PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF STALKING: VICTIM-PERPETRATOR RELATIONSHIP

BY

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DEDICATION

    This is dedicated to my wonderful parents, Elias and Monica Sainz, and my very supportive and loving grandparents, Alfonso and Betty Hernandez.

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Stalking has been a pervasive behavioral pattern that disrupts the lives of many. Previous researchers have examined factors can predict the occurrence of stalking in victim-perpetrator relationships while simulteanously examining stalking type. Domestic violence and psychopathology have been possible predictors to stalking. A vignette survey examines the public's perception of stalking within former lover, acquaintance, and stranger relationship. A 3x3 factorial MANOVA examined the effects of relationship and type of stalking to danger, violence, and safety. Results demonstrate an interaction effect between former intimate, stalking type of following and perceptions of violence and threat to safety. These findings suggest that prevention programs need to educate communities on domestic violence in intimate relationships and stalking.

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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

Stalking has been an increasing issue over the recent years. A total of 3.3 million people were victims of stalking in 2016, and the numbers continue to rise. Research has made some advancement in understanding factors that influence stalking. There has been discoveries of common patterns and connections between victim-perpetrator relationship and type of stalking. It has been recently proposed that the victim-perpetrator relationship influences the severity, duration, and type of stalking. The public should be aware of these common patterns to help or prevent others or one's self from becoming a victim of stalking.

Problem Statement

The number of victims affected by stalking continues to rise. Victim-perpetrator relationship and types of stalking, could have the potential to escalate a stalking scenario and the importance of understaning how each factor influences stalking must be placed at a high importance.

Purpose of the Study

The efforts to understand stalking should continue for the purpose of educating the public on common occurrences and

patterns found within stalking, victim-perpetrator relationship, and type of stalking. The current study aimed to take the public's perception on stalking regarding victim-perpetrator relationship and match it with past research to uncover whether the public was aware of the common occurrences and patterns found within stalking. Ultimately, this study could help strengthen stalking prevention and awareness programs.

Objectives of the Study

Research questions as followed. Was there a main effect for relationship type on the perceptions of victim stalking? Is there a main effect for relationship type on the perceptions of dangerous situation? Was there a main effect for a relationship type on the perceptions of the likelihood of fear? Was there a main effect for type of stalking on the perceptions of victim stalking? Was there a main effect for type of staking on the perceptions of dangerous situation? Was there a main effect for type of stalking on the perceptions of dangerous situation? Was there an interaction effect between relationship type and type of stalking on victim stalking, dangerous situation, and likelihood of fear? Was there a main effect for relationship type on the perceptions of likelihood of violence? Was there a main effect for relationship type on the perceptions of likelihood of threat of safety? Was there a main effect for type

of stalking on the perceptions of likelihood of violence? Was there main effect for type of stalking on the perceptions of likelihood of threat to safety? Was there an interaction effect between relationship type and type of stalking on perceptions of likelihood of violence and threat to safety?

There was a main effect for relationship type on the perceptions of victim of stalking? Specifically, in former intimate relationship and following stalking. There was a main effect for relationship type on the perceptions of dangerous situation? Specifically, former intimate relationship and following stalking. There was a main effect for relationship type on the perceptions of the likelihood of fear? Specifically, former intimate relationship and following stalking. There was a main effect for type of stalking on the perceptions of victim stalking? Specifically, stranger relationship and following stalking. There was a main effect for type of stalking on the perceptions of dangerous situation? Specifically, stranger relationship and following stalking. There was a main effect for type of stalking on the perceptions of the likelihood of fear? Specifically, stranger relationship and text stalking. There was an interaction effect between relationship type and type of stalking on victim stalking, dangerous situation and likelihood of fear? Specifically, former intimate relationship and

following stalking. There was a main effect for relationship type on the perceptions of likelihood of violence? Specifically, former intimate relationship and following stalking. There was a main effect for relationship type on the perceptions of likelihood of threat to safety? Specifically, stranger relationship and cyber stalking. There was a main effect for type of stalking on the perceptions of likelihood of violence? Specifically, stranger and following stalking. There was a main effect for type of stalking on the perceptions of likelihood of threat to safety? Specifically, acquaintance and following stalking. There was an interaction effect between relationship type and type of stalking on the perceptions of likelihood of violence and threat to safety? Specifically, stranger and following stalking.

This study expected the public to be uneducated on the influence the victim-perpetrator relationship has on the common occurrences and patterns found within stalking cases.

Delimitations

The current study examined victim-perpetrator relationship and type of stalking, which would include former lovers, acquaintances, and strangers, and following, cyberstalking, and texting. The current study would not examine any other factors.

Assumptions

The current study projected for the public to perceive Following condition to be the more common form of stalking compared to Texting and Cyberstalking. Additionally, Stranger condition would be perceived higher to the public compared to Acquaintance and Former Lover.

Definition of Key Terms

Cyberstalking. Cyberstalking can be defined as stalking and essentially a new phenomenon introduced to current research. Cyberstalking can include, but not limited to, text messages, emails, and checking of social media (i.e. facebook, snapchat, and twitter) (Shorey, Cornelius, & Strauss, 2015)

Stalking. An action directed towards another person, which can involve but not limited to: repetitive visual and physical proxmity, unwanted communication, or verbal, written or implied threats in which could instill fear upon the other person. (The National Criminal Justice Association, 1993).

Cyber obsessional pursuit. Stalking behaviors through the use of technology, which demanded intimacy or harassed from another person (Lyndon, Bonds-Raacke, Cratty, 2011).

Obsessive Relational Intrusion. "The repeated and unwanted pursuit of intimacy through violation of physical and/or symbolic privacy" (Cupach & Spitzber, 2000, p. 66).

Persistence. The frequency of a behavior or behaviors (Scott, Sheridan, & Sleath, 2014).

Intent. The perpetrator explicitly threatening the victim (Scott et al., 2014).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Prevalence of Stalking

Stalking has become an increasing issue within the past decade. According to Melton (2007), stalking had affected the general population, in the United States alone, from anywhere between 200,000 and 1.4 million people per year. In 2016, stalking had affected an estimate of 3.3 million people within that year (Menard & Cox 2016). The total number of victims rose almost three times in comparison to what was reported in 2007. Furthermore, McEwan and Strand (2013) demonstrated that women were primarily victimized during occurrences of stalking. Sadly, women account for 75 percent to 80 percent of all victims. Less commonly, men were targeted by female perpetrators. Males accounted for 75 percent to 80 percent of the perpetrators (McEwan et al., 2013). Men were more likely to be the perpetrator and women were more likely to be a victim.

Defining Stalking

No single defintion exists for the concept of stalking. Menard et al. (2016) wrote that, "legal definitions vary from state to state but stalking generally is defined as repeated unwanted contact, accompanied with action or implied threat or other behavior that causes victims to be fearful" (p. 671).

Melton (2007), had defined the act of stalking as, "the willful, repeated, and malicious following, harassing, or threatening of another person" (p. 3). McEwan et al. (2013), suggested that stalking was better defined as, "the persistent harassment of one person by another in a manner that produces concern or fear" (p. 546). While Shorey, Cornelius and Strauss (2015), argued that stalking was better defined as, "the willful, malicious, and repeated following and harassing of another person that threatens his or her safety" (p. 935). Due to the diverse definitions used to describe the act of stalking, the federal definition will be used to define stalking for the current study. The federal definition states stalking as, an action directed towards another person, which can involve but not limited to: repetitive visual and physical proxmity, unwanted communication, or verbal, written or implied threats in which could instill fear upon the other person. (The National Criminal Justice Association, 1993). Therefore, according to the legal definition, to label an act as stalking one must repeatedly behave in such a way that produces fear in the victim.

