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Differential Effects of Gender on Perceptions of Stalking Behaviour

by

Heather A. Finnegan

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Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2010

Differential Effects of Gender on Perceptions of Stalking Behaviour

by

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine the effect of gender on perceptions of stalking following the break-up of a romantic relationship. 349 university students were presented with stalking scenarios in which the gender of the target and pursuer of the stalking behaviour were systematically varied. Participants were asked to rate the degree to which they considered the behaviour stalking, how concerned they would be if this were happening to a friend, and the likelihood that they would recommend help-seeking. Individuals were equally as likely to rate potential stalking scenarios as stalking, regardless of actor gender. However, participants were significantly more likely to express concern and to recommend help-seeking when the scenarios described a male stalking a female. This research is important in understanding factors that influence perceptions of stalking, which may have repercussions for the legislation and enforcement of stalking laws, as well as the likelihood that victims will seek help.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my Gramma, who always provided unconditional love and support.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

IV.   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

What is Stalking?

A woman is being harassed by an ex-partner who calls her home at all hours of the day and leaves threatening messages on her answering machine. A man is being followed by a former girlfriend and recently found her trying to break into his car. These are both examples of behaviours that could be considered stalking. The question is, what exactly is stalking? Legal definitions vary, but the general consensus is that stalking involves the repeated harassment of another individual that causes the target to reasonably fear for his or her safety (Dennison, 2007). Most courts do not consider isolated incidents to be stalking (the behaviour must occur more than once), but there are no straight-forward definitions of harassment (Dennison, 2007; Sheridan, Blauuw, & Davies, 2003; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). In some cases, credible threat to the target or the target's family is required, suggesting that some lesser forms of harassment do not meet criteria for stalking behaviour. Public opinion also plays a role; general beliefs about which behaviours are considered more threatening, the context in which these actions occur, and even who the target and pursuer are may change how certain potential stalking situations are perceived (Dennison & Thomson, 2002). The impact of these situational variables is of particular interest given the repercussions they may have in the legislation and enforcement of stalking laws, as well as the likelihood that victims will seek help. A recent study of college women found that of the women who reported stalking victimization, only half sought assistance (Buhi, Clayton, & Surrency, 2009).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

<u>Stalking Following the Break-up of a Romantic Relationship</u>

Stalking is no longer considered a stranger-based crime, but is viewed by many

researchers as a variant of intimate partner violence (Logan, Leukefeld, & Walker, 2000).

Statistics Canada (2005) states that 7% of men and 11% of women in Canada report that

they have been targets of stalking behaviour that caused them to fear for their own safety

or the safety of someone close to them, and that 4% of men and 9% of women reported

that they were stalked by a current or ex-partner. One study found that 40% of university

students from South Carolina reported engaging in at least one stalking behaviour

following the dissolution of a romantic relationship (Davis, Ace, & Andra, 2000). Of the

almost 80% of female victims who know their stalker, the largest proportion are former

intimate partners (Logan & Walker, 2009; Sheridan, Blaauw et al., 2003; Spitzberg &

Cupach, 2007; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). The recognition that stalking occurs in the

context of dating relationships, particularly among ex-partners, has lead many researchers

to investigate the nature of relationship context in perceptions of stalking behaviour.

In a study of 168 university students, Sheridan, Gillett, Davies, Blaauw, and Patel

(2003) examined the effect of target-pursuer relationship on perceptions of a stalking

incident. The researchers found that the greater the level of intimacy between target and

pursuer, the less likely it was that participants would express concern for the target.

Relationship context ranged from stranger, to acquaintance, to ex-spouse. Participants

rated the same behaviour as less representative of stalking when the perpetrator (the

individual responsible for committing the behaviour) was an ex-spouse than when it

described an acquaintance or a stranger. Participants also perceived the target as more responsible for the stalking when the target and pursuer knew one another (ex-spouse or acquaintance). Finally, participants were more likely to report that police intervention was needed for stranger-perpetrated stalking compared to ex-partner and acquaintance stalking (Sheridan, Gillett et al., 2003). Subsequent studies have replicated these findings, suggesting that there is a consistent bias towards perceiving partner stalking as less dangerous than stranger stalking (Hills & Taplin, 1998; Phillips, Quirk, Rosenfeld, & O'Connor, 2004). Despite this pervasive belief, research suggests that ex-partner stalking is actually more dangerous. In particular, research suggests that ex-partners are significantly more likely to become violent than acquaintance or stranger stalkers, with targets of intimate partner stalking being four times as likely to be physically harmed (Palarea, Zona, Lane, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1999).

"Stalking" is a widely used and accepted term, but other ways of describing stalking-related behaviours, particularly in the context of partner stalking, are used in the research literature. Cupach and Spitzberg (1998) use "obsessive relational intrusion" (ORI) behaviours to describe activities which involved the recurrent and unsolicited pursuit of another individual with whom they desire a romantic relationship. These activities involve intrusion into the lives of the targeted individual and generally result in a loss of autonomy. The severity of these behaviours ranges from mild (calling repeatedly) to severe (threat of violence), and often overlaps with the current conceptualization of stalking. The term "unwanted pursuit behaviour" (UPB) has also been used, and is similarly defined along a continuum of severity. However, greater focus has been placed on milder pursuit behaviours that may not necessarily fall within

the stalking or ORI definition. In some cases, unwanted pursuit behaviour can actually result in a positive outcome for both parties (i.e., reconcillation; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Palarea, Cohen, & Rohling, 2000).

In a sample of 282 college students, 119 of 120 students who had been the recipient of a break-up reported engaging in at least one unwanted pursuit activity; unsolicited communications (in person or by phone) were the most commonly endorsed behaviours (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2000). The authors hypothesized that male participants would report engaging in more severe and recurrent pursuit behaviours and female participants would report greater distress when victimized. Except for the finding that females were more likely to report being threatened by their ex-partners, these gender differences were generally not found. Additionally, the authors found that pursuers and targets reported very different perceptions of the UPB. For instance, whereas 84% of targets reported experiencing a negative effect from unwanted phone messages, only 18% of pursuers perceived their messages as having a negative effect. Thus, targets of unwanted pursuit reported experiencing significantly higher levels of behaviours like theft, threats, or personal injury than pursuers reported engaging in (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al.). This discrepancy between target and pursuer perceptions, as well as the lack of gender differences in reporting UPB, has been observed in subsequent studies (Dutton & Winstead, 2006; Sinclair & Frieze, 2000, 2005). It is clear that unwanted pursuit and stalking behaviour are common occurrences following the dissolution of romantic relationships, and that perceptual differences play an important role.

Public Perceptions of Stalking

The ambiguity of stalking can make it difficult to properly enforce stalking legislation. Dennison and Thomson (2002) have discussed the idea that determination of stalking should be based on public opinion, given the subjective nature of stalking behaviour. Despite specific legislation, juries can sometimes disagree with the classification of a given behaviour based on their own preconceptions about stalking. In these cases, juries' perceptions are inconsistent with the stated laws. Congruence between public opinion and legislation is needed, but unlike most other crimes, there does not appear to be a single accepted definition. Nevertheless, there does appear to be some consensus on the types of behaviours that are most frequently classified as stalking. In a comparison of six different measures of stalking behaviour, Davis and Frieze (2000) found that certain behaviours tended to be identified most often as indicative of stalking. The following behaviours were represented in at least four of the six measures: spying on you, following you, sending notes or gifts, unwanted phone calls, staying outside home/work or driving by, showing up where you are, damaging your property, asking others about you, secretly taking your belongings, threatening or attempting to hurt you, threatening or attempting to hurt someone you know, and threatening to hurt him/herself (Davis & Frieze, 2000).

Given this ambiguity, there appears to be a need to investigate how the determination of stalking is made. In order to establish a connection between women who self-identify as victims of stalking and specific stalking behaviours, a recent study conducted at two American universities with 841 female university students asked both victims and nonvictims to indicate how often they experienced a given stalking-related behaviour (Amar, 2007). A significant relationship was found between all 12 stalking-

related behaviours used in the study and self-identification of victimization. In other words, participants who self-identified as victims of stalking also reported experiencing all of the behaviours included in the questionnaire. The highest correlations between self-identification and experience with a given behaviour were found for "followed or spied on you", "made unsolicited phone calls", "stood outside your home, school, or workplace", "showed up at places where you were even though he had no business being there", and "tried to communicate with you against your will." These behaviours were experienced with the highest frequency among self-identified victims. The authors noted that the behaviours that were intrusive in nature (surveillance, etc.) were often seen as more representative of stalking (Amar, 2007). Findings such as these suggest that, despite ambiguity in the definition of stalking, it appears that there are some behaviours that are consistently seen as stalking.

Although a handful of behaviours have been identified as characteristic of stalking, other research has demonstrated that a number of factors influence perceptions of stalking. For instance, a 2002 study conducted by Dennison and Thomson examined the influence of situational variables on perceptions of stalking in a community sample of 1,080 (383 males, 685 females, and 12 undisclosed) adults in Melbourne. The authors found main effects for participants' sex and intentions of the pursuer such that female participants were significantly more likely to consider a given behaviour to be stalking than were male participants. Participants were also significantly more likely to report that stalking had occurred if there was an explicit intent to cause fear or distress in the target (Dennison & Thomson, 2002). Furthermore, a significant interaction was found between pursuer persistence and the relationship between the target and pursuer. That is,

participants were more likely to consider a behaviour stalking given moderate levels of persistence than when there were low levels of persistence, but only when the scenario involved a stranger or an acquaintance. However, for scenarios depicting an ex-partner pursuer, persistence had no significant effect (Dennison & Thomson, 2002). This study supports the idea that there are a variety of factors that influence whether an individual determines whether stalking has occurred, but that there continues to be a bias towards discounting ex-partner perpetrated stalking.

Stalking as a Form of Intimate Partner Violence

In recent years, the nature of stalking and recognition of its relationship with intimate partner violence has become increasingly evident (Logan et al., 2000; Logan & Walker, 2009; Melton, 2007). Stalking occurs with relative frequency, and often in the context of intimate relationships. The movement towards labeling stalking behaviour as a form of partner violence is therefore understandable. A 1998 report on stalking in the United States reported a high co-occurrence of stalking or pursuit behaviours and other forms of domestic violence. Specifically, 81% of women in heterosexual marital or cohabitating relationships who had been stalked by a former partner were also physically abused by that partner (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Incidences of emotional abuse and controlling behaviour were also significantly higher among ex-husbands who engaged in stalking behaviour compared to ex-husbands who had not. In other research, Langhinrichsen-Rohling and colleagues (2000) found an association between unwanted pursuit behaviour and dating relationship violence, but only among targets of the pursuit behaviour. Taken together, these findings suggest that the underlying mechanisms

involved in intimate partner violence may also be related to stalking behaviour, supporting the conceptualization of stalking as an extension of partner violence.

Logan and colleagues (2000) examined stalking behaviour among 130 college students following the break-up of a romantic relationship. They found stalking victimization in women to be significantly associated with both physical and psychological abuse victimization. Among males, stalking victimization and perpetration were both associated with psychological abuse, suggesting that male stalking victims were also at greater risk for using psychological aggression against their romantic partners. These findings are consistent with recent research by Costigan (2007). In Costigan's research, 457 heterosexual undergraduate students from the University of Saskatchewan were asked to provide information on their experience with harassment and stalking behaviour, as well as their history of intimate partner violence. Information collected included both victimization and perpetration of stalking and partner violence. Results indicated that a history of intimate partner violence was associated with both victimization and perpetration of stalking or harassment behaviours. Moreover, although male and female respondents were equally as likely to report engaging in a given harassment behaviour, male respondents reported engaging in these behaviours with greater frequency (Costigan, 2007). Based on these studies, there appears to be evidence that stalking is likely an extension of intimate partner violence, and that, in some cases it represents a continuation of violence following the termination of the relationship (Logan et al., 2000).

Recognizing the co-occurrence of stalking behaviour and other forms of partner violence, Brewster (2000) investigated the correlation between different behaviours

involved in ex-intimate stalking and the instances of physical aggression during the course of the stalking behaviour, in a sample of 187 female victims in Pennsylvania. Almost half (46%) of the women reported being the victim of physical violence during the course of the stalking behaviour. Furthermore, verbal threats of violence were highly correlated with acts of physical violence. In fact, verbal threats were better predictors of physical aggression than a previous history of aggression (Brewster, 2000). This suggests that there is a high probability of violence when verbal threats are issued during the course of a stalking situation.

Logan and Walker (2009) propose that there are five areas that distinguish intimate partner stalking from other forms of stalking: relationship history, psychological distress of the victim, frequency and variety of stalking behaviours, threat of violence, and the initiation of the stalking behaviour. The relationships of ex-partner stalkers are usually characterized by physical, psychological, and sexual abuse (Davis et al., 2000; Logan et al., 2000; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). This history of abuse often leads to greater fear and psychological distress, with victims recalling the past abuse from their partners (Logan, Cole, Shannon, & Walker, 2006). Research suggests that former intimates use a wider array of stalking behaviours and with greater frequency that non-intimates (Logan et al., 2006) and are more likely to become to become violent (McEwan, Mullen, MacKenzie, & Ogloff, 2009; Palarea et al., 1999). Finally, ex-partner stalking often begins during the relationship as a form of control and then escalates following a break-up (Logan et al., 2003). Women who are stalked by their partners experience higher rates of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse than women who are not victims of partner-stalking (Logan, Shannon, & Cole, 2007). The likelihood of escalation from stalking to

more severe forms of harassment and aggression reinforces the belief that stalking should be classified as partner violence, and highlights the importance of taking these behaviours very seriously.

Gender and Violence

The idea that individuals engage in an automatic processing of information based on innate preconceptions about sex and gender is known as the Gender Schema Theory (Bem, 1981). These schemas organize the way individuals view the world, shaping their perceptions, and in turn, their behaviour. Specific behaviours and attributes are associated with a given gender, and these become part of children's early experiences. As a result, the social influence and categorization based on gender is promptly integrated into the unconscious processing of environmental stimuli. Children quickly learn the difference between men and women, as well as the specific social role each gender ought to play (Blakemore & Hill, 2008; Goffman, 1977). Women are seen as fragile and delicate, whereas men are considered more capable of enduring physical exertion and hardship; women are the "weaker" sex. In courtship, men are expected to be the pursuers, and women the targets. In most cases, women are smaller than their male partners, and physical power remains a male domain (Goffman, 1977). These concepts are learned very early on and serve as the basis for much of children's future learning. As a result, it becomes difficult to "un-learn" them. Information to which individuals are exposed is processed through this gender schema, altering individuals' perceptions accordingly. In short, individuals see and then process the world through these gender schemas (Bem, 1981).

These gender schemas impose meaning on the barrage of incoming stimuli, helping to organize the information in a meaningful way. In many cases, this processing is beneficial to human survival and to an accurate assessment of the environment. However, in some cases, these schemas may hinder individuals, organizing information in a way that actually impairs individuals' ability to perceive situations in different ways. In the case of intimate partner violence, gender schemas play a significant role in the way in which people organize and understand aggression that occurs between romantic partners (Anderson, 2005; Thompson, 1991).

There are three competing view points on the nature of gender in intimate partner violence: individualist, interactionist, and structuralist. The individualist model posits that gender is innate and resides within the individual, suggesting that individual differences in masculinity and femininity are the way in which gender is able to affect intimate partner violence. Based on this theory and the idea that violence and aggression are more "masculine" behaviours, it should follow that individuals higher in masculinity should engage in more partner aggression. However, recent evidence suggests that this is not the case (Anderson, 2005; Dutton, 1994; Sugarman & Frankel, 1998). A meta-analysis of 14 effect sizes from seven studies involving physical spousal abuse found that husbands who were physically abusive towards their wives actually held less traditional masculine gender beliefs than husbands who did not engage in spousal abuse (Sugarman & Frankel, 1998).

