at ages 16-17 and jealousy measured in totality across ages 20-28, some very intriguing interactions were found. There was a significant interaction between betrayal and trust predicting both cognitive jealousy and total jealousy during adulthood. These interactions showed that if someone experienced more friend betrayal and were more trusting during mid-adolescence, they would experience more jealousy in adulthood. This could be explained because if someone tends to be more trusting toward others, she could be putting herself in more situations in which that trust could be violated, resulting in more feelings of betrayal. This could lead to expecting betrayal in any consecutive relationship, therefore fearing a romantic partner's infidelity as an adult. This especially explains the interaction's relationship to cognitive jealousy, due to it being characterized by suspicions of infidelity even if there is no physical evidence of it.

Another significant interaction was found between trust and rejection sensitivity predicting behavioral jealousy. This interaction showed that someone who is less trusting and experiences low rejection sensitivity would experience more behavioral jealousy. If someone has low rejection sensitivity, he wouldn't be very nervous seeking out new social situations or romantic relationships. This would give him more of an opportunity to experience behavioral jealousy, especially if he is less trusting. A lack of trust could motivate him to take the deceptive and protective measures characterizing behavioral jealousy to determine if his partner is being disloyal.

Rejection sensitivity appeared again in another post-hoc interaction, this time coupled with betrayal predicting emotional jealousy. This interaction showed that someone who experienced more betrayal and has high rejection sensitivity would experience more emotional jealousy. However, an interesting thing about this interaction is that the graph shows that experiencing more betrayal but having low rejection sensitivity would result in dramatically lower emotional jealousy. This demonstrates that rejection sensitivity is key in experiencing emotional jealousy after a betrayal. Despite being betrayed by a peer in the past, if you don't fear or anxiously await subsequent rejections, you will experience less emotional jealousy, compared to if you do experience these anxious feelings regarding rejection. This makes sense; it's been shown that betrayal can lead to an array of intense emotions such as anger, sadness, and revenge goals (MacEvoy & Asher, 2012), and these emotions coupled with the anxious feelings of an impending rejection can lead to a strong emotional reaction to a jealousy-evoking event, characterizing emotional jealousy.

Rejection sensitivity appeared in one last interaction, this time interacting with dislike to predict total jealousy. This interaction showed that if someone is less disliked and experiences

high rejection sensitivity, they will experience less jealousy than someone who is more disliked and experiences high rejection sensitivity. Youth who are disliked by their peers tend to report higher levels of rejection sensitivity, and also tend to feel increased threat and competition for social status, which increase their feelings of insecurity (Downey & Feldman, 1996 ,Li & Wright, 2013). This could explain why those who are more disliked and have higher rejection sensitivity tend to experience more jealousy; they may feel that same threat and insecurity in their romantic relationships. Even though those who are less disliked still experience rejection sensitivity, it doesn't seem to affect the development of jealousy, which could suggest that their higher social status as teens could have provided the confidence needed to combat any feelings of jealousy that may arise in their romantic relationships.

Interestingly, no significant relationships across any of this study's analyses were found involving residential moves. This contradicts the hypothesis that early adolescent residential moves would be a significant social experience predicting romantic jealousy. While the literature shows that residential moves during early adolescence tend to cause lessened social contact, difficulty making friends, and internalization of problems leading to anxiety and depression (Leary, 1990, Scanlon & Devine, 2001, Adam & Chase-Lansdale, 2002), there were no significant relationships found to any of the anxiety factors nor jealousy dimensions. This could mean that residential moves tend to be associated with anxiety factors not examined in this study, or that young teens tend to recover from the social effect of these moves by the time they reach mid-adolescence and young adulthood.