Types of Stalking

For an act to be considered stalking, it must pose a threat to the safety of the victim and also produce the feeling of fear and danger upon the victim. Similarly, to the various definitions

provided to describe stalking, there have been a variety of types of stalking. The different forms of stalking include a set of motives and behaviors, and can be demonstrated differently depending on the victim-perpetrator relationship. The different forms of stalking all include a set of perpetrator motives and behaviors, which, taken together, produce fear in the targeted individual.

Following and Unwanted Communication. A victim-perpetrator relationship can influence the form, the severity, and the behavior of the stalking. For example, stalking can be demonstrated through unwanted communication; this can include phone calls, text messages, emails or letters (McEwan et al., 2013). Other form of stalking included following or watching of the victim, which have been known to be the most common form of stalking. Leaving unwanted gifts, loitering, property damage, or assault was also recognized as stalking (Melton, 2007). If the perpetrator pursues an unwanted romantic relationship with the victim it would be constituted as stalking (Shorey et al., 2015). Following and unwanted communication plays an essential role in stalking as it has the potential to produce fear in an individual.

Melton (2007) conducted a study examining women who were victims of stalking by a former lover. In this longitudinal study

women were interviewed three different times: right after the case closed, six months after the case closed, and one year after the case closed. Within the first six months the following stalking behaviors were reported: victim receiving unwanted calls or messages, being "checked up on", followed or being watched, and receiving unwanted gifts (Melton, 2007). "Checked up on" was reported by more than half of the participants, unwanted calls or messages were reported by more than a third of the participants, and following or being watched were reported by more than a third of the participants (Melton, 2007).

Shorey et al. (2015) examined types of stalking amongst college students in relationships. Results indicated that within the past six months types of stalking behaviors were displayed through unwanted calls, monitoring partner's activities through social media, and attempting to obtain information about one's partner without the other finding out (Shorey et al., 2015). The most prevalent type of stalking were identified as calling partner when he or she did not want to, attempting to obtain information about the partner without his or her knowledge, and attempting to monitor partner's behavior through social media. Following and unwanted communication were found highly prevalent amongst former lovers, however social media has also been identified as a recent and commonly used method for stalking.

Cyberstalking. Rapid growth in technology has led to a new phenomenon – cyberstalking, the enhanced ability of perpetrators to stalk their victims through electronic media (Shorey et al., 2015). Accessibility to electronic media has the opportunity to give others access to a variety of important things, for example personal information. Rapid growth in current technology has given perpetrators the ability to hide behind a screen and stalk their victims through electronic media (Shorey et al., 2015). Harrassment through cyberstalking can include, but not limited to, text messages, emails, and checking of social media (i.e. facebook, snapchat, and twitter) (Shorey et al., 2015). Cyberstalking can be especially dangerous considering the many ways social media may compromise the privacy of a user (Shorey et al., 2015). For instance, social media gives the user the option to input addresses, contact information, and photographs of the user, emails, personal background information, and even current location. If a user gives permission to share his or her current location when using social media then all privacy could be ultimately lost (Shorey et al., 2105). If a user gives permission to share his or her location while actively on a social media site, then when a user uploads anything online, the post would also include the location in which the user posted (Shorey et al., 2015). More hazardous, some social media sites

have provided the option to share the user's exact location while actively on a social media site, an uploaded message could include the location from which the user posted. Social media can make it easy for perpetrators to be discreet while stalking their victims making it one of the more dangerous forms of stalking.

Although young adults commonly engage in stalking-like behaviors through the use of Internet, most of these behaviors would not instill fear in the targeted person and, thus, would not be considered severe enough to fit the legal defition of stalking. Additionally, the use of social media, for instance Facebook, could provide an opportunity for some to engage in behaviors which could be defined as stalking. In 2011, Facebook had over 500 million active users and it was known to be the most popular social networking site (Lyndon, Bonds-Raacke, & Cratty, 2011). Since that time, Facebook has been so commonly used for cyberstalking that the term "Facebook stalking" has been coined, referring to the obsessive and constant monitoring of social information posted on Facebook by friends, acquaintanes, or strangers (Lyndon et al., 2011).

Examples of Facebook stalking would include obsessively reading wall posts and constantly checking status updates. In spite of much discussion about cyberstalking, to date there has been very little empirical research. However, the few studies on

social media has centralized its studies on the platform of

the social media site by examining the site, user's

characteristics, and how the social media site has affected its

users. Melander and collegues (2010) found intentional aggressive

behaviors utlizing technology and social media – including

Facebook – for harassment toward a former lover. Such behaviors

included messages intended to control the partner, and exposure

of private arguments made public to other users. Muise,

Christofides and Desmarais (2009) found similar behaviors among

perpetrators challenged with romantic jealousy, who used social

media for obsessive pursuit and monitoring of their partners.

Results of Muise et al. (2010) study suggested that new forms of

communication via the Internet could potentially provide

increased intrusion and surveillance.

Lyndon and colleagues (2011) posited that those who harassed

others through the use of technology, including social media,

were also likely to engage in cyber obsessional purusit (COP).

Research stated COP could potentially be defined as cyberstalking

if the perpetrator's behaviors were repetitive and severe enough

to instill fear in the targeted person. Lyndon et al. study

(2011) found a moderate connection between COP and obsessive

relational intrusion (ORI). ORI was defined as, "the repeated and

unwanted pursuit of intimacy through violation of physical and/or

symbolic privacy", in other words an overlapping concept of stalking. (Cupach & Spitzber, 2000, p. 66). The 2011 study included 411 participants in an online survey; all were former lovers who used Facebook as a platform to communiate. Three variables were measured: hidden provocation, public harassment, and venting. The study found 67 perecent admitted to engaging in at least one variable, and over half reported to engaging in at least two variables. Additionally, 80 percent admitted to using Facebook to publicly harass their former lover or to vent about their former lover. Findings indicated that those who used Facebook to monitor or harass a former lover would indeed engage in COP and ORI (Lyndon et al., 2011). In a similar study, Baum, Catalano, Rand & Rose (2009) reported finding one in four victims to have been cyberstalked through email (83%), or instant message (35%) in the past 12 months. These findings can be suggestive of cyberstalking being a potentially dangerous form of stalking through the invasion of other's privacy, which can essentially lead to behaviors related to harrassment and satlking.

Stalking Typologies

In the early 1990's stalking was defined as an illegal act. Researchers and psychologists dug deeper and began to study why perpetrators began to stalk their victims. It was discovered that stalking was accompanied by many factors, for example the type of

relationship between victim and perpetrator, therefore stalking typologies were created to better organize the different type of stalkers that exist (Zona, Sharma & Lane, 1993; Holmes, 1993).

Zona's Typologies. Zona et al. (1993) categoried stalkers into three groups: erotomanic, love obsessional, and simple obsessional stalkers. Erotomanic stalkers victimize individuals whom they do not know – normally a celebrity. Such predators operate under a delusional perception that they are in a "real" relationship with their victims.

Love obsessional stalkers also have the delusional belief that their victims are in love with them and the victim and stalker are often no more than acquaintances (i.e. neighbors, coworkers). Simple obsessional stalkers are the most commonly among perpetrators. These persons are characterized as having had a prior long or short-term relationship with the victim, and include former lovers, spouses, or former partners.