On the other hand, interactionists believe that gender is a function of social interaction. According to this perspective, gender is seen to exist because individuals continue to behave in gender-specific ways. Because aggression is often considered a

11

"masculine" activity, men may attempt to prove their masculinity through acts of violence (Anderson, 2005). This differs from the individualist model in that interactionists posit that violence is used to support gender roles, whereas individualists believe that violence is a result of the innate gender roles themselves. According to the interactionist model, male-perpetrated violence is perceived differently than female-perpetrated violence because these two forms of aggression are interpreted differently on the basis of gender roles. Aggression is considered reasonable and natural in men, but is seen as irrational and unnatural in women. Female perpetrators are viewed as ineffective, particularly when they victimize men, who are considered to be the natural aggressors (Anderson, 2005). This way of perceiving violence alters the actions we take in response to that violence. Female-perpetrated partner violence often goes unreported to authorities because it is seen as less harmful and does not fit within the gender concept of "feminine", regardless of the actual harm or danger. Society's focus on male-perpetrated domestic violence and dismissal of female-perpetrated intimate partner violence reinforces gender roles and maintains gender inequality (Anderson, 2005).

Finally, the structuralist perspective conceptualizes gender as a social construct. Unlike the interactionist approach, structuralists believe that gendered violence is a result of social structures like marriage, employment, and societal roles (Anderson, 2005). These roles socialize men and women differently; men are encouraged to be aggressive and are given opportunities to express themselves through violence. According to the structuralist model, women, on the other hand, are discouraged from engaging in aggressive or violent behaviour, limiting women's experience with violence. The association between violence and masculinity is therefore reinforced by social structures.

This dynamic also contributes to the perception of women as victims – the power structure places women at both a physical and social disadvantage. Women are more likely than men to experience fear and injury as a result of partner violence, and they have fewer means of escape based on economic and status inequality (Kurz, 1995; Straus, 2004; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Men remain the aggressors and women the victims because of these social influences. According to the structuralist model, gender is neither an innate quality, nor an interactional event between individuals; it is a social construction that influences the way we perceive and react to the world (Anderson, 2005). Regardless of how the relationship between gender and violence is conceptualized, it is clear that violence is experienced and evaluated differently on the basis of gender.

Perceptions of Stalking and Gender

Given the subjective nature of stalking and the relationship between gender and altered perceptions of violence, an investigation into the specific influence of gender on perceptions of stalking is particularly relevant. Hills and Taplin's (1998) study examined different personal reactions to stalking based on the gender of the participant. Participants were 172 community adults from metropolitan Australia who were asked to read a first-person stalking scenario and then complete several ratings on their impressions. Female participants reported that they were significantly more likely to rely on community supports, to talk to friends or family, to apply for a restraining order, and to contact law enforcement than male participants in response to the stalking scenario. The authors also considered affective reactions to the scenario; male participants were more likely to report feeling flattered or indifferent, whereas female participants were

more likely to indicate feelings of fear, worry, concern, anxiety, and anger (Hills & Taplin, 1998). Perrilloux & Buss (2008) found that female rejecters found the pursuit attempts of male ex-partners more costly (i.e., associated with more depression, interference into relationships, abuse, personal information revealed) than did male rejecters in a sample of 106 university students in Texas. This is in line with the 2002 study by Dennison and Thomson, who found that female participants were more likely to identify a given behaviour as stalking and to believe that the pursuer intended to cause harm to the target. Overall, these findings suggest that men and women appear to view the same situations very differently when faced with stalking behaviour.

Sheridan, Gillett and colleagues (2003) also considered the effects of gender in their study into perceptions of stalking using a sample of predominantly female (71%) university students in the United Kingdom. The authors found that when the pursuer was female and the target male, participants tended to believe that the likelihood of injury was less, that there was less need for police intervention, that the target (male) was more responsible for the stalking, and that males were also more capable of improving the situation (Sheridan, Gillett et al., 2003). Two other important, but seemingly contradictory findings from this research were that participants were just as likely to report that a given behaviour was stalking, regardless of the gender of the target or pursuer, and that similar ratings of severity were provided for both male and female pursuers. How can male targets of female-perpetrated stalking be less needing of help and more responsible for the stalking than their female counterparts if the actual stalking behaviour is viewed just as harshly? It appears that although gender of the actors does not necessarily affect whether an individual judges the behaviour to be stalking, attitudes

14

toward the target are affected by gender, such that male targets are seen as less likely to be injured and as more capable of helping themselves.

Research conducted by Phillips and colleagues (2004) using university students from the northeastern United States also examined several factors that may affect perceptions of stalking among college students, including gender. In a series of two studies, the authors manipulated stalking vignettes in order to determine the effects of actor gender, the severity of the stalking behaviour, and the relationship context on a number of different factors. Forty-one males and 79 females participated in experiment one and 130 males and 244 females participated in experiment two. Participants were presented with one of six different scenarios and were asked to rate the degree to which the scenarios depicted stalking, the likelihood of harm, and help-seeking. Participants were specifically asked whether stalking had occurred, if the target should be worried about his/her safety, if the target should meet with the pursuer, the likelihood of violence, and whether the target should seek help from the police. In order to assess the effects of actor gender, the authors created six conditions; half of the participants read one of the three scenarios as a male pursuing a female, and half read the same scenario as a female pursuing a male. The researchers found that the gender of the target and pursuer in the vignettes had no effect on whether the scenario was considered stalking, but it did influence perceptions of risk and need for help-seeking. When a male pursued a female, participants were more likely to rate the target as needing help and expressed greater concern for her safety. These results suggest that while the determination of stalking is unaffected by actor gender, concern for the target and need for help-seeking tend to be significantly higher when the targets are female and the pursuers are male (Phillips et al.,

2004). However, contrary to their expectations, the researchers found that previous experience with stalking did not affect participants' ratings. It should be noted that Phillips and colleagues also found a small effect for participant gender. Female participants were more likely to label a given behaviour as stalking, suggesting that the influence of gender extends beyond target/pursuer gender to include the gender of the person interpreting the scenarios (Phillips et al., 2004).

While Phillips and colleagues' research provided significant advances in the understanding of perceptions of stalking, four main limitations need to be considered in future studies. First, the procedure of presenting a single vignette to each participant did not allow for ratings to be averaged across a variety of different stalking scenarios. In experiment one, three different vignettes were used, meaning that the sample size per vignette was actually only one-third the overall (i.e., reported) sample size. In experiment two, the scenarios built upon the previous scenario such that scenarios two and three were simply extensions of the previously presented scenario(s). Such a procedure results in different scenario lengths, which could, in turn, affect the results of the study. Thus, any findings that are based on comparisons made between the scenarios should be interpreted with caution. Second, Phillip et al.'s sample included an unequal number of males and females (with almost twice as many females as males), creating unequal cell sizes; this may have lead to biased results, particularly for findings related to gender effects. Third, the researchers sought to investigate the perceptual influence of participants' actual experience with stalking on their vignettes. However, their "experience with stalking" variable only included stalking victimization and not the perpetration of stalking behaviour. Finally, the measure of help-seeking only asked about

16

formal help-seeking (law enforcement intervention) and did not consider informal types of help-seeking (friends and family). More than 90% of college women in a recent study who sought help for stalking victimization reported seeking assistance from friends (Buhi et al., 2009). Less than 30% sought help from their parents, 12% from residence hall advisors, and only 7% approached the police for help for stalking victimization. Given these findings, the decision not to include alternative sources of help-seeking seems to be a substantial oversight. The current study intended to address these limitations.

Subsequent research has supported Phillips and colleagues' (2004) findings. For instance, in a dissertation by Cass (2008), the author found that while gender played no role in the determination of whether stalking had occurred, there was a significant effect for perceived seriousness of the behaviour and potential harm to the target. The sample included 530 predominantly female (55%) university students from the eastern United States. Participants rated scenarios describing a male pursuing a female as more serious, and indicated that there was a greater likelihood of physical harm from the pursuer when the target was female. In addition to these ratings, participants were also asked to rate their perceptions of how the criminal justice system would respond. Cass reported that participants believed female-perpetrated stalking would be taken less seriously than male-perpetrated stalking. However, as with Phillips and colleagues (2004), there were limitations with the methodology of this study. Participants were only asked to read one of the eight scenarios created for the study, limiting the sample size per scenario and preventing any within-participant averaging. This study also had an unequal number of males and females, and did not attempt to counterbalance participant and actor gender so that an equal number of males and females read a given scenario. In addition, Cass

(2008) did not create two different versions of scenarios with gender of the target and pursuer systematically varied. Instead, participants were simply asked to imagine that the gender of the target and pursuer were switched and to indicate how this would affect their ratings. This might have created an obvious response bias and compromises the validity of their conclusions. The current study intended to resolve these issues.

A 2010 study by Sheridan and Scott continued this line of research using community samples from the United Kingdom. The researchers investigated the effect of physical and psychological harm on participants' perception of the stalking incident. They also manipulated actor gender in experiments 2 and 3 to determine whether participants provided different ratings for scenarios describing a male pursuer and female target than for scenarios in which a female pursued a male target. Both experiments used hypothetical vignettes describing a series of stalking behaviours over a 12 month period. These behaviours included repeated phone calls, following, repeated harassment, and love letters. Vignettes subsequently described different levels of either verbal threat (none, implicit, or explicit) in experiment 2 or physical injury (non-life threatening or life threatening). The researchers found that while both male and female targets were seen as blameless for the stalking in experiment 2, participants believed that the impact and potential danger of the stalking behaviour was greater for female targets than for male targets. Male pursuers of female targets were more likely to be seen as criminals (and thus requiring imprisonment) than female pursuers of male targets in both experiments 2 and experiment 3 (Sheridan & Scott, 2010).

The findings from this study support previous research by Phillips et al. (2004) and Cass (2008). However, by using similar methodology (a single descriptive vignette

18

with actor gender counterbalanced), the researchers were unable to assess whether participants' perceptions varied across different stalking situations. Participants were asked to make ratings on the criminality of the behaviour and the need for police intervention, but as with Phillips and colleagues, no questions were asked regarding alternative forms of help-seeking. Finally, although the sample size of these studies were adequate (161 for study 2; 115 for study 3), the samples were predominately female (69% for both study 2 and study 3). The current study sought to remedy some of these limitations.

Summary of Factors Influencing Perceptions of Stalking

Gender appears to be one way that individuals orient themselves in perceptions of stalking. A number of researchers have found that although actor gender does not influence this determination, it does have an effect on subsequent reactions to stalking. In particular, concern for the target and perception of potential harm has been shown to be highly influenced by actor gender (Cass, 2008; Phillips et al., 2004; Sheridan, Gillett et al., 2003; Sheridan & Scott, 2010). Likewise, participants are more likely to report that law enforcement and other types of formal help-seeking are required when the behaviour involves a female target and a male pursuer. Gender of the perceiver also appears to play a role in perceptions of stalking, with female participants providing higher ratings across different dimensions (Dennison & Thomson, 2002; Perrilloux & Buss, 2008; Phillips et al, 2004). These findings allow for a greater understanding of the mechanisms involved in perceptions of stalking behaviour, which may influence how stalking is interpreted and subsequently handled. The current study intends to continue this line of research. I am also interested in assessing informal (in addition to formal) help-seeking as a way of

differentiating the types of recommendations people make depending on actor and perceiver gender. By continuing this line of research, the specific effects of gender on perceptions of stalking will be better understood. This will inform research in this area and may help law enforcement and community agencies in both prevention and treatment efforts.

The Current Study

Former partners make up the majority of stalking relationships in Canada, and these relationships have been found to be the most likely to become violent (Statistics Canada, 2005). The research provided in this study is important for understanding how gender can influence perceptions of stalking following the break-up of a romantic relationship in a university sample. Male targets of female stalkers are largely ignored by the public and there is an obvious bias in college students regarding female-perpetrated stalking (Cass, 2008; Phillips et al., 2004; Sheridan, Gillett et al., 2003). The tendency to underestimate potential harm prevents men from seeking the appropriate resources for dealing with this behaviour, and may lead to further violence. As well, judge and jury perceptions of stalking and the need for help-seeking can influence decisions regarding justifiable fear and intervention. Recognizing the factors that influence perceptions of stalking may help to diminish their influence. For the purposes of the current study, "stalking" was conceptualized very broadly as any form of persistent or aggressive pursuit behaviour following the dissolution of a romantic relationship. Specific behaviours were based on previous literature in the area (Ben, 2000; Cass, 2008; Davis & Frieze, 2000; Phillips et al, 2004; Sinclair & Frieze, 2000).

The current study sought to further previous research on the effects of both participant and actor gender on perceptions of stalking using brief stalking scenarios. The study improved upon past research in the following ways: (1) using a greater number of participants than were used by Phillips and colleagues; (2) including an equal number of males and females in the sample; (3) using multiple scenarios of possible incidents of stalking that were of near-equal length; and (4) employing systematic counterbalancing. By taking these issues into consideration, I hoped to improve upon the limitations of previous studies.

The current study also asked participants to report on three different dimensions of experience with stalking – victimization, perpetration, and knowing someone who has been a victim of stalking behavour. The inclusion of stalking perpetration (rather than only victimization; Phillips et al, 2004) was meant to provide a greater range of stalking experience. Knowing someone who has been stalked was likewise included to extend the dimension of "experience with stalking" given that other researchers in the area have operationalized experience in this way (Yanowitz, 2006). I also included a measure of informal help-seeking (how likely participants would be to recommend seeking help from friends or family) in addition to seeking help from the police, as other studies have done (Phillips et al., 2004; Sheridan, Gillet et al., 2003). The additional help-seeking variable was included to evaluate the use of informal sources of help-seeking and to determine whether participants provide different recommendations for the two types of help-seeking depending on actor and participant gender. Literature on IPV and help-seeking suggests that informal sources play a critical role (Ansara & Hindin, 2010; Buhi et al., 2009). This information will help to further the understanding of help-seeking recommendations and

21

utilization in relation to stalking behaviour. The specific research questions addressed included the following:

1. What is the effect of actor gender on the determination of whether stalking has occurred?

2. What is the effect of actor gender on perceived concern for the targets of stalking behaviour?

3. What is the effect of actor gender on recommendations for formal (law enforcement) and informal (friends and family) help-seeking? Does actor gender have a differential effect on these two types of help-seeking?

4. What is the effect of participant gender on the determination of stalking, concern for target, and help-seeking (formal and informal)?

Based on these questions and the literature review presented above, the following hypotheses were tested to better understand the effects of gender on perceptions of stalking among university students following the break-up of a romantic relationship:

Hypothesis 1. Actor gender (pursuer and target) will have no effect on the determination on whether stalking has occurred.

Hypothesis 2. Actor gender will have an effect on ratings of concern for target. Specifically, participants will express greater concern for female targets of male pursuers than for male targets of females pursuers.

Hypothesis 3. Participants will provide higher ratings on recommendations for both informal (friends and family) and formal (law enforcement) forms of help-seeking when the scenarios depict a female target and a male pursuer. I did not expect to find a different pattern of results for informal versus formal help-seeking.

Hypothesis 4. Female participants will provide higher ratings across all four domains (perceptions of stalking, concern for target, recommendations for informal help-seeking, and recommendations for formal help-seeking), compared to male participants.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

<u>Participants</u>

Participants were 349 (159 male, 176 female, 1 transgender female; 13 did not

disclose their gender) undergraduate psychology students enrolled in a psychology course

at the University of Windsor. Male and female participants were recruited separately in

order to ensure an equal number of participants for each gender. Participants were

recruited from the Psychology Department Participant Pool, and received credit towards a

course requirement for their participation. Informed consent was obtained from all

participants.

<u>Measures</u>

Stalking scenarios. Brief stalking vignettes were created for this study based on

stalking scenarios used in previous studies and on commonly identified stalking

behaviours. A total of 10 scenarios were developed, each scenario depicting a different

potential stalking behaviour. Scenarios varied in length from 36 to 59 words and

described heterosexual couples. Each scenario described a relationship that had been

dissolved by one partner, followed by unwanted pursuit behaviour by the other partner.