There are several notable limitations to the current findings. First, it is important to think about the context and age at which these participants were completing these self-assessments. In the early and mid-adolescent years, when the "imaginary audience" is ever so real to many

27

teenagers; they may be reluctant to disclose such insecurities about their social status in fear of who may read them and in turn judge them for their responses. This is a common problem with any self-assessment because we cannot guarantee full honesty between the participant and herself. Another limitation worth mentioning is the cultural bias of the sample. This sample was of a majority White and Black group of participants, with a very small percentage of Hispanic and Asian participants, all from the southeast region of the United States. This sample does not leave a lot of room for cultural diversity, and we cannot assume that such social experiences, anxiety factors, and experiences of jealousy can generalize to cultures outside of those represented in the sample. Lastly, the arguably most important limitation of this study is that correlation does not equal causation. A longitudinal study such as this one cannot suggest any causal relationship between variables; it is quite possible that these adolescent social experiences or anxiety factors have no connection to the development of later jealousy at all, and in fact it's the work of extraneous variables such as a toxic relationship or personal insecurities. Further research should aim to eliminate confounds and utilize methods other than longitudinal, correlational, and self/peer report data.

Hopefully, future research in this area can more deeply examine the role of gender in the development of adult romantic jealousy, and further expand into the implications that jealous thoughts and behavior can have on various aspects of life, from relationship satisfaction, to career outcomes, to even physical health. Despite the limitations of the current study, the results are consistent with existing research in supporting that adolescent social experiences and anxiety-related emotional factors can potentially lead to dimensions of romantic jealousy in adulthood. If this study is replicated with consistent findings, this could have major implications for positive changes in middle and high schools. New resources and policies could be

administered to help young teens with the social and emotional impact of a friend betrayal; and

raise awareness of the potential lasting impact of early adolescent social experiences.

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Table 1. Means and standard deviations of social experiences and anxiety factors

Variable (age)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social Dislike 13	0.62	1.45
Moves 13	0.44	0.75
Betrayal 13	5.26	3.92
Rejection Sensitivity 16-17	7.88	2.94
Anxiety 16-17	5.55	6.01
Trust 16-17	43.62	5.78

Variable (age)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Emotional Jealousy 20-22	43.45626	6.15144
Cognitive Jealousy 20-22	14.33333	7.82603
Behavioral Jealousy 20-22	15.59957	7.87127
Total Jealousy 20-22	73.56555	16.95886
Emotional Jealousy 23-25	43.35238	5.17572
Cognitive Jealousy 23-25	14.33645	6.88441
Behavioral Jealousy 23-25	13.82243	6.17025
Total Jealousy 23-25	71.07619	12.88089
Emotional Jealousy 26-28	42.68778	5.62113
Cognitive Jealousy 26-28	14.24272	8.26695
Behavioral Jealousy 26-28	13.32039	7.05749
Total Jealousy 26-28	70.57745	15.95614

Table 2. Means and standard deviations of jealousy dimensions and waves.

Table 3. Correlations between gender, income, and study variables

Variable (age)	Gender	Income
Social Dislike 13	0.10	**0.27****
# of Moves 13	-0.06	-0.17
Betrayal 13	-0.09	-0.14
Rejection Sensitivity 16-17	-0.13	-0.13
Anxiety 16-17	**0.17***	0.13
Trust 16-17	**0.37*****	-0.08
Emotional Jealousy 20-22	**0.38*****	-0.13
Cognitive Jealousy 20-22	0.06	0.04
Behavioral Jealousy 20-22	0.14	-0.05
Total Jealousy 20-22	**0.22***	-0.06
Emotional Jealousy 23-25	**0.22***	**-0.29****
Cognitive Jealousy 23-25	-0.06	**-0.21***
Behavioral Jealousy 23-25	0.09	**-0.09****
Total Jealousy 23-25	0.13	-0.27
Emotional Jealousy 26-28	-0.04	-0.15
Cognitive Jealousy 26-28	0.06	-0.16
Behavioral Jealousy 26-28	0.10	-0.02
Total Jealousy 26-28	0.03	-0.17