Holmes' Typologies. Criminology professor Ronald Holmes categorized and defined six types of stalkers: the celebrity stalker, the lust stalker, the hit stalker, the love-scorned stalker, the domestic stalker, and the political stalker. Holmes defined the first of these, the celebrity stalker, as an individual who stalks famous people. In a striking example,

stalker John Hinckley became obsessed with child actress Jodie Foster after seeing the 1976 Martin Scorses film, *Taxi Driver*, in which Foster portrayed a 12-year old prostitute rescued by her sordid life by a disturbed driver, played by Robert DeNiro. Having stalked Foster for several years, in 1981 Hinckley attemped the assassination of President Ronald Reagan, hoping to attract the actress's attention (History.com Staff, 2009).

The lust stalker (Holmes, 1993) is a serial predator who stalks various victims, one at a time. Driven by sexual lust, this type of stalker targets strangers with certain common characteristics the perpetrator finds attractive. A third type of stalker, the love-scorned stalker, targets acquaintances such as coworkers or neighbors, with the aim of creating an intimate relationship with the victim. The fourth type, domestic stalkers, victimize their former intimate partner. The political stalker targets an individual on the basis of agreement or a disagreement with the victim's political belief. The sixth and final Holmes category of stalker would be the hit stalker, whose behavior culiminates in hiring a contract killer to murder the victim (Holmes, 1993).

Mullen's Typologies. Mullen (2009) suggested five types of stalking, which related mainly to stranger and acquaintance stalking: the Rejected, Intimacy Seeker, Resentful, Incompetent

Suitor, and Predatory stalker. The Rejected type was mainly associated with former intimate stalkers. The Intimacy Seeker sought to stalk its victim mainly because they believed it expressed their love towards the victim and they were also seeking love from the victim. This tended to lead to a pathological fixation of the victim. Next, the Resentful type was defined as the stalker who targeted their victims because the victim had either provoked or angered the perpetrator. The incompetent suitor was found to be socially incompetent. This type of stalker had a difficult time understanding how socially expressing himself or herself to the victim. Therefore, their inability to socialize led them to stalk their victim pursuing a friendship or a date in hopes that it would lead to something more. Lastly, the predatory stalker purposely targeted victims to fulfill a sexual deviant urge and arousal. These specific stalking types have not been empirically validated but the American Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry have recommended it for clinical use (McEwan et al., 2013).

Motives for Stalking

Perpetrators who were highly motivated to commit their crimes had specific motives for why they committed such crime. The National Institute of Justice (1996) states that stalkers were driven by control, obsession, jealousy, revenge and/or

anger. Additionally, a perpetrators' motivations were largely influenced by the types of relationships they have with the victim. For example, erotomanic or delusional stalkers normally target casual acquaintances or strangers, motivated by a delusional belief that their victims were in love with them. During this situation, a perpetrator's goal would be to receive acknowledgment from the victim of the so called existing relationship between the two. Erotomanic, also known as delusional stalkers, normally suffer from a mental disorder, for example, delusional disorder, histrionic personality disorder, or borderline personality disorder, which could play a role in stalking-like behaviors (Melton, 2000).

With domestic or simple obsessional stalkers, more often than not, the victim and perpetrator have had a previous relationship, or have been romantically involved. Domestic or simple obsessional stalkers tend to be fearful of abandonment and, thus, were highly motivated to control the victim to prevent such a loss. In some cases, these particular type of stalker does not want to see their victim with another partner, and may seek the need to reestablish a relationship with the victim. Other simple obsessional or domestic stalkers, instead, were driven by anger, which served as a defense mechanism against grief of loss. Attention seeking or fulfilling a sexual urge could be

alternative motives for former lover, acquaintance and stranger stalking (Melton, 2000).

Differences Among Former Lovers, Acquaintances, and Strangers

The lengthy nature of stalking has made it a difficult crime to define and legislate against. Stalking could be explained in accordance to the law in various ways and could have many types of variations within the law worldwide. In the United States, anti-stalking laws have been generally centralized on the perpetrator and the perpetrator's behavior. As defined by the United States government, a perpetrator must exhibit repetitive, or engage in specific conduct, where the goal was to intentionally cause fear, harm or uneasiness to the victim (Scott, Rajakaruna, Sheridan, & Sleath, 2014). The Supplemental Victimization Survey defined stalking as, "the occurrence of at least one type of specified stalking behavior on at least two separate occasions" (Scott et al., 2014, p. 221). Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) had reported the majority of stalking incidents involving a perpetrator that the victim knew (e.g. former lover, acquaintance). However, Scott et al. (2014) reported that perceptions of stalking failed to reflect the reality of stalking behaviors as reported by crime surveys. For example, McEwan, Mullen, MacKenzie, & Ogloff (2009) had reported that former lovers tended to be the more persistent and the more

dangerous type of stalker, however perception research indicated the same type of behavior and was considered to be more dangerous when the perpetrator was portrayed as a stranger (Scott et al., 2011). Therefore, the importance for research to better understand what specific factors influence perception regarding stalking should be placed highly to reduce inconsistencies between perception and applied research. Once these factors have been identified it should be put into motion to be addressed through education, training, and prevention programs for the public to benefit from.

Hypothetical stalking scenarios have been commonly used in perception research in the United States to investigate the various situational and personal characteristics in stalking. The main and common characteristics investigated included a prior relationship between the perpetrator and victim (Scott et al., 2014). Another important factor when examining perception of stalking would be the severity of behaviors exemplified within a victim-perpetrator relationship.

Persistence and intent. Persistence was defined as the frequency of a behavior or behaviors, and intent was defined as the perpetrator explicitly threatening the victim (Scott et al., 2014). Dennison (2007) commonly found that persistence and intent of a perpetrator in a stalking scenario had a direct influence on

the perception of fear. For instance, if the persistence of a perpetrator and evidence of clear intent was portrayed in a stalking scenario then this tended to increase the influence of the public's perception as a stalking crime and also the need to call the police (Scott & Sheridan, 2011). A prior relationship between the victim and perpetrator was strongly associated with the level of persistence from a stalker (Purcell, Pathé, & Mullen, 2004). Purcell et al. (2004) found that fifty percent of stranger stalking cases lasted a few days and was never pursued beyond a two-week period. Congruently, McEwan et al. (2009) the former lover and acquaintance stalker was the most persistent in stalking its victim. Scott et al. (2011), found when the perpetrator was persistent and explicitly demonstrated intent within their actions, the victim was perceived to have experienced high amounts of distress and fear of violence. Therefore, stranger stalkers would be less likely to be persistent in stalking its victim, while former lover and acquaintance stalkers would be more likely to be persistent. Additionally, those who sought an intimate involvement with their victims were highly persistent as well (Weller, Hope, & Sheridan, 2013).

Former lover versus stranger. The most common relational subtypes studied within the research of stalking have been former

lovers, acquaintances, and strangers. Hills and Taplin (1998) conducted a study in Australia and recruited participants in an Australian community. Participants reported to have perceived stalking-like behaviors by a stranger scenario, which invoked more fear than a former lover scenario (Hills et al., 1998). Weller et al. (2013) conducted a study on the examination of the the public and police officer's perception of stalking involving either a former lover, acquaintance or stranger stalker. The lay participants and police officer participants were given one of three scenarios, in which six questions were asked about the scenario: if the scenario could be constituted as stalking, the level of severity, the duration of the stalking, the likelihood of injury to the victim, how responsible the victim was, and how necessary police intervention was. Results showed that for both lay and officer participants, victim-perpetrator relationship greatly affected both group's perception of stalking, with stranger stalker perceived to be strongly associated with being constituted as stalking (Weller et al., 2013).