Rather than reporting a specific number of instances, scenarios were intentionally written

using vague terms such as "several" (i.e., "Jane has called Andy *several* times") in order

to keep descriptions ambiguous and open to interpretation. "Stalking" in this study was

operationalized as any behaviour in which the "pursuer" interacted with the "target" in a

way that was either persistent or overtly aggressive. Scenarios were developed in this

way in an attempt to create a consistent but very general definition of stalking and to allow for comparisons to be made to previous research in this area.

The phrasing of the scenarios was based largely on the vignettes by Phillips and colleagues, although they were simplified to keep the scenarios brief. The specific pursuit behaviours came from a variety of sources (Ben, 2000; Cass, 2008; Davis & Frieze, 2000; Phillips et al., 2004; Sinclair & Frieze, 2000; Yanowitz, 2006) and varied in severity from mild (calling multiple times) to severe (threatening to set target's residence on fire while the target was still inside). The specific behaviours used in this study included: calling repeatedly; repeatedly sending flowers, gifts, and letters; waiting outside target's home; breaking into target's car and rummaging through his/her things; following the target; threatening to kill himself/herself if target did not take him/her back; threatening to set target's residence on fire while target was still inside; breaking into target's apartment and stealing items; smashing target's new partner's car with a baseball bat; showing up at target's workplace unexpectedly. Scenario severity was not part of the experimental manipulation; the intention was simply to provide a range of behaviours to which participants could respond.

The scenarios used in this study can be deconstructed into three components: 1. a statement describing how one partner (the target) in a romantic relationship ended the relationship with the other (the pursuer), 2. a statement indicating that the pursuer was still interested in continuing the relationship, and 3. a statement of the pursuit behaviour engaged in by the pursuer towards the target. The goal behind using a standard formula for each scenario was to make the scenarios comparable in order to collapse across

25

scenarios at data analysis. Scenarios were validated using a pilot study in which

participants were asked to provide feedback on the scenarios.

Two different versions of the scenarios were created so that half of the

participants would read a given scenario as describing a male pursuing a female and the

other half would read the same scenario with a female pursuing a male (see Appendix

A.1 & A.2). In version 1 (V1), scenarios 1, 3, 5, 7, and 10 described a female pursuing a

male (F-M). In version 2 (V2), these same scenarios (1, 3, 5, 7, & 10) depicted a male

pursuing a female (M-F). On the other hand, scenarios 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9 portrayed a male

pursuing a female (M-F) in version 1 and a female pursuing a male (F-M) in version 2;

see Table 1. Given this clustering of scenarios, scenarios 1, 3, 5, 7, and 10 are referred to

as "Cluster 1", and scenarios 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9 are "Cluster 2". Although assignment to

clusters was random and no specific attention was paid to ensuring that scenario severity

was equally distributed between clusters, the plan was to make Cluster 1 and Cluster 2

scenarios equivalent.

Table 1

Counterbalancing of Experimental Conditions by Actor and Participant Gender

Version 1		Version 2	
Female participants	Male participants	Female participants	Male participants
Male-female	Male-female	Male-female	Male-female
2	2	1	1
4	4	3	3
6	6	5	5
8	8	7	7
9	9	10	10
Female-male	Female-male	Female-male	Female-male
1	1	2	2
3	3	4	4
5	5	6	6
7	7	8	8
10	10	9	9

Note. Male-female indicates scenarios in which a male is stalking a female; female-male indicates
scenarios in which a female is stalking a female. Numbers indicate scenario number.

An additional 11th non-stalking scenario was also developed in which the "pursuer" sent the "target" a birthday card several months after the dissolution of their relationship. The purpose of this control scenario was to act as a manipulation check for participants who may not have actually read the scenario, and therefore responded inappropriately, as well as for those participants who perceived stalking even where there was none (ceiling effects).

Perceptions of stalking. Participants were asked to decide whether the "pursuer" in the scenario was stalking the "target" (i.e., "Is Jane stalking Andy?") on a five-point Likert scale (1 = *definitely not* and 5 = *definitely*). These ratings, as well as the following three ratings relating to concern for target and recommendations for informal and formal help-seeking were all made on the experiment webpage following the presentation of each scenario .

Concern for target. Participants were asked to rate: "How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?" on a five-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all concerned* and 5 = *very concerned*).

Recommendations for help-seeking. The help-seeking variable included help-seeking from both informal (friends and family) and formal (law enforcement) sources. Participants were asked to rate: "How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?" and "How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?". These ratings were made on five-point Likert scales where 1 = *not at all likely* and 5 = *extremely likely*.

Partner aggression. The Conflict in Adolescent Dating Relationships Inventory (CADRI; Wolfe et al., 2001) is a 35-item self-report questionnaire that measures the extent to which participants and their partners engage in intimate partner aggression and violence. In addition to a negotiation subscale, the CADRI includes both perpetrator and victim subscales for four forms of partner aggression: verbal/emotional abuse, threatening, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. Overall abuse scores can also be computed. Therefore, in the current study, the four perpetration and victimization subscales were collapsed to create a total perpetration score (IPV.Perpetration) and a total victimization score (IPV.Victimization). In the current study, I adapted the CADRI so that instead of using separate versions of the victimization scale for men and women, the words "my partner" were used instead of "my boyfriend/girlfriend". Respondents were asked to rate on a four-point scale how often behaviours have occurred with their current or ex-partner within the past year. Response choices include 0 = *never* (*this has never happened in your relationship*), 1 = *seldom* (*this has happened only 1-2 times in your relationship*), 2 = *sometimes* (*this has happened about 3-5 times in your relationship*), and 3 = *often* (*this has happened 6 times or more in your relationship*). Examples of questionnaire items include, "I kicked, hit, or punched my partner" and "My partner destroyed or threatened to destroy something I valued" (see Appendix B). Cronbach's alpha coefficients in a group of high school students were greater than .83; test-retest reliability during a two-week period was acceptable ($r = .75$; Wolfe et al., 2001). Cronbach's alpha was .94 for the adopted version of the scale used in this sample.

Although the CADRI is a valuable tool, some concerns have been expressed regarding frequency-based self-report measures of intimate partner violence. Critics report that the self-report nature of such measures, as well as the simplification of behaviours and lack of context, is problematic. Participants were therefore asked to respond to three contextual questions adapted from DeKeseredy (1995) following completion of the perpetrator subscale of the CADRI. In order to better understand the context of these behaviours, participants were asked to indicate the percentage of times they acted in self-defense, in an attempt to fight back, or because their partner attacked first (see Appendix C). These questions were not used in any of the analyses, although frequencies of participant endorsement can be found in the results section.

Stalking experience. Participants were asked to report any previous experience with stalking as part of the demographic questionnaire. They were asked "Have you ever been a target of stalking or excessive pursuit behaviour?", "Have you ever engaged in stalking or excessive pursuit behaviour?", and "Has anyone you know been the target of stalking?".

Demographics. A demographic questionnaire was included, which asked about age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, relationship history, and experience with stalking (see Appendix D).

Design

A quasi experimental 2 x 2 (Actor Gender x Participant Gender) repeated measures design was employed in which male and female participants were randomly assigned to one of two versions of the scenarios.

<u>Procedure</u>

Participants were directed to an internet webpage after signing up for the experiment using the Participant Pool website. They were asked to provide consent by checking a box indicating their approval to participant. After agreeing to continue, participants were presented with a scenario describing a potential stalking behaviour (e.g., repeated phone calls). They were asked to read the scenario and then to provide ratings based on their impressions.

Participants were presented with a total of 11 different scenarios; 10 detailing a unique potential stalking behaviour and one nonstalking control scenario. Scenarios were counterbalanced by actor gender, yielding two different versions of the measure. Actor gender was systematically varied such that half of the participants read a given scenario in which the male was depicted as pursuing a female (male-female) and half read the same scenario with the female depicted as pursuing a male (female-male). This ensured that, across participants, each version was presented the same number of times. Gender of the participant was also counterbalanced such that an equal number of males and females would view each version. Participants were randomly assigned to either version one (V1) or version two (V2), with half of the participants contributing data to each version. Scenarios were presented in a random order to minimize the influence of order effects. Once participants had provided ratings for each of the 11 scenarios, they were asked to complete the CADRI, followed by the three contextual questions adapted from DeKeseredy (1995), and the demographic information form. Following the completion of the study, participants were provided with an information sheet with community

resources available to individuals who have experienced distress following the break-up of a romantic relationship (see Appendix F), as well as instructions on maintaining internet security (see Appendix G).

<u>Pilot Study</u>

Twenty undergraduate students (10 males and 10 females) were recruited from the University of Windsor Psychology Department Participant Pool to take part in a pilot study. The objective of the pilot study was to receive feedback on the newly developed scenarios and questions. I was specifically interested in participants' comfort in responding to scenarios, their perceptions of how realistic the scenarios were, and whether the stimuli were clear and unambiguous. Participants were also given the opportunity to report any other concerns or comments they might have had regarding the study. The data obtained were not included in subsequent analyses. Participants in the pilot study were tested in person using the methodology described above. All of the participants reported that they found the scenarios believable and 95% reported finding them easy to read and understand. No noteworthy issues or changes were expressed.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The independent variables were actor gender (male pursuer-female target vs. female pursuer-male target) and participant gender (male vs. female). The dependent variables were perceptions of stalking (rating for whether pursuer is stalking target), concern for target (rating of how concerned participant would be if scenario were happening to a friend), recommendation for informal help-seeking (rating of likelihood of recommending help from friends or family), and recommendation for formal help-seeking (rating of likelihood of recommending help from the police). The control variables were version of the scenario (version one vs. version two), experience with stalking (experience as the perpetrator, as the target, or knowing someone who has been stalked), and history of intimate partner violence (perpetration and victimization).

Dating Coding Procedures

In order to determine the specific effects of actor gender and participant gender on each of the four dependent variables (perceptions of stalking, degree of concern, recommendations for informal help seeking, and recommendations for formal help seeking), I computed a series of aggregate variables. There were a total of 320 unique variables based on the two different versions of the scenarios, two participant genders, two actor genders, four dependent variables, and 10 different scenarios (i.e., 2 versions x 2 participant genders x 2 actor genders x 4 dependent variables x 10 scenarios = 320; see Table 1 for more information). These 320 unique data points were then grouped in different ways in order to test the hypotheses.

32

Actor gender acted as a grouping factor for hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 in order to create eight new variables (2 actor genders x 4 dependent variables). For example, the variable "M.F.Perception" represented the average "stalking perception" rating of data from the five scenarios that examined male pursuer-female target stalking from version 1 (scenarios 2, 4, 6, 8, 9) as well as data from the five scenarios that examined male pursuers-female targets from version 2 (scenarios 1, 3, 5, 7, 10). This variable was therefore comprised of data from both male and female participants and from version one and version two, but only included ratings on scenarios describing a male pursuing a female. As a result, all 360 participants have data on this variable. Variables measuring female-pursuer male-target stalking were similarly created. I was therefore able to create difference scores based on the two actor gender variables (M-F ratings – F-M ratings), which were used to examine the effect of version of each of the four ratings. These variables were referred to as the "actor gender difference scores".

I also grouped the data by scenario cluster for each of the dependent variables. As noted previously, scenarios 1, 3, 5, 7, and 10 represent all the female-male scenarios in version 1, and all the male-female scenarios in version 2. For example, the variable "perception.135" represents the average "perception of stalking" rating of data from scenarios 1, 3, 5, 7, and 10 (Cluster 1). For participants who completed version 1, this would be an average of all their female pursuer-male target (F-M) ratings. Participants who completed version 2 would have an average of all their male pursuer-female target (M-F) "perception of stalking" ratings. Similarly, the variable "concern.246" represents the average "concern for target" ratings from scenarios 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9 (Cluster 2); these

are all the M-F concern ratings for V1 and all the F-M concern ratings from V2. There are four variables in Cluster 1 (perception.135, concern.135, informal.135, and formal.135) and four variables in Cluster 2 (perception.246, concern.246, informal.246, and formal.246) for a total of eight actor gender variables. By grouping the data in this way, I was able to use version as a between-subject factor to compare M-F ratings to F-M ratings using the same set of scenarios, rather than averaging across the different scenarios. These variables were referred to as the "actor gender variables".

The final hypothesis relating to participant gender collapsed the 320 data points into four separate dependent variables: Perceptions.of.stalking, Concern.for.target, Informal.help.seeking, and Formal.help.seeking. For example, the variable "Perception.of.stalking" represents the average "stalking perception" rating of data from the 10 scenarios answered by both female and male participants across both versions. These variables were referred to as "participant gender variables".

As indicated above, questions relating to experience with stalking were combined to create a single "Experience with Stalking" variable. Likewise, total scores from the CADRI were calculated and to represent history of "IPV.Perpetration" and "IPV.Victimization". All other demographic variables remained intact (i.e., were not transformed or manipulated in any way).

Preliminary Analyses

Effects of version. As indicated above, two versions of the stalking scenario measure were developed and included in the current study to ensure that any variance was due to the experimental manipulation and not to the specific scenario. Half of the

participants read a given scenario as describing a male pursuing a female and the other half read the same scenario with a female pursuing a male. Given that actor gender was counterbalanced randomly across the 10 experimental scenarios, the two versions of the survey were expected to be approximately equal. This was done with the intention of collapsing across version to create one male-female variable and one female-male variable for each DV. Although I had no hypotheses or research questions relating to scenario version, I checked for the effects of version as part of the preliminary analysis to determine whether participants' ratings differed based only on version. I used the actor gender difference scores for each of the four dependent variables and ran correlations with version to determine whether it was reasonable to collapse across version in subsequent analyses.

Version was significantly correlated with all four dependent variables (dif.perception, $r = .123$, $p < .05$; dif.concern, $r = -.658$, $p < .05$; dif.informal, $r = -.564$, $p < .05$; dif.formal, $r = -.748$, $p < .01$). This implied that even after aggregating each participant's MF and FM ratings, participants provided different ratings based on the version. Given that the only difference between the two versions was actor gender, which was randomly assigned to each scenario, this inequality suggested that the female-male (FM) scenarios in V1 (scenarios 1, 3, 5, 7, 10) were not equivalent to the female-male scenarios in V2 (scenarios 2, 4, 6, 8, 9). Likewise, the male-female (MF) scenarios in V1 (2, 4, 6, 8, 9) were not equivalent to the male-female scenarios in V2 (1, 3, 5, 7, 10). In other words, although the assignment of actor gender was done randomly (albeit with some consideration that the scenario severity should be equivalent), this effect

indicates that the individual scenarios were not equivalent; scenarios 1, 3, 5, 7, and 10 (Cluster 1) in V1 were not equivalent to scenarios 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9 (Cluster 2) in V2, despite the fact that they were both FM scenarios (i.e., they both described a female pursuing a male). A version effect meant that I could no longer average across scenarios based on actor gender.

To confirm that there really was a difference between the scenarios, I ran ANOVAs using the eight original dependent variables (i.e., "MF.Perceptions", etc.) and version as the between subject factor. Except for MF.Perceptions and FM.Perceoptions, there was a significant difference in means ratings based on actor gender. In other words, mean ratings on each of the remaining dependent variables (MF.Concern, FM.Concern, MF.Informal, FM.Informal, MF.Formal, and FM.Formal) were significantly different depending on version. Although the total MF mean ratings were always higher than the total FM mean ratings, scenarios from Cluster 2 (2, 4, 6, 8, and 9) evoked higher mean ratings overall, regardless of version. For example, FM.Concern from V1 (Cluster 1) had a mean rating of 3.67, whereas FM.Concern from V2 (Cluster 2) had a mean rating of 4.20. The opposite was true for MF.Concern; V1 scenarios (Cluster 2) had a mean rating of 4.32 and V2 scenarios (Cluster 1) had a mean rating of 3.86. This was true for each of the dependent variables, including perceptions of stalking, although the effect was less pronounced for MF.Perceptions and FM.Perceptions. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that scenarios from Cluster 2 (2, 4, 6, 8, and 9) were seen as more serious than the scenarios from Cluster 1 (1, 3, 5, 7, and 10). This additional severity suggested that there was a need to separate the effects of each scenario cluster and analyze scenarios

from Cluster 1 separately from Cluster 2 scenarios to remove the effect of version on the results.