Note. *=$p<0.05$, **=$p<0.01$, ***=$p<0.001$

Table 4. Correlations between social experiences and anxiety factors

Variable (age)	Social Dislike 13	# of Moves 13	Betrayal 13	Rejection Sensitivity 16-17	Anxiety 16-17	Trust 16-17
Social Dislike13						
# of Moves 13	-0.15					
Betrayal 13	-0.01	-0.02				
Rejection Sensitivity 16-17	-0.07	-0.07	-0.01			
Anxiety 16-17	-0.04	0.11	0.10	**0.22****		
Trust 16-17	0.11	0.01	**-0.21***	**-0.28*****	0.10	

Note. *=p<0.05, **=p<0.01, ***=p<0.001

Variable (age)	Social Dislike	# of Moves	Betrayal	Rejection Sensitivity	Anxiety	Trust 16-17
	13	13	13	16-17	16-17	
Emotional Jealousy 20-22	-0.06	-0.05	**0.22***	0.02	0.03	**0.20***
Cognitive Jealousy 20-22	-0.01	0.19	**0.20***	0.13	-0.01	0.06
Behavioral Jealousy 20-22	-0.03	-0.05	**0.24****	0.02	-0.01	0.08
Total Jealousy 20-22	-0.05	0.07	**0.28****	0.06	0.01	0.01
Emotional Jealousy 23-25	-0.10	-0.15	0.02	0.19	-0.17	0.03
Cognitive Jealousy 23-25	-0.02	0.00	**0.29****	0.03	-0.02	0.01
Behavioral Jealousy 23-25	-0.07	0.12	0.06	0.12	0.07	0.04
Total Jealousy 23-25	-0.09	0.04	0.15	0.10	-0.04	0.04
Emotional Jealousy 26-28	-0.14	-0.08	0.11	0.05	0.08	0.03
Cognitive Jealousy 26-28	-0.08	-0.09	0.12	0.01	-0.01	0.11
Behavioral Jealousy 26-28	0.05	-0.13	0.07	0.17	0.17	0.01
Total Jealousy 26-28	-0.11	-0.10	0.12	0.07	0.10	0.07

Table 5. Correlations between social experiences, anxiety factors, and jealousy dimensions. Note. *=p<0.05, **=p<0.01, ***=p<0.001

Table 6. Means and standard deviations of ancillary variables.

Variable (age)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social Dislike 16-17	0.30	1.07
# of Moves 16-17	0.44	0.75
Betrayal 16-17	4.61	3.01
Rejection Sensitivity 16-17	7.88	2.94
Anxiety 16-17	5.55	6.01
Trust 16-17	43.62	5.78
Emotional Jealousy 20-28	43.12	4.53
Cognitive Jealousy 20-28	14.40	6.52
Behavioral Jealousy 20-28	14.55	6.40
Total Jealousy 20-28	72.21	14.27

Table 7. Correlations between ancillary variables.

Variable (age)	Social Dislike 16-17	# of Moves 16-17	Betrayal 16-17
Social Dislike 16-17		-0.16	0.01
# of Moves 16-17	-0.16		0.19
Betrayal 16-17	0.01	0.19	
Rejection Sensitivity 16-17	0.03	-0.07	0.03
Anxiety 16-17	**0.19***	0.11	0.08
Trust 16-17	0.13	0.01	**-0.52***
Emotional Jealousy 20-28	-0.14	-0.13	**-0.22**
Cognitive Jealousy 20-28	-0.03	0.01	0.06
Behavioral Jealousy 20-28	-0.03	-0.01	0.07
Total Jealousy 20-28	-0.09	0.03	0.02