A United States (U.S.) study reported similar findings involving stranger stalking scenarios. Cass (2011) reported to have found particpants perceiving behaviors constituted by stalking to be a greater danger when the perpetrator was a stranger. Scott et al. (2014) investigated the prior relationship

and severity of behavior regarding public's perception of stalking and responsibility in Australia, U.S., and United Kingdom (U.K). It also included non-possessive and possessive former lover conditions. Participants completed an online questionnaire that included 1 of 12 versions of a hypothetical stalking scenario. Results showed that participants were more likely to perceive stalking behaviors, the need for police intervention and a criminal conviction when the perpetrator was a stranger or acquaintance rather than a non-possessive or possessive former lover (Scott et al., 2014). Additionally, when the perpetrator was a stranger or acquaintance, participants perceived the victim to experience more fear of violence and distress, which was significant across all three countries. Victims were found to be less responsible in a stalking situation when the scenario involved a stranger or acquaintance as the stalker compared to a non-possessive and possessive former lover. Furthermore, when the perpetrator's behavior was highly persistent and the intent was greatly threatening, the victim was perceived to have experienced stalking-like behaviors, the need for police intervention, and a criminal conviction (Scott et al., 2014).

Former Lover and Violence. The most common type of stalking was indeed when a prior relationship occurred between the victim

and perpetrator rather than no prior relationship between the victim and perpetrator (Mullen, Pathé, & Purcell, 2000). Mullen et al. (200) stated victims of stalking would be more likely targeted by former lovers. Coleman (1997) found that eighty percent of stalking cases reported to have involved former lover relationships, and the victim reported physical assault during the relationship. James and Farnham (2003) associated former lover stalking with violence, especially if there was evidence of the perpetrator having had a strong emotional attachment to the victim. An older study conducted by Tjaden and Thoennes (1998) revealed that 59 percent of the stalking cases they examined were of female victims who were stalked by their former lover and 81 percent of those women were physically assaulted by their former lover. An abusive relationship, as stated by Sheridan and Roberts (2011), was a strong predictor of physical assault after a relationship break up. Correspondingly, former lover stalking victims were found to be at the highest risk of being physically assaulted by their stalker, and were also placed at the highest risk of being threatened by their stalker (Harmon, Rosner, & Owens, 1998; Mullen et al., 2000). Tjaden et al. (1998) found between 29 percent to 54 percent of all females who were murdered were found to have been previously battered women, and 90 percent of these cases, murder was subsequent to stalking. Former lover

relationship with evidence of physical violence has a great potential to be a highly dangerous situation for a victim. This type of relationship poses the highest risk in stalking cases compared to acquaintance and stranger stalking.

The Influences on Perception of Stalking

    Social Cues. Although evidence was found supporting former lover stalking to be the most prevalent and highly associated to violence – especially if the relationship was abusive – they would be less likely to be convicted of a stalking crime (Weller et al., 2013). It appears a distorted perception of "real" stalking behaviors exists amongst the public. Former lover stalking was considered the commonly reported case yet they were the least likely to be convicted of the crime. Social psychology suggested that certain social cues could influence one's interpretation of certain interactions and behaviors regarding stalking. An early study conducted by Shotland and Straw (1976) examined the public's perception of the seriousness of a crime and victim blame attribution. This study exposed participants to a staged attack between a female and male. Participants would either be exposed to a woman screaming, "I don't know you" or "I don't know why I ever married you" (Shotland et al., 1976, p. 994). Overall, results indicated that participants were more likely to intervene (65%) when they overheard the woman scream,

"I don't know you" rather than when the participant's overheard, "I don't' know why I ever married you" (19%) (Shotland et al., 1976). Additionally, the stranger condition was perceived as the more dangerous situation and also perceived the victim to have been more at risk of physical harm compared to the former lover condition (Shotland et al., 1976).

   Rape Myth. A parallel between the perceptions of stalking and perceptions of rape should be recognized. It could provide an alternative explanation as to why stranger stalking would be perceived as the higher of the three. More than 30 years ago, rape was only considered rape when the offender was a stranger, which turned out to be the biggest rape myth (Brownmiller, 1975). This rape myth was linked to the "just world" hypothesis, which was defined as the understanding of the world to be a fair and a just place, therefore people receive what they deserve, both good and bad (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). In other words, when an event occurs, others would perceive the situation through comprehension and rationalization that the victim did something to deserve what had happened to him or her (Lerner & Miler, 1978). For example, the victim had a negative attitude toward their partner throughout the relationship. These types of myths tended to point the finger at the victim and eliminate any blame from the offender in order to perserve such belief (Lerner et al., 1978).

Misinterpretation. Another reason for why stranger stalkers have been perceived higher than former lover and acquaintance stalkers could be due to misinterpretion of "normal" behaviors following the dissolution of a relationship (Dennison, 2007). Many persons have the belief that stalking-like behaviors to be normal following a break up. According to the fundamental attribution error, stranger stalkers would be perceived as a highly alarming situation because there would be no prior history between the victim and offender to justify stalking behaviors resulting perceiving the situation to be more concerning.(Ross, 1977; Weller et al., 2013).

Unpredictability. Hills and Taplin (1998) suggested that a lack of control of a situation could cause more distress and fear when perceiving a stalking situation. A stranger stalker's characteristics, motives, and behaviors have been unknown to the public, making it harder to predict and control the situation. A false belief, as stated by recent research, that it would be easier to control and predict the behavior of a known person (i.e. former lover) versus the behavior of an unknown person (Cass, 2011). Former lover stalkers may also be perceived as less serious compared to stranger stalkers because of the difficulty associating between stalking behaviors and "normal behaviors" after a relationship break up (Dennison, 2007). Stalking-like

behaviors after a relationship break up were perceived to not be out of the ordinary to the public (Dennison & Stewart, 2006).

Psychopathology of Stalking Behavior

In 1997, Keinlen and his colleagues were one of the first few to enter the domain of stranger and acquaintance stalking and the psychology behind it. The two main differences found were the prevalence and the nature of psychopathology during the time of the stalking.

Psychosis. Psychosis appeared to be more prevalent in acquaintance and stranger than former lover stalking (Keinlen, Birmingham, Solberg, O'Regan & Melogy, 1997). Mohandie reviewed 1,000 legal stalking cases and discovered 25 percent of stalkers and acquaintances experienced psychosis, while only 11 percent of former lover stalkers reported experiencing psychosis (Mohandie, Meloy, McGowan, 2006). Another study reported that 80 percent of strangers who stalked public figurers (i.e. famous people) reported to have experienced psychosis when stalking their victim. Although, it has been difficult to confidently report psychosis symptoms because the majority of the data collected from past research depends on self-report. However, from the data collected, it was certain that erotomanic or persecutory delusions, morbid infatuations and delusions were prevalent in stranger and acquaintance stalking (Mohandie et al., 2006).

Personality disorders. Collective past research has found a link between stalking and psychopathology. The role of psychopathology was investigated amongst former intimate, acquaintance and stranger stalking. It has been suggested that a possible link between stalking relationship types and personality disorders exists. Approximately 30 to 50 percent of stalkers report having a personality disorder or traits related to a personality disorder (McEwan et al., 2103). Additionally, "studies of psychotic disorders identify a close temporal relationship between the onset of the disorder and the onset of the stalking behavior" (McEwan et al., 2013, p. 547). For example, stalking in borderline personality has been a reoccurring problematic behavior, specifically with the misconstrued boundaries of the victim. This has been due to the social and interpersonal deficits of the disorder.