Given that FM scenarios from V1 were different than the FM scenarios from V2, the original plan of aggregating across versions would have resulted in a loss of power and increased error. Rather than try to co-vary out the effect of version, which would be difficult to do with a categorical variable, I chose to separate the analyses based on scenario cluster. That is, I separated the analyses and in order to compare actor gender using the same set of scenarios. Perceptions of stalking ratings from scenarios 1, 3, 5, 7, and 10 (Cluster 1) in V1 were compared to the same scenarios in V2 (where the actor gender was reversed). Likewise, perceptions of stalking ratings from scenarios 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9 (Cluster 2) in V1 were compared to same scenarios in V2. This was done for each of the four DVs, leading to the creation of eight actor gender variables (perception.135, perception.246, concern.135, concern.246, informal.135, informal.246, formal.135, and formal.246). I abandoned the original data analysis plan of repeated measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) using the averaged actor gender data points (i.e., "MF.Perceptions") and instead went forward with separate between-subject MANOVAs with each scenario cluster acting as a separate dependent variable.

Bivariate correlations. I checked for possible covariates by correlating participants' scores on each of the dependent variables with their scores on the perpetration and victimization subscales of the CADRI as well as each of the experience with stalking variables (perpetrator, target, and known). This was done to determine

whether prior experience with stalking and/or intimate partner violence was associated

with individuals' perceptions of stalking and ratings of concern and help seeking.

Experience as the target of stalking or knowing someone who had been stalked was not

associated with any of the dependent variables. Experience as the perpetrator of stalking

was correlated with the two help-seeking dependent variables (informal help-seeking and

formal help-seeking) from hypothesis 4, which examined the effects of participant

gender. Experience as the perpetrator of stalking was also associated with actor gender,

although only the variables from Cluster 1 (perception.135, concern.135, informal.135,

and formal.135), which were used for hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. IPV perpetration and

victimization were not correlated with any of the dependent variables. I also conducted

bivariate correlations between participant gender and the eight actor gender variables

from Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 to determine whether participant gender accounted for any

of the variance in ratings based on actor gender. Participant gender was significantly

correlated with all of the actor gender dependent variables from hypotheses 1, 2, and 3.

As a result, experience with stalking perpetration and participant gender were controlled

for accordingly in subsequent analyses. See Tables 2 and 3 for correlations.

Table 2
Bivariate Correlations Among Participant Gender Variables

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Perceptions.of.stalking	1.00									
2	Concern.for.target	.43**	1.00								
3	Informal.help.seeking	.35**	.82**	1.00							
4	Formal.help.seeking	.39**	.65**	.63**	1.00						
5	Participant gender	.16**	.35**	.32**	.25**	1.00					
6	CADRI_Perpetration	-.05	-.09	-.06	-.03	.03	1.00				
7	CADRI_Victimization	-.05	-.09	-.05	-.02	-.06	.77**	1.00			
8	Target of stalking	.05	.07	.09	.09	.08	.13*	.17**	1.00		
9	Perpetrator of stalking	-.10	-.07	-.15**	-.13*	-.01	.12*	.09	-.02	1.00	
10	Know target of stalking	.08	.04	.02	-.03	-.05	.08	.12*	.20**	0.01	1.00

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3
Bivariate Correlations Among Actor Gender Variables divided by Scenario Cluster

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	Perception.135	1.00													
2	Perception.246	.46**	1.00												
3	Concern.135	.57**	.12*	1.00											
4	Concern.246	.27**	.34**	.50**	1.00										
5	Informal.135	.49**	.11*	.82**	.44**	1.00									
6	Informal.246	.20**	.28**	.44**	.75**	.50**	1.00								
7	Formal.135	.52**	.12*	.72**	.30**	.70**	.27**	1.00							
8	Formal.246	.27**	.28**	.36**	.56**	.38**	.54**	.52**	1.00						
9	Participant gender	.14*	.14**	.32**	.27**	.31**	.24**	.25**	.17**	1.00					
10	CADRI_Perpetration	-.02	-.06	-.07	-.09	-0.05	-.07	-.01	-.04	.03	1.00				
11	CADRI_Victimization	-.04	-.04	-.07	-.09	-.06	-.04	-.02	-.03	-.06	.77**	1.00			
12	Target of stalking	.05	.05	.11*	.00	.12*	.03	.10	.05	.08	.13*	.17**	1.00		
13	Perpetrator of stalking	-.15**	-.04	-.13*	.02	-.20**	-.06	-.16**	-.06	-.01	.12*	.09	-.02	1.00	
14	Know target of stalking	.05	.08	.04	.02	.04	-.01	-.03	-.03	-.05	.08	.12*	.20**	0.01	1.00

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Missing data. A missing data analysis was used to determine the nature and extent of missing data in the sample. Ratings based on the scenarios had the lowest level of missing data, with less than 3% missing in V1 and less than 8% in V2. CADRI variables had more missing data, with nearly 8% missing in some V1 variables and 12% in V2. Of the 380 cases in the original sample, 10 were removed due to substantial (more than 50%) missing data in the primary variables (ratings based on the stalking scenarios). Six additional cases were removed based on high ratings on the control scenario in which the actor in the scenario sent his/her ex-partner a birthday card several months after their break-up. Ratings of 4 or higher (on a scale that ranged from 1 to 5) on two or more of the ratings on the control scenario were considered aberrant and suggested that either the participant was prone to identify even seemingly innocent actions as stalking or that they were not reading the scenarios. Either way, these individuals were considered outliers and were removed from the data set.

Statistical assumptions. The remaining 364 cases were assessed for issues with univariate and multivariate normality, homogeneity of variances, multicollinearity, outliers, and influential statistics. There were no issues with multicollinearity or

singularity, and the variances of individual variables were approximately equal. However, several of the dependent variables had non-normal distributions, showing a negative skew. Given the large sample size, a liberal cut-off of 3.0 standard deviations was used to identify outliers; 15 outliers were found to be above or below the cut-off range and were removed from the sample. There were no influential observations. Following the removal of these 15 outliers, normality was significantly improved and values for skewness and kurtosis fell back within normal range. I therefore decided to keep the outliers out for the remainder of the analyses, which yielded a sample of 349.

The final sample included 159 (45.6%) male, 176 (50.4%) female, and one transgendered (0.3%) participant [13 (3.7%) participants did not disclose their sex] with a mean age of 20.82 ($SD = 2.99$; range = 17 to 44) years. Other key demographic information is presented in Table 4. A priori analyses used $p < .05$, whereas the exploratory MANOVA and any post-hoc analyses used a Bonferonni correction to account for Type I error. The mean, standard deviation, range, and Cronbach's alpha of each dependent variable can be found in Table 5. Information regarding the contextual questions by DeKeseredy (1995) following the CADRI is presented in Table 6.

Table 4

Demographic Information (N = 349)

Variable	N (%)
Gender	
Male	159 (45.6)
Female	176 (50.4)
Transgender female	1 (0.3)
Prefer not to disclose	13 (3.7)
Version	
Version 1	181 (51.9)
Version 2	168 (48.1)
Year of study	
First year	103 (29.5)
Second year	100 (28.7)
Third year	75 (21.5)
Fourth year	53 (15.2)
Fifth year	4 (1.2)
Race/ethnicity	
Caucasian	251 (71.9)
Chinese	6 (1.7)
South Asian	23 (6.6)
African American	12 (3.4)
Filipino	5 (1.4)
Latin American	3 (0.9)
Southeast Asian	6 (1.7)
Arab	15 (4.3)
West Asian	2 (0.6)
Japanese	2 (0.6)
Aboriginal	1 (0.3)
Other	11 (3.2)
Sexual orientation	
Heterosexual	325 (93.1)
Homosexual	9 (2.6)
Bisexual	4 (1.1)
Relationship status	
Single	144 (41.3)
Casually dating	22 (6.3)
Dating exclusively	156 (44.7)
Engaged	11 (3.2)
Married	6 (1.7)
CADRI Perpetration Subscales	
Threatening Behaviour	169 (48.4)
Physical Aggression	62 (17.8)
Emotional Aggression	323 (92.6)
Sexual Aggression	125 (35.8)
Relational Aggression	131 (37.5)

Table 5

Mean, Standard Deviation, Range, and Cronbach's Alpha for each Dependent Variable

	Mean	SD	Range	Cronbach's alpha
Perceptions of stalking	3.73	0.58	1.90 - 5.00	.71
Concern for target	4.05	0.48	2.40 - 5.00	.76
Informal help-seeking	3.92	0.57	1.70 - 5.00	.77
Formal help-seeking	3.44	0.60	1.80 - 4.75	.79

Note. Values in the table are based on Likert-type ratings on a 1 to 5 scale.

Table 6

Frequency of Participant Endorsement for Contextualization of IPV Perpetration in the CADRI

	Acting in self-defense, protecting yourself from immediate physical harm.	Trying to fight back; you were not first to use these or similar tactics.	Before he/she actually attacked you or threatened to attack you.
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
0%	225 (64.5)	182 (52.1)	235 (67.3)
10-20%	50 (14.3)	61 (17.5)	47 (13.5)
30-50%	26 (7.4)	39 (11.2)	31 (8.9)
50-70%	15 (4.3)	31 (8.9)	15 (4.3)
70-90%	14 (4.0)	16 (4.6)	5 (1.4)
90-100%	8 (2.3)	9 (2.6)	3 (0.9)

Note. Contextual questions were adapted from DeKeseredy (1995).

Main Analyses

Given the bivariate correlations reported above, experience with stalking (perpetrator) and participant gender were considered covariates for hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 and were controlled for in analysis of perception of stalking, concern for target, and recommendations for help-seeking. Experience with stalking (perpetrator) was also significantly correlated with two of the dependent variables from hypothesis 4. It was therefore regarded as a covariate and was controlled for in the analysis of the effect of participant gender.

42

Perceptions of stalking. A 2 x 1 MANOVA (using perception.135 and perception.246) revealed a significant effect for actor gender on perceptions of stalking, $F(2, 346) = 3.19$, $p = .042$, $\eta^2 = .02$. However, this effect became non-significant after controlling for participant gender and experience with stalking, $F(2, 330) = 1.84$, $p = .16$, $\eta^2 = .01$. That is, actor gender (pursuer and target) no longer had an effect on the determination on whether stalking has occurred, once participant gender and experience with stalking were accounted for (see Table 7).

Table 7

Variable Means and Standard Deviations by Scenario Cluster and Actor Gender

	Cluster 1		Cluster 2	
Variable	V1 (F-M)	V2 (M-F)	V2 (F-M)	V1 (M-F)
Perceptions of stalking	3.72 (0.65)	3.80 (0.56)	3.67 (0.75)	3.73 (0.70)
Concern for target	3.70 (0.67)	3.88 (0.59)	4.24 (0.54)	4.39 (0.40)
Informal help-seeking	3.58 (0.72)	3.83 (0.69)	4.09 (0.70)	4.24 (0.52)
Formal help-seeking	2.92 (0.80)	3.15 (0.73)	3.69 (0.67)	3.96 (0.54)

Note. Numbers in the table reflect Likert-type ratings on a 1 to 5 scale. V1 = version 1; V2 = version 2; F-M = female purser, male target; M-F = male purser, female target.

Concern for target. A 2 x 1 MANOVA (using concern.135 and concern.246) revealed a significant effect for actor gender on concern for target, $F(2, 346) = 18.88$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$. This effect remained significant after controlling for participant gender and experience with stalking, $F(2, 330) = 17.17$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .09$. Results suggested that actor gender had a significant effect on ratings of concern for target; specifically, examination of means revealed that participants expressed greater concern for female targets of male pursuers than for male targets of female pursuers (see Table 7).

Recommendations for help-seeking. A 1 x 4 MANOVA (using informal.135, informal.246, formal.135, and formal.246) revealed a significant main effect for actor

gender on recommendations for help-seeking, $F(4, 344) = 16.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .16$. This effect remained significant after controlling for participant gender and experience with stalking, $F(4, 328) = 17.25$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .17$. Participants provided significantly higher ratings on recommendations for both informal (friends and family) and formal (law enforcement) forms of help-seeking when the scenarios depict a female target and a male pursuer. A different pattern of results for informal vs. formal help-seeking did not emerge, although ratings for informal help-seeking were higher than ratings for formal help-seeking (see Table 7).

Participant gender. A 1 x 4 MANOVA revealed a significant main effect for participant gender on all four dependent variables (perceptions of stalking, concern for target, informal help-seeking, and formal help-seeking), $F(4, 344) = 12.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .12$. This effect remained significant after controlling for experience with stalking, $F(4, 331) = 11.75$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .12$. Female participants provided significantly higher ratings across all four domains (perceptions of stalking, concern for target, informal help-seeking, and formal help-seeking), compared to male participants (see Table 8).

Table 8
Variable Means and Standard Deviations by Participant Gender

Variable	Participant gender	
	Male	Female
Perceptions of stalking	3.62 (0.56)	3.83 (0.58)
Concern for target	3.87 (0.49)	4.22 (0.43)
Informal help-seeking	3.73 (0.61)	4.11 (0.48)
Formal help-seeking	3.27 (0.61)	3.59 (0.58)

Note. Numbers in the table reflect Likert-type ratings on a 1 to 5 scale.

Post-Hoc Analyses

Perceptions of stalking. Given the significant p-value for the perceptions of stalking MANOVA without covariates, additional analyses for each scenario cluster were used to explore the nature of the effect. A one-way ANOVA revealed a non-significant effect for actor gender on perceptions of stalking for Cluster 1, $F(1, 347) = 2.39$, $p = .123$. This effect remained non-significant after controlling for participant gender and experience with stalking, $F(1, 331) = 1.78$, $p = .183$. A second one-way ANOVA for Cluster 2 also revealed a non-significant effect for actor gender, $F(1, 347) = 1.12$, $p = .291$, which remained non-significant after controlling for participant gender, $F(1, 346) = 0.749$, $p = .387$. It appears that when examining each scenario cluster individually, actor gender no longer had an effect on the perceptions of whether stalking had occurred.

Exploratory Analyses

A 2 x 4 exploratory MANOVA revealed a significant interaction effect between actor gender and participant gender, $F(8, 338) = 4.38$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .09$. This effect remained significant after controlling for experience with stalking, $F(8, 323) = 4.40$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$.

Perceptions of stalking. Male participants provided higher ratings on perceptions of stalking in Cluster 1 when the scenarios depicted a male stalking a female ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.57$) than for scenarios depicting a female stalking a male ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.62$). Although this effect was not as pronounced for Cluster 2, there was a similar tendency to perceive M-F (male pursuer – female target) scenarios as stalking ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 0.72$) relative to F-M scenarios ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.74$). On the other hand, female participants in Cluster 1 tended to rate M-F scenarios ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 0.65$) similarly to F-M (female

pursuer – male target) scenarios ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.56$), but considered M-F more

indicative of stalking in Cluster 2 ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.68$ vs. $M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.75$; see

Figures 1 & 2).

Figure 1. Relationship Between Actor Gender and Participant Gender for Perceptions of Stalking in Cluster 1 Controlling for Experience with Stalking. Male-Female = male pursuer-female target; Female-Male = female pursuer-male target.

Figure 2. Relationship Between Actor Gender and Participant Gender for Perceptions of Stalking in Cluster 2 Controlling for Experience with Stalking. Male-Female = male pursuer-female target; Female-Male = female pursuer-male target.