Note. *=p<0.05, **=p<0.01, ***=p<0.001

Figure 1. Interaction between trust and betrayal predicting cognitive jealousy.
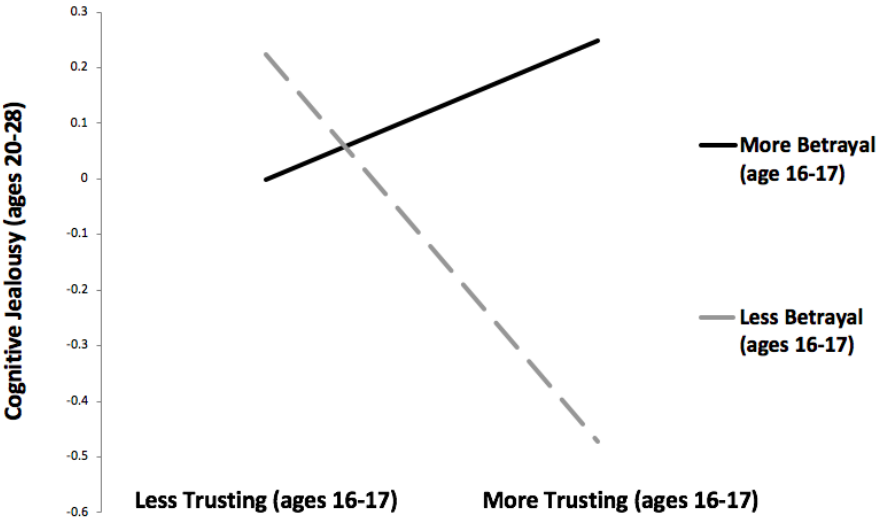
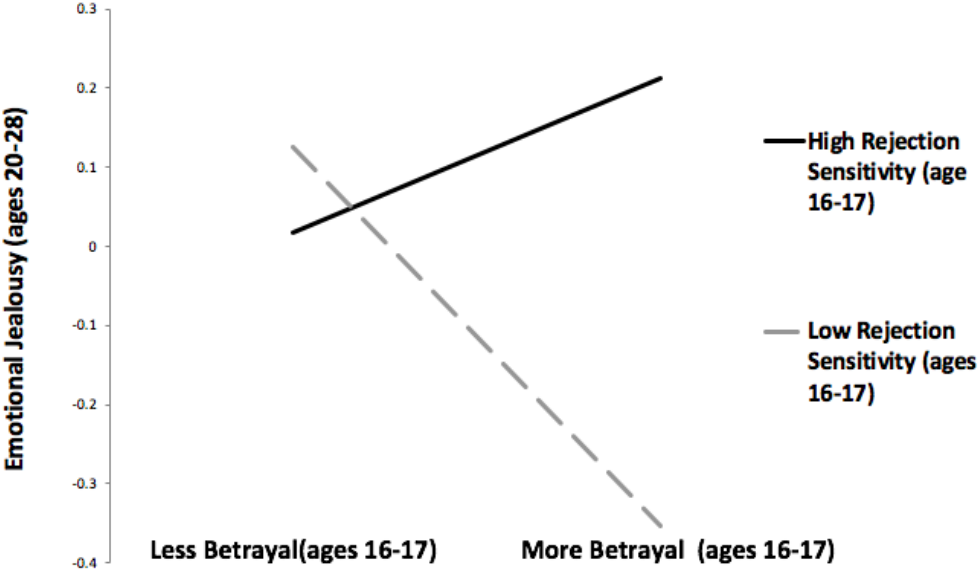*Figure 2.* Interaction between betrayal and rejection sensitivity predicting emotional jealousy.