A study conducted in Australia aimed to investigate the possible occurrence in which psychopathology showed between stranger and acquaintance stalking. The participants chosen for this study were clients from a community clinic where they were being assessed for stalking behavior. A forensic psychiatrist and a clinical forensic psychologist interviewed each participant, and they were also asked to complete a psychometric personality testing. 64 percent accounted for stranger and 46 percent

accounted for acquaintance (this included casual, professional, friends, family and workplace). The variables measured was the differences of motivation type, comparing the differences of psychopathology between former intimate and stranger and acquaintance stalking, and examining the outcomes of stranger and acquaintance stalking, specifically looking at stalking behaviors and the increased period of time. The most commonly found stalking behaviors of stranger and acquaintance were telephone calls and writing letters to the victim (Mohandie et al, 2013). A close second was stalkers approaching their victim. This included following, loitering, physically confronting the victim, entering the victim's home, or hiring someone else to harass the victim (Mohandie et al., 2013). The top two were found to be loitering and confront the victim. Violence was found to be a low factor, only 9 percent of participants admitted to using violence towards their victim (Mohandie et al., 2013). The findings found from the study suggested a range of things. First, strangers and acquaintances were significantly more likely to be diagnosed with a psychotic illness than former intimate stalkers (Mohandie et al., 2013). More than half of the psychotic stalkers associated their motives to those of intimacy seeking and resentful. Analyses showed that both types of motivations were proven that the victim was

incorporated into delusions and the psychosis played a key role in the stalking behavior (Mohandie et al., 2013). Other diagnosis was found prevalent between stranger and acquaintance stalking known as paraphilia. Predatory motives were the primary motive to stalk (Mohandie et al., 2013). Only a small percentage was diagnosed with a substance use disorder, however almost half of the participants (44%) reported to have misused substances during the time of the stalking (Mohandie et al., 2013). Personality disorders were also found to have been a factor in some of these stalking cases. However, personality disorders were found mostly in acquaintance stalking. Antisocial and narcissistic personality disorder were the two common personality disorders associated to acquaintance. Strangers showed a small association to personality disorders, specifically obsessive-compulsive personality disorder. The most important finding regarding personality disorder was that it was significantly more associated with recurrent stalking (Mohandie et al., 2013). Overall, these results indicate that stranger and acquaintance stalking are significantly more likely to be diagnosed with a psychotic or paraphilic disorder. It was found that psychotic pursued for intimacy or to mitigate an injustice, and paraphilia pursued for sexual deviant fulfillment.

Chapter 3

METHOD

Participants

Participants were randomly recruited from a private university from Riverside, California. The criteria for participation was that participants be 18 years or older and currently enrolled as a student at the institution. A total of 280 participants (n = 280) completed the survey. Of these 280 participants, 22.9% were male (M = 64) and 77.1% were female (M = 216). Ages ranged from 18-33 years (M = 21.14, SD = 2.91) with a median age of 19. Ethnicity breakdown was as follows: White/Caucasian accounted for 36.8% (n = 103, Hispanic/Latino accounted for 34.3% (n = 96), African American accounted for 8.2% (n = 23), Asian/Pacific Islander accounted for 7.1% (n = 20), 'Other' accounted for 13.6% (n = 38). The participant's level of education breakdown was as follows: 23.6% (n = 66) obtained a High School or Equivalent diploma, 0.4% (n = 1) obtained a Vocational/Technical School degree, 61.8% (n = 173) had completed Some College, 13.9% (n = 39) had earned a Bachelor's degree, and 0.4% (n = 1) had earned a Master's degree. Marital status was as follows: A total of 5.7% (n = 16)were Married, 0.4% (n = 1) Divorced, 91.8% (n = 257) Single, Never Married, and 2.1% (n = 6) Living With Another.

Design

  A 3 (Victim-Perpetrator Relationship: Former Lover, Acquaintance, and Stranger) by 3 (Type of Stalking: Following, Cyberstalking, and Texting) between-subjects factorial design was used.

Instrument

  A total of 9 vignette conditions (Appendix A) were examined in the current study. The vignettes contained a fictional scenario describing the relationship of two individuals and the type of stalking that occurred. Following the brief scenario, a total of five items were developed that examined perceptions of victim stalking, belief that the individual who was being stalked was in a dangerous situation, belief that the individual that was being stalked was fearful, belief that the stalker would behave violently, and belief that the stalker posed a threat to the other individual. All items were measured on a 5-point Likert-scale format ranging from 1 (Very Unlikely) to 5 (Very Likely).

Procedure

  The NIH training on the Protection of Human Research Subjects was completed by the PI and the Chairperson. Institutional Review Board (IRB) was obtained prior to data collection. Instructor approval was obtained to collect data in the classrooms. A total of five instructors granted permission to

collect data in six classes. Each instructor signed a consent form permitting the researcher access to the classroom at the end of the class period or at the beginning of the class period. A recruitment script (Appendix B) was read out loud to all potential participants in the classroom. Participants who agreed to partake in the study were provided with a consent form (Appendix C). The researcher read the consent form orally. A few minutes was also given to the students to review and sign the consent form. The surveys were handed out individually. Those who wished to participate completed the survey and those who did not had the option to draw on the back of the survey. A total of 15 minutes was given to complete the survey. After 15 minutes the surveys and consent forms were collected all together. Upon completion of the survey each participant received a community resource form (Appendix D).

Data Analysis

The statistical program IBM SPSS was used to analyze the data collected. A two-way MANOVA was conducted to examine between-group differences of victim-perpetrator relationship (former lover, acquaintance, and stranger), and type of stalking (following, cyberstalking, and texting) on perceptions of victimization of stalking, dangerous situation, and fear. The second two-way MANOVA examined group differences between victim-

perpetrator relationship (former lover, acquaintances, and stranger) and type of stalking (following, cyberstalking, and texting) on perceptions of violence and threat to safety.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

A 3 (Victim-perpetrator relationship: Former Lover,
Acquaintance, Stranger) x 3 (Type of stalking: Following,
Cyberstalking, Texting) between-group factorial MANOVA was
conducted to examine differences in perceptions of victim
stalking, belief that the individual who was being stalked was in
a dangerous situation, belief that the individual that was being
stalked was fearful, belief that the stalker would behave
violently, and belief that the stalker posed a threat to the
other individual. It was hypothesized that there would be a main
effect for Victim-perpetrator relationship on the perceptions of
victim stalking. Specifically, perceptions of victim stalking
would be higher in the Former Lover condition, followed by the
Stranger, and Acquaintance conditions, respectively. It was
hypothesized that there would be a main effect for Victim-
perpetrator relationship on the belief that the individual being
stalked was in a dangerous situation? Specifically, the belief
that the individual being stalked was in a dangerous situation
would be higher in the Stranger condition, then Former Lover, and
lastly the Acquaintance condition. It was hypothesized that there
would be a main effect for victim-perpetrator relationship on the
belief of the likelihood of fear. Specifically, the main belief

of the likelihood of fear would be highest in the Stranger condition, followed by the Former Lover condition, and lastly the Acquaintance condition.

It was hypothesized that there would be a main effect for type of stalking on the perceptions of victim stalking. Specifically, the perceptions of victim stalking would be higher in Following condition, subsequent to Cyber condition, then Texting condition. It was hypothesized that there would be a main effect for type of stalking on the belief that the individual being stalked was in a dangerous situation? Specifically, the Following condition would be the highest, followed by Texting condition, and lastly the Cyber condition in regards to the individual being stalked would be in a dangerous situation. It was hypothesized that there would be a main effect for type of stalking on the belief of the likelihood of fear. Specifically, the belief of the likelihood of fear would score highest in Following, then Cyber, then Texting.