Concern for target. Male participants in both Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 expressed significantly more concern for female targets of male pursers (Cluster 1: $M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.64$, Cluster 2: $M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.40$) than for male targets of female pursuers (Cluster 1: $M = 3.39$, $SD = 0.61$, Cluster 2: $M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.57$). Female participants in Cluster 1 also reported higher ratings of concern for M-F scenarios ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.50$) than for F-M scenarios ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.61$). However, the change in ratings was not as large as for male participants. Female participants in Cluster 2 showed no difference in ratings based on actor gender (M-F: $M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.40$, F-M: $M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.42$; see Figures 3 & 4).
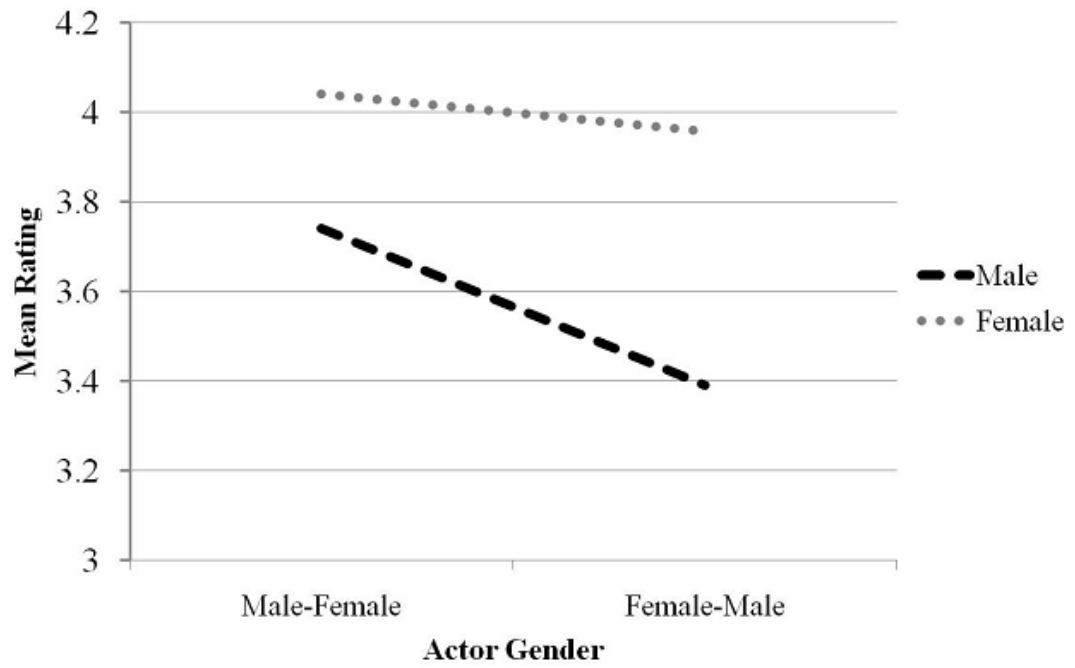
Figure 3. Relationship Between Actor Gender and Participant Gender for Concern for Target in Cluster 1 Controlling for Experience with Stalking. Male-Female = male pursuer-female target; Female-Male = female pursuer-male target.
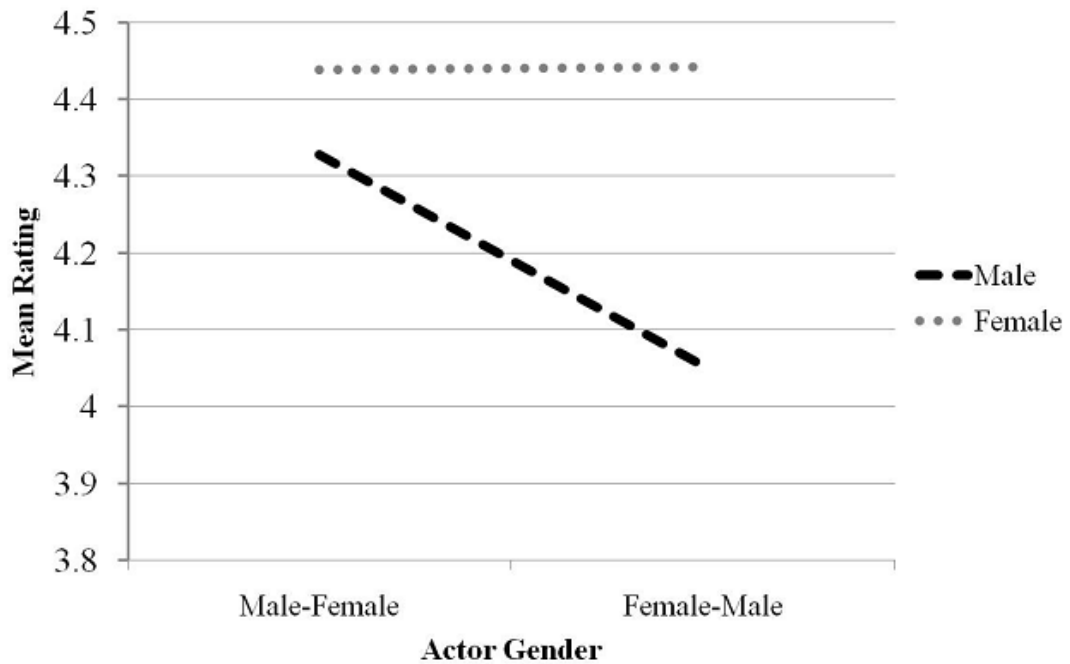
Figure 4. Relationship Between Actor Gender and Participant Gender for Concern for Target in Cluster 2 Controlling for Experience with Stalking. Male-Female = male pursuer-female target; Female-Male = female pursuer-male target.

Informal help-seeking. Female participants in Clusters 1 and 2 reported that they would be slightly more likely to recommend help seeking from friends or family for M-F scenarios (Cluster 1: $M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.54$, Cluster 2: $M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.49$) compared to F-M scenarios (Cluster 1: $M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.65$, Cluster 2: $M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.53$). Male participants in Cluster 1 showed a similar pattern of results. However, compared to female participants and male participants in Cluster 1 (M-F: $M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.76$ vs. F-M: $M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.68$, male participants in Cluster 2 were substantially more likely to recommend help to female targets of male pursuers ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 0.54$) than to male targets of female pursuers ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.78$; see Figures 5 & 6).
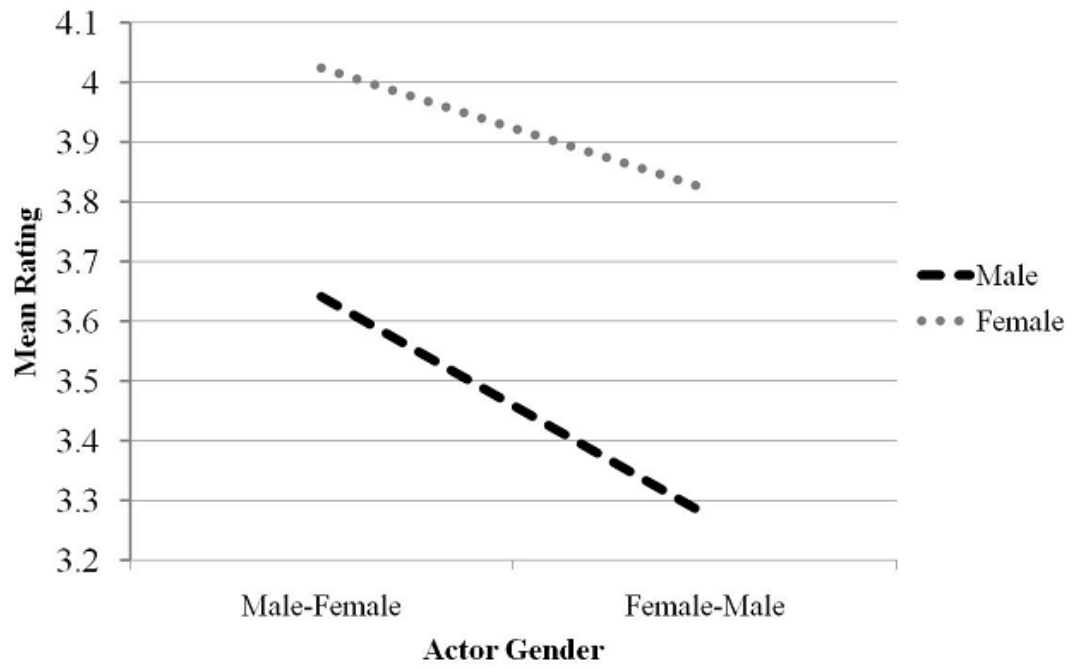
Figure 5. Relationship Between Actor Gender and Participant Gender for Recommendations of Informal Help-seeking in Cluster 1 Controlling for Experience with Stalking. Male-Female = male pursuer-female target; Female-Male = female pursuer-male target.
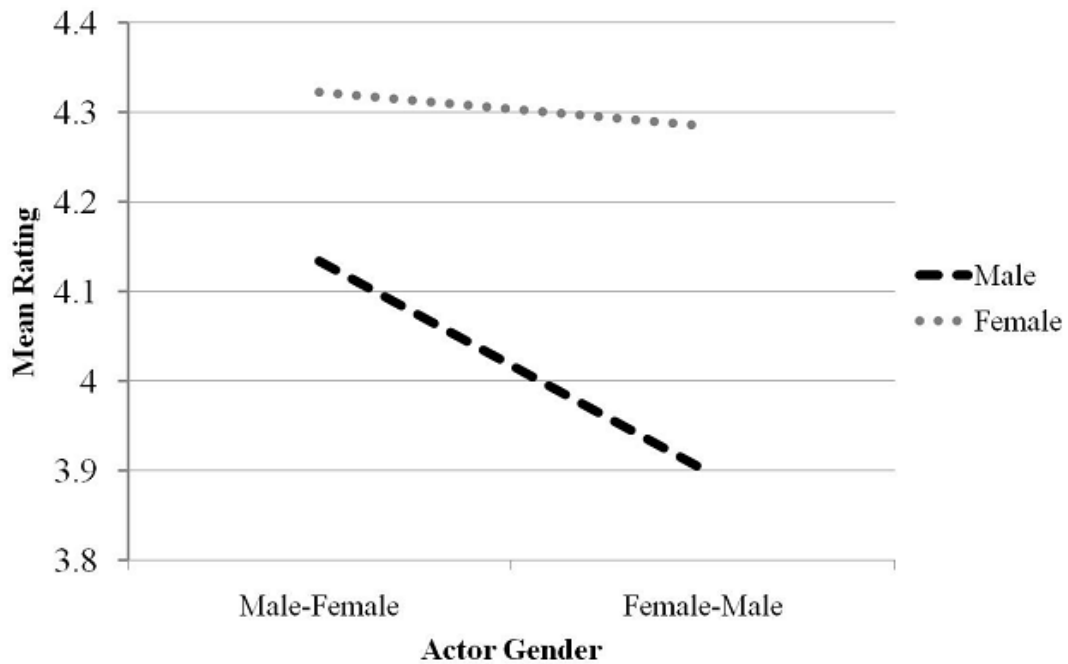
Figure 6. Relationship Between Actor Gender and Participant Gender for Recommendations of Informal Help-seeking in Cluster 2 Controlling for Experience with Stalking. Male-Female = male pursuer-female target; Female-Male = female pursuer-male target.

Formal help-seeking. Male participants in Cluster 1 were more likely to recommend seeking help from law enforcement for M-F scenarios ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.77$) compared to F-M scenarios ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 0.74$; see Figure 7). Female participants displayed a similar trend (M-F: $M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.63$ vs. F-M: $M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.80$). Male participants in Cluster 2 showed an even larger discrepancy, providing significantly higher ratings for recommendations of formal help-seeking for M-F scenarios ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.48$) relative to F-M scenarios ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.72$). This effect was not as dramatic for female participants, although female participants in Cluster 2 did provide

higher ratings of formal help-seeking for M-F scenarios ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.58$), compared

to scenarios describing a female pursuing a male ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.54$; see Figures 8).
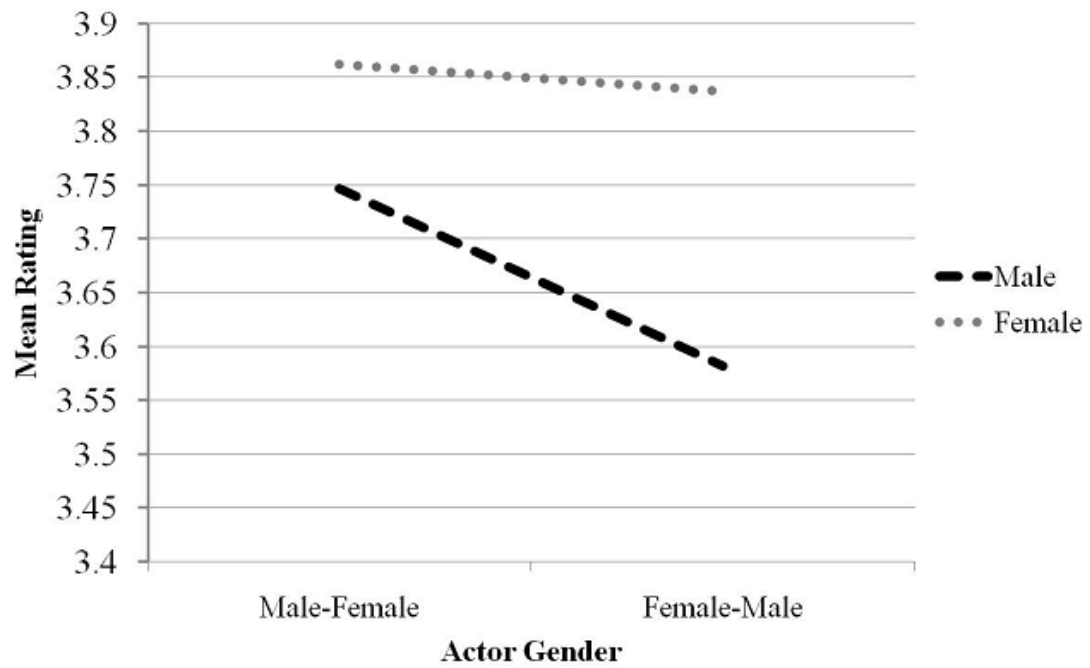

Figure 7. Relationship Between Actor Gender and Participant Gender for Recommendations of Formal Help-seeking in Cluster 1 Controlling for Experience with Stalking. Male-Female = male pursuer-female target; Female-Male = female pursuer-male target.