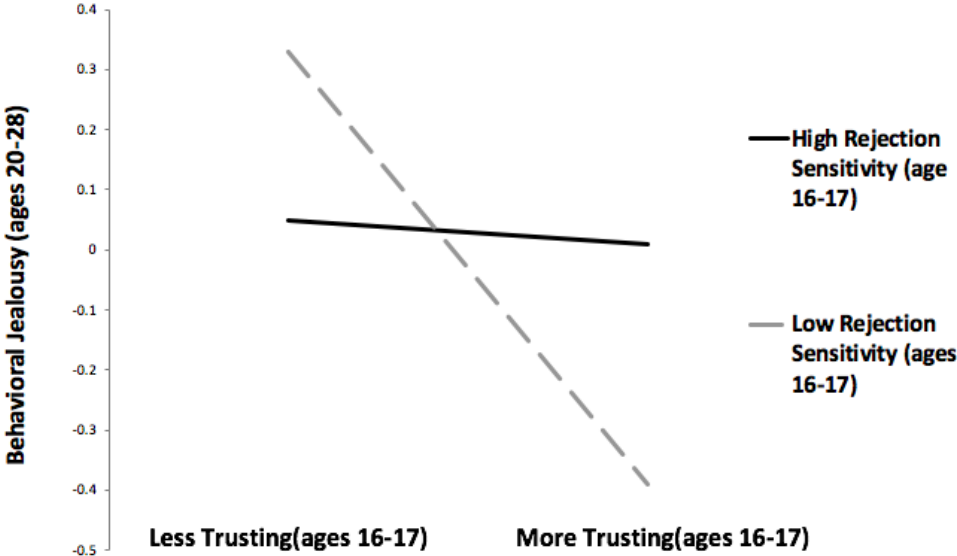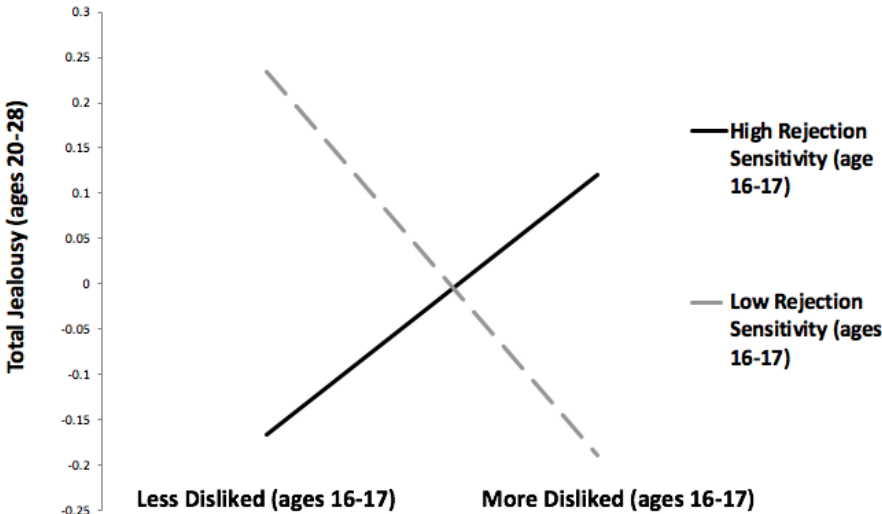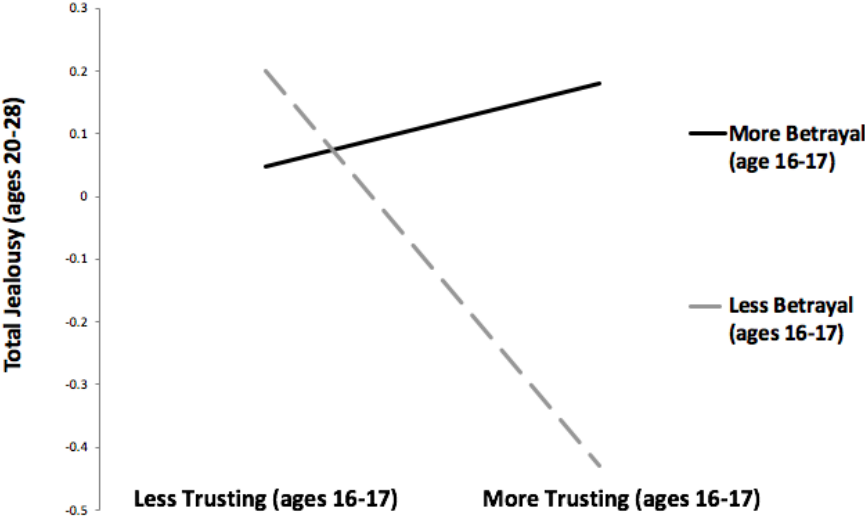*Figure 3.* Interaction between trust and rejection sensitivity predicting behavioral jealousy.

Figure 4. Interaction between dislike and rejection sensitivity predicting total jealousy.

Figure 5. Interaction between trust and betrayal predicting total jealousy.