A 3 X 3 factorial MANOVA revealed a main effect for victim-perpetrator relationship [Wilks' Λ = 0.546, F = (6, 538), p = .00, $\eta2$ = 0.26] and a main effect for type of stalking [Wilks' Λ = 0.884, F = (6, 538), p = .00, $\eta2$ = .06]. Univariate analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Bonferroni tests were conducted as follow-up tests. Results revealed a main effect for victim-perpetrator

relationship on beliefs that Cindy was a victim of stalking [F = (2, 271) = 33.57, p = .00]. There was a mean difference on perceptions that Cindy was a victim of stalking between the Former Lover condition (M= 4.82) and the Acquaintances condition (M=3.77), and a mean difference between the Former Lover condition (M=4.82) and the Stranger condition (M=3.82). There was no difference between the Acquaintance (M=3.77) and the Stranger condition (M=3.83).

Results revealed a main effect for victim-perpetrator relationship on the belief that Cindy was in a dangerous situation [F = (2, 271) = 75.63, p = .00]. There was a mean difference on perceptions that Cindy was in a dangerous situation between the Former Lover condition (M=4.46) and the Acquaintance condition (M=2.75), and a mean difference between Former Lover condition (M=4.46) and Stranger condition (M=3.49). There was also a mean difference between Acquaintance condition (M=2.75) and Stranger condition (M=3.49).

Results revealed a main effect for victim-perpetrator relationship on the belief that Cindy was fearful of the stalker [F = (2, 271) = 66.01, p = .00]. There was a mean difference between Former Lover condition (M=3.97) and Acquaintance condition (M=3.03) regarding the perceptions on how likely Cindy was fearful of Sam. There was also a mean difference between

Former Lover condition (M=3.97) and Stranger condition (M=3.34), and also between Acquaintance condition (M=3.03) and Stranger condition (M=3.34).

Results revealed a main effect for type of stalking on the belief that Cindy was a victim of stalking [F = (2, 271) = 6.51, p = .00]. A mean difference was found regarding the perception that Cindy was a victim of stalking and type of stalking, specifically between Cyber condition (M=3.91) and Texting condition (M=4.43). There was no difference between Following condition (M=4.10) and Cyber condition (M=3.91), and there was also no difference between Following condition (M=4.10) and Texting condition (M=4.43).

Results revealed a main effect for type of stalking on the belief that Cindy was in a dangerous situation [F = (2, 271) = 16.89, p = .00]. There was a mean difference on the perception that Cindy was in a dangerous situation between Following condition (M=3.49) and Texting condition (M=4.01), and a mean difference between Cyber condition (M=3.22) and Texting condition (M=4.01). There was no difference between Following condition (M=3.49) and Cyber condition (M=3.22).

Results revealed a main effect for type of stalking on the belief that Cindy was fearful of Sam [F = (2, 271) = 9.66, p = .00]. There was a mean difference on the perception of how likely

was that Cindy was fearful of Sam between the Cyber condition
(M=3.00) and Texting condition (M=3.77). There was no difference
between the Following condition (3.57) and Cyber condition
(3.00), and there was no difference between the Following
condition (3.57) and Texting condition (3.77).

A 3 (Victim-perpetrator relationship: Former Lover,
Acquaintance, Stranger) x 3 (Type of stalking: Following,
Cyberstalking, Texting) between-group factorial MANOVA was
conducted to examine differences in perceptions of violence and
threat to safety. A main effect was posited for relationship type
on perceptions of the likelihood of threat to safety.
Specifically, the perceptions of the likelihood of threat to
safety would score higher in Stranger, followed by Former Lover,
and then Acquaintance. A main effect was also posited for type of
stalking on perceptions of threat to safety. Specifically, the
perceptions of threat to safety would score higher in Following
condition, subsequent to Cyber condition, then Texting condition.
It was hypothesized that there would be a main effect for victim-
perpetrator relationship on the belief that that stalker would
behave violently. Specifically, on the belief that the stalker
would be have violently, it was hypothesized that Former Lover
condition would score higher, followed by Stranger condition,
lastly followed by Acquaintance condition. It was also

hypothesized that there would be a main effect for type of stalking on the belief that the stalker would behave violently. Specifically, on the belief that the stalker would behave violently it was hypothesized that Following would score highest, followed by Texting, then followed by Cyber.

A 3 X 3 factorial MANOVA revealed a main effect for victim-perpetrator relationship [Wilks' Λ = 0.712, F = (4, 540), p = .00, $\eta2$ = 0.16]. A main effect was also revealed to be significant for type of stalking [Wilks' Λ = 0.875, F = (4, 540), p = .00, $\eta2$ = 0.07]. Univariate analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Bonferroni tests were conducted as follow-up tests. Results revealed a main effect for victim-perpetrator relationship on beliefs that the stalker was likely to behave violently [F = (2, 271) = 5.37, p = .01]. There was a mean difference on the perception that Sam was likely to behave violently towards Cindy between the Former Lover condition (M=4.32) and Acquaintance condition (M=2.85). There was no difference between Former Lover condition (M=4.32) and Stranger condition (M=3.48), and there was also no difference between Stranger condition (M=3.48) and Acquaintance condition (M=2.85).

Results revealed a main effect for victim-perpetrator relationship on beliefs that the stalker posed a threat to safety [F = (2, 271) = 54.49, p = .00]. There was a mean difference

between the groups on the perception that Sam was a threat to Cindy's safety between the Former Lover condition (M=4.42) and Acquaintances (M=2.62). There was also a mean difference between Former Lover condition (M=4.42) and Stranger condition (M=3.76), and Acquaintance condition (M=2.62) and Stranger condition (M=3.76).

Results revealed a main effect for type of stalking on beliefs that the stalker was likely to behave violently [F = (2, 271) = 3.76, p .02]. There was a mean difference on the perception that Sam was likely to behave violently towards Cindy between the Cyber condition (M=3.26) and Texting condition (M=4.03). There was no difference between the Following condition (M=3.37) and Cyber condition (M=3.26), and there was no difference between the Following condition (M=3.37) and Texting condition (M=4.03).

Results revealed a main effect for type of stalking on belief that the stalker posed a threat to safety [F = (2, 271) = 17.50, p = .00). There was a mean difference on the perception that Sam was a threat to Cindy's safety between the Following condition (M=3.61) and Texting condition (M=3.96). There was also a mean difference between the Cyber condition (M=3.26) and Texting condition (M=3.96). There was no difference between Following condition (M=3.61) and Cyber condition (M=3.26).

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

The current study examined the various Victim-perpretrator relationships (Former Lover, Acquaintance, and Stranger) and type of stalking (Following, Cyber, and Texting), and the influences it had on the public's perception of stalking. It was hypothesized that there would be a main effect for victim-perpetrator relationship on the perceptions of victim stalking, specifically perceptions of victim stalking would be higher in the Former Lover condition, followed by the Stranger, and Acquaintance conditions. The Former Lover was most likely perceived to be a victim of stalking, followed by Stranger, then Acquaintance, which was hypothesized. Findings supported Scott et al., (2014) the the majority of stalking incidents involved a perpetrator that the victim knew. Interestingly, there was a difference between Former Lover and Stranger, and Former Lover and Acquaintance. However, there was no difference between Stranger and Acquaintance condition. Stranger and Acquaintance were perceived to be least likely to be a victim of stalking. This goes against the conception of individuals fearing strangers. Additionally, it goes against Weller et al. (2013) findings of stranger stalkers being strongly constituted as stalking. Results found could have been due to the types of

participants used in the current study. Participants were recruited from psychology classrooms, and they may have had prior knowledge of stalking and its various influences.