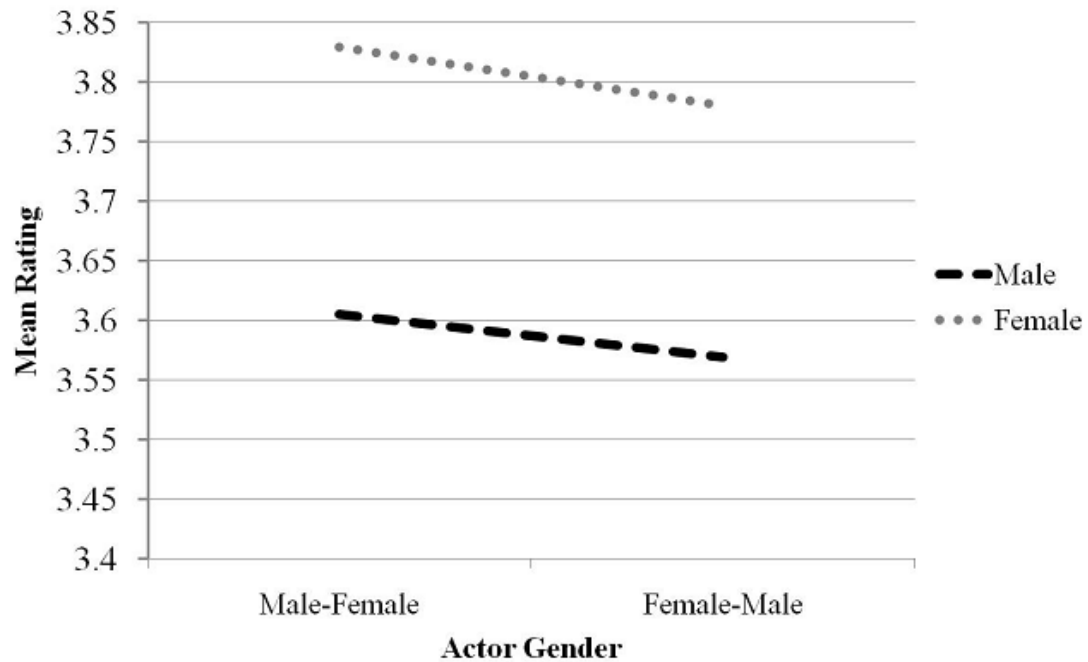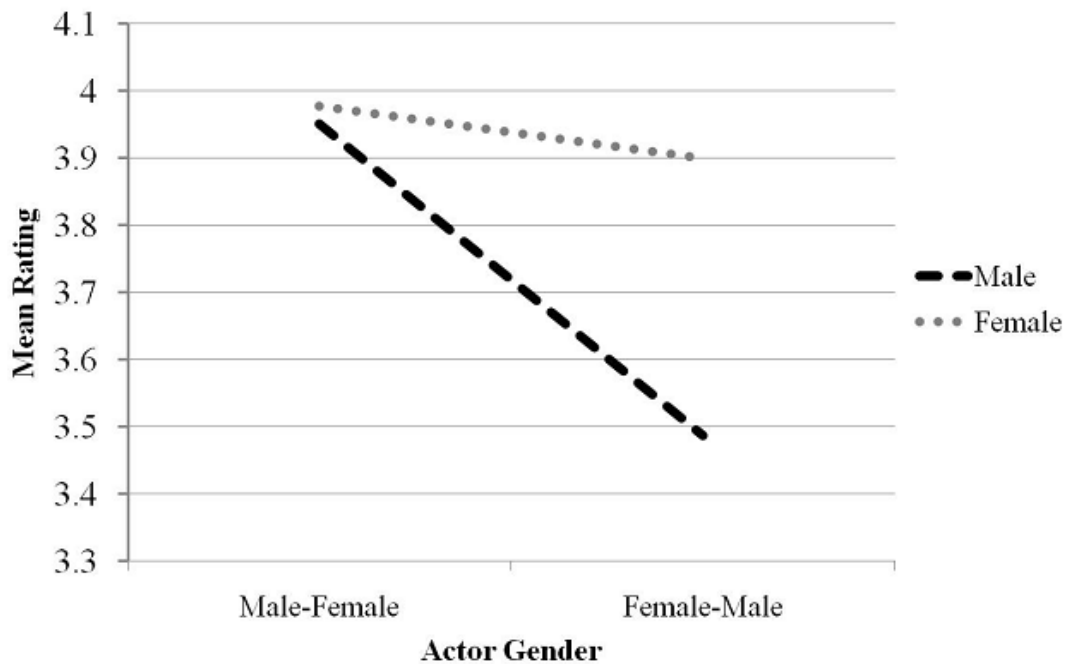*Figure 8.* Relationship Between Actor Gender and Participant Gender for Recommendations of Formal Help-seeking in Cluster 2 Controlling for Experience with Stalking. Male-Female = male pursuer-female target; Female-Male = female pursuer-male target.

Based on these exploratory analyses, it appears that male participants displayed a greater discrepancy between F-M and M-F scenarios on ratings of concern for target and recommendations for help-seeking than did female participants, although this effect was only evident for Cluster 2 scenarios. Male participants were also less likely than female participants to perceive F-M as stalking compared to M-F scenarios, but only in Cluster 1. These results suggest that males and females apply actor gender information differently; males tend to view pursuit behavior of male targets by female pursuers as less concerning and less needing of help. These findings also reinforce the idea that the scenario clusters differed in a meaningful way.

Summary

The results of the current study have demonstrated that both actor gender and participant gender play a role in perceptions of stalking behaviour. Specifically, the findings support each of the four hypotheses; actor gender had no effect on the determination and labelling of "stalking", but it did have an effect on participants' concern for the target of the pursuit behaviour as well as their recommendations for seeking help from both informal (friends or family) and formal (law enforcement) sources. Finally, female participants provided higher ratings across all four ratings (perceptions of stalking, concern for target, informal help-seeking, and formal help-seeking) compared to male participants. These findings are consistent with previous literature on the effects of gender on perceptions of stalking and pursuit behaviour.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

<u>Summary of Findings</u>

I predicted that actor gender would have no effect on the determination of whether a given scenario was perceived as stalking. After controlling for experience with stalking and participant gender, results suggested that participants provided similar ratings for scenarios in which a male pursued a female as for scenarios describing a female pursuing a male. Confirmation of the null hypothesis supports previous findings by Phillips and colleagues (2004), as well as Cass (2008), who found that participants presented with hypothetical vignettes were equally as likely to judge a particular behaviour as stalking, regardless of the gender of the pursuers or targets. This has important implications for the conceptualization of stalking; these results suggest that individuals define stalking the same way despite differences in actor gender.

However, there was a significant effect for actor gender in regard to concern for target, with participants providing higher ratings and expressing greater concern for female targets of male pursuers than for male targets of female pursuers. This is consistent with previous research in the area (Cass, 2008; Phillips et al., 2004; Sheridan & Scott, 2010; Wigman, 2009). Victimization of male targets is seen as less concerning, with males being viewed as more capable of helping themselves (Sheridan & Scott, 2010; Wigman, 2009). Goffman's (1977) work on gender norms and perceived helplessness in women suggests that this is likely due to people's innate belief that women are less able to defend themselves. Men are also naturally seen as aggressors, making the idea of a man acting aggressively towards a woman seem more threatening than if a woman were

to behave similarly towards a man. These findings support the idea that aggression is perceived differently on the basis of gender roles.

This tendency to view women as more needing of help lead to the third hypothesis, which was that participants would be more likely to recommend seeking help when the scenario described a male pursuer and a female target than for scenarios in which a female pursued a male. Participants behaved as predicted and provided higher ratings on recommendations of both informal (friends and family) and formal (law enforcement) help-seeking for female targets of male pursuers. Ratings for informal help-seeking were higher than for formal help-seeking (which is unsurprising given findings by Buhi et al. which demonstrated the importance of informal sources of help), but the general pattern of results remained the same. These findings provide further evidence of the bias towards perceiving male-perpetrated pursuit behaviour as more threatening and female victims as more vulnerable (Sheridan & Scott, 2010; Wigman, 2009).

Male-to-female intimate partner violence is also considered more serious; women are seen as weak and more vulnerable to serious injury (Seelau & Seelau, 2005). Although some research suggests that men and women perpetrate partner violence at similar rates (Archer, 2002), feminist theorists often respond by pointing out that the severity and risk of injury is usually greater for women (Wendelien, 1998). Violence against women is thought to exist as a result of a patriarchal society in which women are devalued. Feminist researchers who consider a social constructionist viewpoint suggest that perceptions of women as helpless contribute to societal constructs of a battered

woman, which perpetuates the idea that women are less capable and more needing of help. The tendency to dichotomize men and women in this way has implications for both individual and societal perceptions of IPV and stalking, particularly for female perpetrators (Wendelien, 1998).

Previous research on the effects of gender on perceptions of stalking have found that female respondents typically perceive hypothetical pursuit scenarios as more indicative of stalking and express greater concern for targets (Dennison & Thomson, 2002). The current study replicated these findings. Compared to male participants, female participants were more likely to perceive the scenarios as depicting stalking, expressed greater concern for targets, and were more likely to indicate that informal and formal help was warranted. This is in contrast to previous research that found no significant difference in ratings between male and female participants (Phillips et al., 2004). The discrepancies in findings between the current study and those reported by Phillips and colleagues (2004) may be related to scenario characteristics or study design, or may simply result from differences in the make-up of the two samples. Regardless, findings from the current study suggest that women may perceive pursuit behaviour differently than men. Specifically, they may see the same behaviour as more threatening and are therefore more likely to label it stalking and to recommend seeking help.

Exploration of the participant gender by actor gender effect showed an interaction between these two variables. Both female and male participants provided lower ratings on concern for target and recommendations for help-seeking when the scenario described a female pursuing a male, but this difference was much more pronounced for male

participants. This effect suggests that male participants are more influenced by actor gender. This may be a result of more ingrained gender schemas, which reinforce the idea that women are help-less and men are strong. The idea that a woman could be a threat to a man, or that a man would require help as a result of the behaviour of a women, may seem particularly unlikely.

Covariates. Given the current study's focus on individuals' perceptions of stalking behaviour, I examined whether previous experience with stalking and with other forms of intimate partner violence influenced participants' perceptions of the stalking scenarios. Previous research found no effect for experience with stalking, although this only included stalking victimization (Phillips et al., 2004). Other researchers have found that experience with stalking does play a role in perceptions of stalking, although only for males (Yanowitz, 2006). Experience with stalking in this study was assessed based on experience as the target of stalking behaviour, the perpetrator of stalking behaviour, and knowing someone who had been the target of stalking behaviour. Of these three dimensions, only experience as the perpetrator of stalking (i.e., the pursuer) was related to the dependent variables. Experience with stalking perpetration was associated with all the actor gender variables, as well as the help-seeking participant gender variables. In other words, while experience as either the victim of stalking or knowing a victim of stalking behaviour had no effect on individuals' perceptions, previous experience as the perpetrator of stalking played a significant role. It may be that targets and individuals' who know targets of stalking do not differ significantly in their perceptions of stalking behaviour than those with no experience. On the other hand, individuals who have

58

experience as the perpetrator of stalking behaviour may be more likely to minimize the behaviour and would therefore be less likely to perceive the behaviour as stalking, express concern, or recommend help. Experience with IPV was likewise separated into experience as either the perpetrator or the victim of IPV. Unlike experience with stalking, neither IPV perpetration nor victimization was related to the experimental variables.

Given that stalking perpetration was negatively correlated with recommending both informal and formal help-seeking, one explanation may be that individuals who have victimized others are less likely to recommend that a target of stalking seek help; future research should investigate whether this is the case. Another interesting finding was that although experience with stalking perpetration was also associated with actor gender, it was only associated with the actor gender variables from Cluster 1. That is, an individuals' stalking perpetration only mattered when comparing scenarios describing a male pursuing a female to scenarios in which a female pursued a male for scenarios 1, 3, 5, 7, and 10. The finding that stalking perpetration was only related to gender of the actors in these scenarios once again suggests that the behaviours described in these scenarios differ in some way from those in Cluster 2. Participant gender was associated with the actor gender variables from both Clusters, suggesting the males and females respond differently to variations in pursuer and target gender. This was confirmed by the exploratory analyses, which found an interaction between actor and participant gender. Stalking perpetration and participant gender were controlled for accordingly in the analyses, but it is of interest to note that while individuals' previous experiences do play a

role in their perceptions and reactions to stalking scenarios, it is only the perpetration experience that mattered.

Limitations of the Current Study

Although the current study was able to replicate past research in the area of perceptions of stalking and support the hypotheses set out, there were some limitations. First, the sample used in the current study was drawn from a university population, which is fairly homogenous and therefore limits the generalizability of the results. Second, although this study extended previous research by including two types of help-seeking (both informal and formal), the decision to operationalize help-seeking as either informal (friends and family) or formal (law enforcement) excluded other forms of help-seeking such as community agencies or outreach programs. Third, Likert-type ratings on a 5-point scale were used based on preceding studies, but the use of interval level data caused the range of scores to be restricted, and created a non-normal distribution. Finally, although there were significant findings and all of the hypotheses were supported, the actual effects were disappointingly small (η^2 ranged from .01 to .17).

Other limitations include the construction of the scenarios themselves. The decision was made to keep the scenarios ambiguous in order to maximize the influence of individual differences in perception of the incident. It also allows the findings to be generalized to the situation as a whole rather than to specific details about the incident. However, in doing so, additional error in the interpretation of the scenario dilutes the effect. For example, "following a number of times" may have been interpreted as 2 or 3 times by some participants and 5 or more by others. This difference in interpretation

could have lead to differences in ratings. It may be that following someone 2 times only warrants a moderate level of concern, but following them 5 times elicits much greater concern. By allowing participants to interpret the scenarios more freely, therefore allowing for more general conclusions to be made about the way in which participants perceive stalking scenarios, the influence of nuisance effects may have been increased.

Participants provided ratings to 11 different brief scenarios. One strength of the current study was the use of multiple scenarios in order to capture a broader picture of individuals' perceptions towards stalking across a variety of behaviours. By keeping the scenarios short and concise I reduced the chances of participant fatigue and eliminated extraneous details. Participants were able to respond to simple descriptions of a romantic relationship that ended, followed by pursuit behaviour by the rejected party. This was in contrast to the detailed scenarios used in previous research (Cass, 2008; Phillips et al., 2004; Sheridan & Scott, 2010), which were deemed unsuitable for the purposes of the current study. Shorter scenarios may also have allowed participants to interpret the scenario according to their own experiences; by including fewer details participants were able put more of themselves into the situation. On the other hand, it may be that participants would relate better to more elaborate scenarios, allowing for more meaningful ratings to be made across the dependent variables. Phillips and colleagues suggested investigating the effects of vignette length in their 2004 study.

Another potential limitation of using multiple scenarios is that this may have encouraged participants to respond more flippantly and to spend less time on each scenario, which may have increased error in responding. The manipulation check

examining ratings on the non-stalking 11th scenario suggested that this was likely the case for some participants. Some of the ratings for this scenario indicated that the participant either did not read or did not understand the scenario. It should be noted that aberrant ratings on the control scenario (as set out in the method section) were only found for participants who completed Version 1 of the stalking scenarios. However, it may be that some participants perceived the control scenario as indicative of stalking; sending someone a birthday card several months after a break-up may be perceived as meaningful in some cultures. The inclusion of multiple scenarios may have allowed participants to guess the purpose of the study by noting the counterbalancing of gender. Randomization controlled for possible order effects, but it is likely that participants' ratings for one scenario influenced their ratings on the next. By using several brief scenarios rather than a single long scenario, internal validity may have been compromised for the purposes of increased external validity.

As noted previously, with the exception of perceptions of stalking, ratings from Cluster 2 (scenarios 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9) were, on average, much higher than ratings from Cluster 1 (scenarios 1, 3, 5, 7, and 10; see Table 4). This suggests that although assignment to Cluster was done randomly, scenarios in Cluster 2 were perceived as more severe than scenarios in Cluster 1. This led to version effects, which required a separation of clusters in data analysis and a move from a between-within (mixed) design to a solely between design. Given that scenarios from Cluster 1 were not equivalent to scenarios from Cluster 2, a participant's average rating on M-F scenarios could not be compared to their average rating on F-M scenarios. This failure to appropriately control

for severity did not prevent conclusions from being drawn, but it suggests that closer attention should have been paid to the relative severity of the scenarios. An attempt was made to provide an array of behaviours, but the negative skew of the ratings on all four dependent variables suggests that milder pursuit behaviours may have allowed for a greater range. There were also several scenarios that described extremely aggressive behaviour (e.g. threatening to set target's residence on fire while target was still inside) that may have been too severe and therefore created a ceiling effect. In other words, participants may have provided a rating of "5" based on severity alone, and not based on the gender of the target and pursuer.

Stalking in this study was broadly defined as any behaviour in which the "pursuer" interacted with the "target" in a way that was either persistent or overtly aggressive. This was done with the intention of keeping the concept of stalking as open to interpretation as possible, so as not to restrict stalking to a specific set of circumstances. However, by allowing the conceptualization of stalking to encompass a range of behaviours, some participants may not have considered some of the behaviours as indicative of stalking, regardless of the aggressive nature of the behaviour. In these cases, lower ratings would have been given to the questions as to whether the pursuer was stalking the target, but high ratings for concern for target and recommendations for help-seeking. The mean, standard deviation, and range of ratings displayed in Table 5 suggest that although this may have been the case for some participants, ratings for perceptions of stalking were comparable to those on the other three dependent variables. Nevertheless,

it is important to recognize that the use of a broad conceptualization of stalking was both a strength and a potential limitation.