It was also hypothesized that there would be a main effect for type of stalking on the perceptions of victim stalking. Specifically, the perceptions of victim stalking would be higher in Following condition, subsequent to Cyber condition, then Texting condition. Texting was perceived to be the highest for victim of stalking variable, followed by Following, then Cyber. Texting was perceived as the highest possibly because a virtual message can be interpreted in various forms. Results found could be explained because of the type of scenarios presented. The vignette survey was not specific as to what the text message had said, therefore the context of a text message was open for interpretation.

The current study hypothesized that there would be a main effect for victim-perpetrator relationship on the belief that the individual being stalked was in a dangerous situation, specifically the belief that the individual being stalked was in a dangerous situation would be higher in the Stranger condition, then Former Lover, and lastly the Acquaintance condition. There was a difference between all three conditions with Former Lover relationship highly perceived as a dangerous situation, followed

by Stranger, and then Acquaintance. Participants were predominantly females and psychology students, it could have been possible for them to have been aware and educated on the current topic. Again, findings go against past research for stalking-like behaviors involving a stranger invoked more fear than a former lover (Hills et al., 1998). This could also be suggestive of communities, schools, and law enforcement bringing more awareness on stalking.

It was also hypothesized that there would be a main effect for type of stalking on the belief that the individual being stalked was in a dangerous situation, specifically the Following condition would be the highest, followed by Texting condition, and lastly the Cyber condition. There was a difference between Texting and Following, and Texting and Cyber, but there was no difference between Following and Cyber. It was perceived that Texting would be the highest form of stalking when portraying a dangerous situation, followed by Following, and then Cyber. It could have been possible for the current study to have interpreted unwanted communication as a the most dangerous situation because it could lead to harassment and other unwanted actions and dangerous behaviors.

It was hypothesized that there would be a main effect for victim-perpetrator relationship on the belief of the likelihood

of fear. Specifically, the main belief of the likelihood of fear would be highest in the Stranger condition, followed by the Former Lover condition, and lastly the Acquaintance condition. Results revealed that there was a difference between all three conditions with Former Lover relationship perceived as the most likely for the likelihood of fear, followed by Stranger, then by Acquaintance. Although, findings go against perception research it does correspond with applied research. Tjaden et al. (1998) revealed that 59 percent of stalking cases involved a Former Lover as the perpetrator. Again, indicating the public to be more educated upon the topic of stalking.

It was also hypothesized that there would be a main effect for type of stalking on the belief of the likelihood of fear. Specifically, the belief of the likelihood of fear would score highest in Following, then Cyber, then Texting. It was perceived that Texting was the most likely for the likelihood of fear, followed by Following, and then Cyber. Although, there was a difference seen between Texting and Cyber, there was no difference between Texting and Following, and Following and Cyber.

It was hypothesized the perceptions of the likelihood of threat to safety would score higher in Stranger, followed by Former Lover, and then Acquaintance. It was found that Former

Lover was perceived to be the more likely of a threat of safety, followed by Stranger, and Acquaintance. There was a difference seen between Former Lover and Acquaintance, but there was no difference between Former Lover and Stranger, and Stranger and Acquaintance. Former Lover relationship was perceived to be the highest threat to safety but was not perceived too much higher of threat than Stranger. Similarly, there was not much difference between Stranger and Acquaintance. A common pattern has been shown that Former Lover has been perceived as the superior out of all three.

Findings counter past perception research but correspond, once again, with past applied research reporting victims of a Former Lover stalker to be found at the highest risk of being physically assaulted by their stalker and posing a threat to their safety (Sheridan et al., 2015). It was also hypothesized a main effect was also posited for type of stalking on perceptions of threat to safety. Specifically, the perceptions of threat to safety would score higher in Following condition, subsequent to Cyber condition, then Texting condition. Texting was perceived to be the highest threat to safety, followed by Following, then Cyber. There was a difference between Texting and Cyber, and also a difference between Texting and Following. However, there was no difference between Following and Texting, and no difference of

threat to safety between Following and Cyber. This demonstrated that the current study did not identify a high amount of threat to safety between Following and Cyber. Cyber tended to be the least likely out of the three to be perceived as a threat to safety. Once again, going against past reserch. Melander (2010) stated the use of technology was commonly used as a form of stalking towards an intimate partner (Melander, 2010). Cyberstalking needs to be explored more to gather sufficient amount of information with the aim to educate others on its link to stalking.

It was hypothesized that the belief that the stalker would behave violently with the highest at Former Lover, followed by Stranger condition, lastly followed by Acquaintance condition. It was perceived that Former Lover was the most likely to behave violently, followed by Stranger, and then Acquaintance. There was a difference between Former Lover and Acquaintance, and no difference between Former Lover and Stranger. Former Lover was perceived the highest likely to behave violently in a stalking scenario but does not differentiate much from Stranger. Again, going against past perception research but supported by applied research. It was also hypothesized that there would be a main effect for type of stalking on the belief that the stalker would behave violently. Specifically, with Following scoring the

highest, followed by Texting, then followed by Cyber. Texting was perceived to be the most likely form of stalking to lead to violent behaviors, followed by Following, and then Cyber. There was a difference between Texting and Cyber. However, there was no difference between Texting and Following, and no difference between Following and Cyber.

Conclusion

Stalking has affected a large portion of the world's population. The stigma of stalking occurring only between strangers and only described in the form of following has slowly decreased as demonstrated by the current study. Although, past perception research suggested that stranger relationship was placed at the highest concern. The current study has found that its participants identified former lovers to be the highest likely to be a victim of stalking, dangerous situation, fear, threat to safety, and behave violently. This has demonstrated that the public has a better understanding of stalking. Awareness has increased over the years on stalking and placed its highest concern on former lover relationships. This movement should continue, it should continue to raise awareness and educate others on stalking to prevent others from torment, or even save a life.

Nevertheless, it needs to be understood that new forms of stalking have been created within recent years due to the advancement of technology. This was evidently demonstrated in the results found. Following has always been identified as the most feared and typical type of stalking (McEwan et al., 2013). However, this was not the case as participants identified Texting to be the most likely to be a victim of stalking, dangerous situation, fear, threat to safety, and to behave violently. Yet, Following followed closely behind Texting. There has been an increase in use of technology within the recent years. The younger generations prefer to communicate virtually. There could be no limit as to what could be sent virtually. The current study's average age of participants was 22 years old and percevied texting to be the most likely of type of stalking in all dependent variables. The importance of recognizing a shift in research should be gravely noticed. The current study identified texting to be the highest form of stalking as it could be the highest likely form of stalking due to its popular usage within todays society. Although, past research does not have much information yet in this specific topic, research should continue to push to understand other possible factors linked to Texting. Virtual unwanted communication regarding stalking should be furthered studied.

Recommendations

Recommendations for future studies: examine the public's perception with having a strong and detailed instrument. The current study used a vignette for the instrument measuring the variables. The vignette should be created with a more specific direction, this could include considering other specific variables that can alter the public's perception of stalking. Possibly replacing variables or eliminating some variables examined. Another option could be to stick to one type of stalking and not include all three. Additionally, the scenarios in the vignette were minimal in description. Minimal description of a scenario can leave room for much interpretation.