Finally, the failure to appropriately control for severity and to create two different but equivalent versions of the scenarios meant that a within participant comparison could not be conducted in order to compare participants' responses on M-F scenarios to their ratings on F-M ratings. Although between effects were still found, this additional information on individual discrepancies on the basis of actor gender was no longer available. Despite these limitations, the current study successfully used a quasi-experimental design to extend and refine previous research in the area of perceptions of stalking behaviour.

Implications for Practice and Policy

Research on violence in intimate relationships is essential to understanding how relationships become aggressive and to anticipate and prevent IPV. Although stalking used to be considered a "stranger-based" crime, it has recently been acknowledged as part of IPV (Logan et al., 2000). Recent research has found that the majority of perpetrators of stalking behaviour are former partners who are unable to let go of a relationship (Cupach & Spitzberg, 1998). However, it can be difficult to differentiate typical courtship behaviours from unwanted pursuit in the context of romantic relationships. Given the ambiguity in the definition of stalking, an examination of factors influencing the determination and perception of stalking behaviours is particularly relevant. How individuals perceive their surrounding plays a central role in the way they react to the world around them; a better understanding of the perceptual differences involved in

64

unwanted pursuit behaviour may help to identify and treat at-risk individuals and prevent escalation of further violence.

The results of this study suggest that although individuals are just as likely to perceive a behaviour as stalking when a female is pursuing a male, there is a tendency to express more concern for female targets and also to recommend help from both informal and formal sources. This implies that men are seen as more dangerous in their pursuit of women and more capable of helping themselves when they are the target. Likewise, women are seen as less threatening than their male counterparts, but far more needing of protection. In other words, even though the behaviour itself is seen as equivalent, the implications are not. These findings support the notion of innate gender schemas (Bem, 1981). When provided with scenarios that differed on nothing but the gender of the pursuer and target, participants used gender as a basis on which to make inferences about the need for help and the safety of the target. They were more likely to express concern for Jane than for Andy, and more likely to recommend that Jane seek help when she was being pursued by Andy than when Andy was being pursued by Jane. Research on gender schemas suggests that this is because women are perceived as weaker than men, putting them at a disadvantage in situations where they are being pursued by a male. On the other hand, women's relative weakness makes them appear less threatening when they themselves are the pursuers, given that men are seen as more capable of defending themselves (Goffman, 1977).

Although clearly skewed, these findings are consistent with research in the area that suggests that women are twice as likely to be victims of stalking as men (Sheridan,

Blaauw et al., 2003; Statistics Canada, 2005; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Given that

stalking is now being considered an extension of intimate partner violence, which

previous research has shown results in more injuries for female victims of male batterers

than for male victims of female batterers (Cercone, Beach, & Arias, 2005; Romans,

Forte, Cohen, Du Mont, & Hyman, 2007), it is not surprising that individuals continue to

perceive female pursuers as less threatening and male targets as more capable.

Nevertheless, this tendency to view stalking and IPV as gender asymmetrical may leave

male victims who do need help without any. Research suggests that male victims of IPV

are significantly less likely than female victims to seek help from either informal or

formal sources (Ansara & Hindin, 2010). This finding may reflect the belief that men are

more capable of helping themselves and that attempts to receive help may be met with

skepticism or ridicule.

Given that stalking is a crime, these findings have implications in the legal arena.

If individuals are more likely to see female pursuers as less threatening and male targets

as more capable, it follows that law enforcement officials might also be prone to this

effect. Male targets may be ignored and potentially dangerous situations may not be

appropriately handled. Research suggests that male pursuers of female targets are seen as

more criminal and more deserving of punishment than their female counterparts

(Sheridan & Scott, 2010). Individuals in law enforcement should be careful not to

discount male targets or female pursuers; all stalking behaviour should be taken

seriously, regardless of the gender of the pursuer and target.

Gender effects may also influence the treatment of female pursuers in court. Judges and juries may be more lenient towards female pursuers, believing that their actions, despite being equivalent to male pursuers, are less threatening (Sheridan & Scott, 2010). Likewise, they may believe that male targets are better able to protect themselves, making the behaviour less dangerous. Although these perceptions are often accurate, the tendency to consistently view stalking in this way may prevent appropriate action from being taken to protect male targets and avoid future aggression. As with law enforcement officials, individuals in the legal system should attempt to protect against the possible influence of gender. The selection of juries for cases involving stalking may choose to include some form of screening for these types of effects. It may be that individuals who hold more traditional views of gender roles are more susceptible to the effect of gender of perceptions of stalking, so screening for perceptions of gender roles may be beneficial.

Empirical evidence suggests that women are, on average, more likely to be victims of stalking and more likely to experience costs as a results of the stalking, particularly when it is an extension of intimate partner violence (Logan et al., 2006; Logan & Walker, 2009; Sheridan, Blaauw et al., 2003; Statistics Canada, 2005; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). On the other hand, it seems as though men have nothing to fear from women. Unfortunately, this assertion is not always correct. A 2001 study found that female pursuers were equally likely as male pursuers to threaten their target or become violent, although the rate of physical assault was lower for female pursuers (Purcell, Pathe, & Mullen, 2001). The rate and type of threats and assaults by women in this study were not characteristically different than men, which suggest that women are capable of

similar acts of aggression as men. By ignoring the potential danger of female stalkers individuals may be doing male targets a disservice. Even if men are, on average, stronger than women, there are a variety of ways to aggress against someone that do not rely on physical prowess. If these beliefs about gender are based on social constructions (as suggested by the structuralist model; Anderson, 2005), then perhaps there needs to be a movement away from consistently classifying gender in this way and towards perceiving female-perpetrated stalking, and female-perpetrated IPV in general, as potentially dangerous.

Future Directions in Research

The current study attempted to promote research in the area of stalking and the effects of gender. Original scenarios were created and an experimental manipulation was designed to examine the influence of gender on individuals' interpretations of unwanted pursuit situations following the break-up of a romantic relationship. Although this study sought to further the understanding of gender effects on perceptions of stalking, there are a variety of manipulations and alternative directions that would provide valuable insight into this area.

A university sample was used in the current study. Future research should consider whether the findings from this study can be replicated in other samples. A community sample including a diverse population would be more representative of Canadian perceptions of stalking behaviour and would allow the results presented here to be generalized to a larger population. It would also allow for an investigation of individual characteristics that may affect perception of stalking behaviour. An

examination of perceptions within a clinical population, particularly those who with

stalking and IPV (both victimization and perpetration) would help to draw conclusions

regarding the impact of experience on perceptions of stalking. The results of this study

suggest that both stalking and IPV perpetration have a significant effect on individuals'

perceptions. Given the legal implications of perceptual differences, an examination of

perceptions of stalking within law enforcement would be extremely useful and would

help to determine whether police officers are responding differently on the basis of

gender, which was suggested as an implication of this study. The use of these scenarios

and this methodology across a variety of samples would provide a more complete picture

of individual perceptions of stalking behaviour.

The behaviours presented in the scenarios were based on behaviours identified by

other researchers as commonly perceived as stalking. However, several of them,

particularly those describing overt aggression towards the target, are not clear-cut cases

on stalking. In some cases participants may not have perceived the scenario as indicative

of stalking but still provided high ratings on the concern for target and recommendation

for help-seeking variables. Given that actor gender was counterbalanced by using two

different versions of the same scenario, this would have had no effect on whether

participants' viewed a scenario differently on the basis of gender (actor or participant).

However, future research may want to consider how this difference in the perception of

individual scenarios, particularly those depicting violent behaviour, influences ratings on

other variables. Additionally, it would be interesting to investigate whether participants

who gave low ratings for perceptions of stalking but still provide high ratings on concern

for target and recommendations for help-seeking on those scenarios differ significantly from those who provide either high or low ratings across all four dependent variables.

In describing the limitations of the current study, several areas for future research present themselves. Future studies may consider using alternative methods of assessing participants' ratings. For example, a "sliding bar" scale on an internet browser would allow participants to provide ratings that fall between two points. Rather than decide whether the likelihood that they would recommend help from law enforcement is a "3" or a "4", participants could slide the bar somewhere between these two points, depending on their perception of the incident. The use of continuous rather than interval level data would allow for greater variability and decrease the likelihood of non-normal data. Additionally, the inclusion of additional help-seeking sources, like community agencies, would broaden the scope of the help-seeking dimension.

The use of ambiguous phrasing such as "a few", "several", and "a number of times" allow participants to interpret the scenarios as they see fit. Future research should compare participants' ratings on ambiguous scenarios to those that use specific values (i.e., "he called her 3 times in one day"). It would be valuable to determine whether participants' perceptions change when specific values are used, and how different values affect ratings (i.e., 3 times in one day vs. 10 times in one day). The length and number of scenarios are also manipulations that would prove useful in determining how changes to the scenarios affect perception. Future research should focus on altering the scenarios in a variety of ways (name/ethnicity of the actors, length and seriousness of the

relationship, length of time between break-up and pursuit behaviour, target reaction to the behaviour, etc.).

Scenario severity was another limitation that could be addressed in future studies. Although it was not a variable in the current study, future research could manipulate the severity of the scenarios used to establish whether participants' ratings change as a function of the relative severity of the behaviour. However, it would first be necessary to create a hierarchy of severity; any decisions by the researchers on relative severity would be highly subjective. Pre-testing using a Q-sort method would allow participants to rank scenarios based on their perception of severity. It would be useful to have participants explain their choices in open-ended feedback to maximize the researcher's understanding of the rankings. It may also be important to differentiate between rankings of scenario severity and their perception of how well the scenario meets criteria for their definition of stalking.

The central tenet of this study was the idea that the concept of stalking is ambiguous and therefore extremely susceptible to personal bias and interpretation. The current study focused on the effect of gender on the perception of stalking. Qualitative interviews with participants on their personal definitions of stalking, as well as the factors that contribute to their definition, would be extremely valuable in better understanding individual differences in perception. This research might use existing scenarios, including the ones used in the current study, as well as generating original scenarios in order to provide participants with a basis with which to discuss their perceptions. Individuals could explain which elements of the scenario help them to decide whether the

scenario is indicative of stalking. Spontaneous reactions to scenarios would be beneficial in trying to get at internal processes that go into the perception of stalking.

The operationalization of stalking in this study was based on previous research (Ben, 2000; Cass, 2008; Davis & Frieze, 2000; Phillips et al., 2004; Sinclair & Frieze, 2000; Yanowitz, 2006) and the notion that stalking is a physical act like following someone or sending them gifts. Modern notions of stalking include "cyber-stalking", which includes the idea that individuals can "stalk" and harass others using online resources like Facebook or MySpace, or through other electronic means. Future research should examine how the definition of stalking has changed over time, how individuals at different stages in life define stalking, and investigate how these differences in traditional versus modern definitions affect individual perceptions of stalking.

Finally, the current research used scenarios depicting couples in heterosexual relationships. Future research should incorporate same-sex couples in order to examine the effect of gender on perceptions of same-sex stalking (i.e., male pursuing a male, female pursuing a female). This is especially relevant as many aspects of same-sex relationships remain under-investigated and this research will allow for increased understanding of the perceptions the public has concerning the dynamics of these relationships. Researchers should make an effort to recruit participants who identify as homosexual in order to compare ratings based on sexual orientation.

Conclusion

The current study investigated the effects of gender, both actor and participant, on perceptions of stalking. Specifically, it examined the effect of gender on the

determination of whether stalking had occurred, concern for the target of the pursuit behaviour, and recommendations for help-seeking (both formal and informal). The results of this study support previous findings in the area that suggest that although individuals provide similar ratings on whether the presented behaviour is stalking, regardless of gender, there is a tendency to express greater concern and provide higher ratings on recommendations for help-seeking for female targets of male pursuers. The gender of the individual also plays a role – females are more likely to perceive a given behaviour as stalking, as well as to express greater concern and recommend help-seeking for the target. These findings have important implications in both the social and legal arena and future research should attempt to further this line of research by manipulating different elements of the study and examining the differential effect of gender on perceptions of stalking within a variety of samples.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Stalking Scenarios from Version One

1. Jane and Andy had been dating for several months when Andy realized that things were not working out in the relationship and he decided that it would be best to break up with Jane. Jane, however, wanted to continue the relationship. Since their breakup, Jane has called Andy several times, but he no longer answers her phone calls.

a) Is Jane stalking Andy?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

2. Alice and Chris recently broke up after dating for nearly a year when Alice decided that she was no longer interested in Chris. However, Chris still wanted to date Alice. He has repeatedly sent flowers and other gifts to Alice's house along, with personal letters.

a) Is Chris stalking Alice?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

3. Joe decided to end things with his girlfriend Lisa, whom he had been dating for several months. Lisa, however, was interested in maintaining the relationship. Joe thinks that he has seen Lisa outside his house on several occasions since their breakup.

a) Is Lisa stalking Joe?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

4. Erica recently broke up with her long term boyfriend Steve. Although Erica was no longer interested in seeing Steve, Steve was still very interested in Erica. Since their breakup, Steve has broken into Erica's car and rummaged through her things.

a) Is Steve stalking Erica?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

5. Paul and Sandra were together for several months when Paul decided to end their relationship. Despite his decision, Sandra was interested in continuing the relationship. Paul has noticed Sandra following him a number of times.

a) Is Sandra stalking Paul?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

6. Krystal and Jacob recently ended their relationship. Krystal was interested in seeing other people, but Jacob was only interested in seeing Krystal. A few weeks after their break-up, Jacob called and told Krystal that he was going to kill himself if she didn't take him back.

a) Is Jacob stalking Krystal?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

7. Allan and Joanna are no longer seeing each other following a decision by Allan to end the relationship. Joanna was very upset by this, since she still wanted to date Allan. A few days after their split, Joanna sent an email to Allan threatening to set his place on fire while he was still inside.

a) Is Joanna stalking Allan?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

8. Frank was recently dumped by his girlfriend Helen. Helen was no longer interested in seeing Frank; however, Frank was still interested in dating Helen. Several days after their break-up, Frank broke into Helen's apartment and took several items.

a) Is Frank stalking Helen?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

9. Karen and David terminated their relationship at Karen's insistence. David was still interested in seeing Karen, but he recently discovered she had started dating someone else. After hearing this, David used a baseball bat to smash her new boyfriend's car.

a) Is David stalking Karen?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

10. Kyle and his girlfriend Sheila broke up a few weeks ago. Although Sheila was interested in maintaining the relationship, Kyle decided he didn't want to date Sheila anymore. Since their break-up, Sheila has shown up at Kyle's work on more than one occasion asking him to take her back.

a) Is Sheila stalking Kyle?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

11. Tom and his girlfriend Mary split up a several months ago when Tom decided to end their relationship. Despite Tom's decision, Mary was still interested in continuing the relationship. Although they had not been contact since the break-up, Mary sent Tom a card on his birthday.

a) Is Mary stalking Tom?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

APPENDIX B

Stalking Scenarios from Version Two

1. Andy and Jane had been dating for several months when Jane realized that things
    were not working out in the relationship and she decided that it would be best to
    break up with Andy. Andy, however, wanted to continue the relationship. Since their
    breakup, Andy has called Jane several times, but she no longer answers his phone
    calls.

a) Is Andy stalking Jane?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

2. Chris and Alice recently broke up after dating for nearly a year when Chris decided that he was no longer interested in Alice. However, Alice still wanted to date Chris. She has repeatedly sent flowers and other gifts to Chris' house, along with personal letters.

a) Is Alice stalking Chris?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

3. Lisa decided to end things with her boyfriend Joe, whom she had been dating for several months. Joe, however, was interested in maintaining the relationship. Lisa thinks that she has seen Joe outside her house on several occasions since their breakup.

a) Is Joe stalking Lisa?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

4. Steve recently broke up with his long term girlfriend Erica. Although Steve was no longer interested in seeing Erica, Erica was still very interested in Steve. Since their breakup, Erica has broken into Steve's car and rummaged through his things.

a) Is Erica stalking Steve?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

5. Sandra and Paul were together for several months when Sandra decided to end their relationship. Despite her decision, Paul was interested in continuing the relationship. Sandra has noticed Paul following her a number of times.

a) Is Paul stalking Sandra?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

6. Jacob and Krystal recently ended their relationship. Jacob was interested in seeing other people, but Krystal was only interested in seeing Jacob. A few weeks after their break-up, Krystal called and told Jacob that she was going to kill herself if he didn't take her back.

a) Is Krystal stalking Jacob?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

7. Joanna and Allan are no longer seeing each other following a decision by Joanna to end the relationship. Allan was very upset by this, since he still wanted to date Joanna. A few days after their split, Allan sent an email to Joanna threatening to set her place on fire while she was still inside.

a) Is Allan stalking Joanna?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

8. Helen was recently dumped by her boyfriend Frank. Frank was no longer interested in seeing Helen; however, Helen was still interested in dating Frank. Several days after their break-up, Helen broke into Frank's apartment and took several items.

a) Is Helen stalking Frank?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

9. David and Karen terminated their relationship at David's insistence. Karen was still interested in seeing David, but she recently discovered he had started dating someone else. After hearing this, Karen used a baseball bat to smash his new girlfriend's car.

a) Is Karen stalking David?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

10. Sheila and her boyfriend Kyle broke up a few weeks ago. Although Kyle was interested in maintaining the relationship, Sheila decided she didn't want to date Kyle anymore. Since their break-up, Kyle has shown up at Sheila's work on more than one occasion asking her to take him back.

a) Is Kyle stalking Sheila?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

11. Mary and her boyfriend Tom split up a several months ago when Mary decided to end their relationship. Despite Mary's decision, Tom was still interested in continuing the relationship. Although they had not been contact since the break-up, Tom sent Mary a card on her birthday.

a) Is Tom stalking Mary?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not				Definitely

b) How concerned would you be if this were happening to a friend?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Concerned				Very Concerned

c) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from other friends or family?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

d) How likely is it that you would recommend seeking help from the police?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Likely				Extremely Likely

APPENDIX C

The Conflict in Adolescent Dating Relationships Inventory

The following questions ask you about things that may have happened to you with your boyfriend or girlfriend while you were having an argument. Circle the answer that is your best estimate of how often these things have happened with your current or ex-boyfriend or your current or ex-girlfriend during the past year. Please remember that all answers are confidential.

During a conflict or argument with my boyfriend or girlfriend in the past year:

	Never 0	Rarely (1-2 times) 1	Sometimes (3-5 times) 2	Often (6 or + times) 3
1. I gave reasons for my side of the argument.	0	1	2	3
2. My partner gave reasons for my partner's side of the argument.	0	1	2	3
3. I touched my partner sexually when my partner did not want me to.	0	1	2	3
4. My partner touched me sexually when I didn't want my partner to.	0	1	2	3
5. I tried to turn my partner's friends against my partner.	0	1	2	3
6. My partner tried to turn my friends against me.	0	1	2	3
7. I did something to make my partner	0	1	2	3

feel jealous.				
8. My partner did something to make me feel jealous.	0	1	2	3
9. I destroyed or threatened to destroy something my partner valued.	0	1	2	3
10. My partner destroyed or threatened to destroy something I valued.	0	1	2	3
11. I told my partner that I was partly to blame.	0	1	2	3
12. My partner told me that they were partly to blame.	0	1	2	3
13. I brought up something bad that my partner had done in the past.	0	1	2	3
14. My partner brought up something bad that I had done in the past.	0	1	2	3
15. I threw something at my partner.	0	1	2	3
16. My partner threw something at me.	0	1	2	3
17. I said things just to make my partner angry.	0	1	2	3
18. My partner said things just to make me angry.	0	1	2	3
19. I gave reasons why I thought my	0	1	2	3

partner was wrong.				
20. My partner gave reasons why my partner thought I was wrong.	0	1	2	3
21. I agreed that my partner was partly right.	0	1	2	3
22. My partner agreed that I was partly right.	0	1	2	3
23. I spoke to my partner in a hostile or mean tone of voice.	0	1	2	3
24. My partner spoke to me in a hostile or mean tone of voice.	0	1	2	3
25. I forced my partner to have sex when my partner didn't want to.	0	1	2	3
26. My partner forced me to have sex when I didn't want to.	0	1	2	3
27. I offered a solution that I thought would make us both happy.	0	1	2	3
28. My partner offered a solution that my partner thought would make us both happy.	0	1	2	3
29. I threatened my partner in an attempt to have sex with him/her.	0	1	2	3
30. My partner threatened me in an	0	1	2	3

attempt to have sex with me.				
31. I put off talking until we calmed down.	0	1	2	3
32. My partner put off talking until we calmed down.	0	1	2	3
33. I insulted my partner with put-downs.	0	1	2	3
34. My partner insulted me with put-downs.	0	1	2	3
35. I discussed the issue calmly.	0	1	2	3
36. My partner discussed the issue calmly.	0	1	2	3

37. I kissed my partner when my partner didn't want me to.	0	1	2	3
38. My partner kissed me when I didn't want them to.	0	1	2	3
39. I said things to my partner's friends about my partner to turn them against my partner.	0	1	2	3
40. My partner said things to my friends about me to turn them against me.	0	1	2	3

41. I ridiculed or made fun of my partner in front of others.	0	1	2	3
42. My partner ridiculed or made fun of me in front of others.	0	1	2	3
43. I told my partner how upset I was.	0	1	2	3
44. My partner told me how upset my partner was.	0	1	2	3
45. I kept track of who my partner was with and where my partner was.	0	1	2	3
46. My partner kept track of who I was with and where I was.	0	1	2	3
47. I blamed my partner for the problem.	0	1	2	3
48. My partner blamed me for the problem.	0	1	2	3
49. I kicked, hit or punched my partner.	0	1	2	3
50. My partner kicked, hit or punched me.	0	1	2	3
51. I left the room to cool down.	0	1	2	3
52. My partner left the room to cool down.	0	1	2	3
53. I gave in, just to avoid conflict.	0	1	2	3
54. My partner gave in, just to avoid	0	1	2	3

conflict.				
55. I accused my partner of flirting with another person.	0	1	2	3
56. My partner accused me of flirting with another person.	0	1	2	3
57. I deliberately tried to frighten my partner.	0	1	2	3
58. My partner deliberately tried to frighten me.	0	1	2	3
59. I slapped my partner or pulled my partner's hair.	0	1	2	3
60. My partner slapped me or pulled my hair.	0	1	2	3
61. I threatened to hurt my partner.	0	1	2	3
62. My partner threatened to hurt me.	0	1	2	3
63. I threatened to end the relationship.	0	1	2	3
64. My partner threatened to end the relationship.	0	1	2	3
65. I threatened to hit my partner or throw something at my partner.	0	1	2	3
66. My partner threatened to hit me or	0	1	2	3

throw something at me.				
67. I pushed, shoved, or shook my partner.	0	1	2	3
68. My partner pushed, shoved, or shook me.	0	1	2	3
69. I spread rumors about my partner.	0	1	2	3
70. My partner spread rumors about me.	0	1	2	3

APPENDIX D

Contextual Questions for the CADRI

The next few questions will ask you to contextualize the situations in which you may just indicated using physical, psychological, or sexual tactics during a dispute with your partner. Select the percentage range that applies to you the best.

0	1	2	3	4	5
0%	10-20%	30-50%	50-70%	70%-90%	90%-100%

1.   What percentage of these times overall do you estimate that in doing these actions you were primarily motivated by acting in self-defense, that is protecting yourself from immediate physical harm?

0	1	2	3	4	5

2.   What percentage of these times overall do you estimate that in doing these actions you were trying to fight back in a situation where you were not first to use these or similar tactics?

0	1	2	3	4	5

3.   What percentage of these times overall do you estimate that you used these actions on your dating partner before she actually attacked you or threatened to attack you?

0	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX E

Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your age (in years)?   _____

2. What is your sex/gender?   ☐ Male
                              ☐ Female
                              ☐ Prefer not to disclose

3. What is your current year of study?
   ☐ First year
   ☐ Second year
   ☐ Third year
   ☐ Fourth year
   ☐ Other _____

4. What is your current major?   _____

5. What race or ethnicity do you identify with the most?
   ☐ Caucasian
   ☐ Chinese
   ☐ South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
   ☐ African American
   ☐ Filipino
   ☐ Latin American
   ☐ Southeast Asian (e.g., Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, Vietnamese, etc.)
   ☐ Arab
   ☐ West Asian (e.g., Afghan, Iranian, etc.)
   ☐ Japanese
   ☐ Korean
   ☐ Aboriginal
   ☐ Other (please specify):   _____

6. What is your current sexual identity?
   ☐ Heterosexual (straight)
   ☐ Homosexual (lesbian/gay)
   ☐ Bisexual
   ☐ Other

7. Have you been involved in a romantic relationship at any point in your life, no matter how long term or serious, short term or causal?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

104

8. Have you ever been a target of stalking or excessive pursuit behaviour?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, please explain: _____

_____

_____

9. Have you ever engaged in stalking or excessive pursuit behaviours?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, please explain: _____

_____

_____

10. Has anyone you know ever been the target of stalking?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, please explain: _____

_____

_____

11. What is your current relationship status?
    ☐   Single
    ☐   Casually Dating (different people at same time)
    ☐   Dating exclusively (single person, short term, long term or serious)
    ☐   Engaged
    ☐   Married

Thank you for providing us with some background information.

Item Means and Standard Deviations by Participant Gender and Version

Scenario Item	Males		Females	
	V1	V2	V1	V2
Item 1: Called several times				
Perceptions of stalking	2.69 (1.21)	2.71 (1.15)	2.98 (1.14)	2.82 (1.14)
Concern for target	2.25 (0.88)	2.53 (1.05)	2.88 (1.08)	2.86 (0.96)
Informal help-seeking	2.18 (1.00)	2.53 (1.23)	2.82 (1.14)	2.79 (1.11)
Formal help-seeking	1.53 (0.86)	1.57 (0.87)	1.90 (1.00)	1.79 (0.94)
Item 2: Repeatedly sent flowers, gifts, and personal letters				
Perceptions of stalking	2.95 (1.05)	2.93 (1.14)	3.19 (1.12)	3.24 (1.11)
Concern for target	2.96 (1.08)	2.48 (1.06)	3.06 (1.08)	3.26 (0.99)
Informal help-seeking	2.88 (1.05)	2.63 (1.30)	3.09 (1.12)	3.15 (1.11)
Formal help-seeking	1.78 (1.02)	1.60 (0.88)	2.00 (1.04)	1.98 (1.04)
Item 3: Saw ex-partner outside home on several occasions				
Perceptions of stalking	3.83 (1.00)	3.94 (0.88)	4.02 (0.96)	4.06 (0.90)
Concern for target	3.35 (1.01)	3.86 (0.93)	4.03 (0.95)	4.20 (0.95)
Informal help-seeking	3.25 (1.06)	3.76 (1.02)	3.85 (1.10)	4.23 (0.84)
Formal help-seeking	2.53 (1.15)	3.10 (1.27)	3.21 (1.23)	3.63 (1.08)
Item 4: Broke into target's car and rummaging through his/her things				
Perceptions of stalking	4.65 (0.60)	4.44 (0.73)	4.59 (0.69)	4.48 (0.75)
Concern for target	4.69 (0.59)	4.31 (0.82)	4.81 (0.47)	4.68 (0.65)
Informal help-seeking	4.43 (0.82)	4.10 (1.01)	4.61 (0.68)	4.48 (0.71)
Formal help-seeking	4.61 (0.63)	4.01 (1.13)	4.52 (0.73)	4.29 (0.90)
Item 5: Followed target a number of times				
Perceptions of stalking	4.34 (0.80)	4.55 (0.73)	4.48 (0.69)	4.58 (0.65)
Concern for target	3.63 (0.96)	4.16 (0.93)	4.29 (0.80)	4.46 (0.69)
Informal help-seeking	3.53 (1.06)	3.99 (0.99)	4.13 (0.83)	4.43 (0.76)
Formal help-seeking	2.78 (1.23)	3.39 (1.20)	3.46 (1.10)	3.78 (1.00)
Item 6: Threatened to kill himself/herself unless target takes him/her back				
Perceptions of stalking	2.80 (1.24)	2.92 (1.46)	3.20 (1.31)	2.94 (1.50)
Concern for target	4.65 (0.58)	4.57 (0.66)	4.77 (0.63)	4.83 (0.44)
Informal help-seeking	4.51 (0.86)	4.52 (0.70)	4.65 (0.82)	4.78 (0.55)
Formal help-seeking	4.00 (1.13)	3.56 (1.30)	4.05 (1.11)	4.02 (1.07)
Item 7: Threatened to set target's place on fire while target is still inside				
Perceptions of stalking	3.34 (1.50)	3.84 (1.23)	3.69 (1.23)	4.02 (1.13)
Concern for target	4.53 (0.86)	4.81 (0.42)	4.75 (0.59)	4.95 (0.22)

Informal help-seeking	4.39 (0.86)	4.55 (0.93)	4.61 (0.67)	4.95 (0.22)
Formal help-seeking	4.31 (0.95)	4.59 (0.70)	4.49 (0.87)	4.83 (0.47)

Item 8: Broke into target's apartment and took several items

Perceptions of stalking	4.05 (1.31)	3.95 (1.17)	4.36 (0.82)	4.30 (0.98)
Concern for target	4.79 (0.50)	4.38 (0.79)	4.78 (0.50)	4.72 (0.64)
Informal help-seeking	4.51 (0.84)	4.08 (1.11)	4.66 (0.66)	4.49 (0.83)
Formal help-seeking	4.82 (0.45)	4.13 (1.24)	4.67 (0.79)	4.55 (0.78)

Item 9: Used baseball bat to smash car of target's new partner

Perceptions of stalking	3.59 (1.35)	3.57 (1.24)	3.80 (1.24)	3.79 (1.18)
Concern for target	4.59 (0.63)	4.42 (0.90)	4.70 (0.63)	4.69 (0.61)
Informal help-seeking	4.34 (0.76)	4.06 (1.30)	4.55 (0.74)	4.41 (0.87)
Formal help-seeking	4.58 (0.78)	4.27 (0.92)	4.57 (0.77)	4.60 (0.77)

Item 10: Showed up at target's work on more than one occasion asking to be taken back

Perceptions of stalking	3.79 (0.95)	3.69 (1.05)	3.90 (1.04)	3.88 (0.90)
Concern for target	3.28 (0.97)	3.29 (1.00)	3.74 (1.07)	3.75 (0.96)
Informal help-seeking	3.15 (1.00)	3.26 (1.17)	3.62 (1.09)	3.70 (1.01)
Formal help-seeking	2.28 (1.10)	2.25 (1.27)	2.55 (1.27)	2.77 (1.19)

Item 11: Sent birthday card several months later

Perceptions of stalking	1.16 (0.43)	1.17 (0.49)	1.18 (0.54)	1.15 (0.39)
Concern for target	1.24 (0.53)	1.13 (0.34)	1.21 (0.59)	1.17 (0.44)
Informal help-seeking	1.20 (0.54)	1.16 (0.45)	1.21 (0.60)	1.16 (0.49)
Formal help-seeking	1.08 (0.35)	1.01 (0.11)	1.09 (0.50)	1.07 (0.35)

Note. Numbers in the table reflect Likert-type ratings on a 1 to 5 scale. V1 = version 1; V2 = version 2. Scenarios 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, and 11 described a female purser and male target (F-M) in version 1 and a male pursuer and female target (M-F) in version 2; scenarios 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9 described a male purser and female target (M-F) in version 1 and a female pursuer and male target (F-M) in version 2. Values highlighted in grey are from scenarios which described a female pursuer and male target.

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108

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