Psychologists

Psychologists should continue to research the public's perception regarding stalking and other factors that contribute to altering the perception of others when presented a stalking scenario. There is substantial amount of information on stalking but there is not enough information regarding cyberstalking and texting. Psychologists should began to explore other forms of stalking, specifically cyberstalking and texting, and how it can affect victims of stalking in present time. For example, examine cyberstalking to a greater extent within stalking scenarios

focusing on former lover, acquaintance, and/or stranger relationship. Virtual communication, like texting and social media, have been the most popular form of communication to date. The goal should be to reduce the number of stalking victims therefore psychologists should explore the in greater detail the topic of cyberstalking, texting and how it plays a role in stalking.

Limitations

The current study had a few limitations that could have altered the final results. First, participants were all recruited from one private university, which limits the ability to have diversity within a study. The participants were predominantly of the Caucasian race, of the Christian religion, and predominantly identified with being female. Furthermore, the participants were recruited from psychology classrooms. Therefore, the likelihood of the participants obtaining prior knowledge of the current topic was high. Additionally, the vignette survey created was not specific enough in each scenario. The scenarios were minimal in detail and only presented the variables studied, not taking into consideration other variables and details that could have contributed to the current study.

Future Research

    Future research wanting to examine the public's perception on stalking should highly consider other specific factors in great detail. Future research should explore other less frequently visitued aveneues regarding stalking scenarios. The research on stalking has been great in size and past research has found substantial amount of information that could possibly contribute to affecting the public's perception, specifically in Following. Therefore, future research should take precaution into researching the same variable too many times. To prevent this from occurring, collect extensive past research to help prioritize the most important variables and eliminate unnecessary variables. Additionally, future research should further examine cyberstalking and texting as a serious form of stalking, and also examine possible negative consequences that follow.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE SURVEY

Demographics:

What is your age (years)?   _____

 What is your gender?

o   Male
o   Female
o   Other

Please specify your ethnicity:

o   White/Caucasian
o   Hispanic/Latino
o   African American
o   Asian/Pacific Islander
o   Other

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

o   High school or equivalent
o   Vocational/technical school
o   Some college
o   Bachelor's degree
o   Master's degree
o   Doctoral degree
o   Professional degree (MD, JD, etc.)

What is your current marital status?

o   Married
o   Divorced
o   Single, never married
o   Living with another
o   Separated

o   Widowed

Please answer the questions below based on the following sentence.

Q1) Cindy and Sam are ex former lovers. Sam begins following Cindy three times a day for more than six weeks.

1. Cindy is a victim of stalking.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

2. Cindy is in a dangerous situation.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

3. Sam is likely to behave violently towards Cindy.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

4. Sam is a threat to Cindy's safety.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

5. How likely is that Cindy is fearful of Sam?

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

Please answer the questions below based on the following sentence.

Q2) Cindy and Sam are acquaintances. Sam begins following Sam at least three times a day for more than six weeks.

1. Cindy is a victim of stalking.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

2. Cindy is in a dangerous situation.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

3. Sam is likely to behave violently towards Cindy.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

4. Sam is a threat to Cindy's safety.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

5. How likely is that Cindy is fearful of Sam?

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

Please answer the questions below based on the following sentence.

Q3) Cindy and Sam are strangers. Sam begins following Cindy at least three times a day for more than six weeks.

1. Cindy is a victim of stalking.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

2. Cindy is in a dangerous situation.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

3. Sam is likely to behave violently towards Cindy.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

4. Sam is a threat to Cindy's safety.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

5. How likely is that Cindy is fearful of Sam?

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

Please answer the questions below based on the following sentence.

Q4) Cindy and Sam are ex former lovers. Sam checks Cindy's social media at least three times a day for more than six weeks.

1. Cindy is a victim of stalking.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

2. Cindy is in a dangerous situation.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

3. Sam is likely to behave violently towards Cindy.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

4. Sam is a threat to Cindy's safety.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

5. How likely is that Cindy is fearful of Sam?

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

Please answer the questions below based on the following sentence.

 Q5) Cindy and Sam are acquaintances. Sam checks Cindy's social media at least three times a day for more than six weeks.

1. Cindy is a victim of stalking.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

2. Cindy is in a dangerous situation.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

3. Sam is likely to behave violently towards Cindy.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

4. Sam is a threat to Cindy's safety.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

5. How likely is that Cindy is fearful of Sam?

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

Please answer the questions below based on the following sentence.

Q6) Cindy and Sam are strangers. Sam checks Cindy's social media at least three times a day for more than six weeks.

1. Cindy is a victim of stalking.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

2. Cindy is in a dangerous situation.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

3. Sam is likely to behave violently towards Cindy.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

4. Sam is a threat to Cindy's safety.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

5. How likely is that Cindy is fearful of Sam?

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

Please answer the questions below based on the following sentence.

Q7) Cindy and Sam are ex former lovers. Sam sends texts to Cindy at least three times a day for more than six weeks.

1. Cindy is a victim of stalking.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

2. Cindy is in a dangerous situation.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

3. Sam is likely to behave violently towards Cindy.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

4. Sam is a threat to Cindy's safety.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

5. How likely is that Cindy is fearful of Sam?

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

Please answer the questions below based on the following sentence.

Q8) Cindy and Sam are acquaintances. Sam sends texts to Cindy at least three times a day for more than six weeks.

1. Cindy is a victim of stalking.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

2. Cindy is in a dangerous situation.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

3. Sam is likely to behave violently towards Cindy.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

4. Sam is a threat to Cindy's safety.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

5. How likely is that Cindy is fearful of Sam?

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

Please answer the questions below based on the following sentence.

Q9) Cindy and Sam are strangers. Sam sends texts to Cindy at least three times a day for more than six weeks.

1. Cindy is a victim of stalking.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

2. Cindy is in a dangerous situation.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

3. Sam is likely to behave violently towards Cindy.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

4. Sam is a threat to Cindy's safety.

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

5. How likely is that Cindy is fearful of Sam?

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Recruitment Script:

The following will be used: "Hi, my name is Ysmara Sainz and I am currently a Forensics Psychology Masters student at California Baptist University. I am conducting a study for my thesis that examines perception of stalking in regards to victim-perpetrator relationships. The study contains 9-items and will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary and this will not count against you in any way if you do not wish to participate. Your survey responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. Would you like to participate in my study?"

Recruitment:

1. Instructor consent will be sought. Instructor will sign a consent form granting permission to utilize students for research and collect data in their classroom (at the end of the class).

2. All instructors consent forms will be sent to IRB prior to collecting data.

3. Research will go to the instructor classroom on a date and time set prior by the instructor.

4. Students will be recruited in the classroom

5. Recruiting participants will include asking students in each classroom if they wish to participate in the current study. There will be no incentive to participate in the current study. All

data will be anonymous and locked for safekeeping.

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Participant Consent Form

Ysmara H. Sainz

Public's Perception on Stalking: Victim-Perpetrator Relationship

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Ysmara H. Sainz a student at California Baptist University within the College of Behavior and Social Sciences, Master of Arts in Forensic Psychology graduate program. I anticipate discovering the public's insight an association on stalking and victim-perpetrator relationship. You were selected as a possible candidate for this study because you are eighteen years of age or older.

If you decide to commit to participate in this study you will be given a survey with lists of scenarios followed by several closed-ended questions regarding the scenarios given. You are not given a time limit to complete the survey.

No foreseeable risk of distress to participants during data collection is anticipated. Social and mental discomfort will be at minimal to no risk. If needed, the CBU Counseling Center is located at 3510 Adams Street, Riverside, CA 92504, (951) 689-1220. The research is intended to benefit the fields of forensic psychology and higher education by examining the public's perceptions of stalking regarding victim-perpetrator relationship. However, I cannot guarantee that you personally will receive any benefits from this research. No compensation will be given for your participation in this study.

Any information obtained in this study that can be identified with you remains confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. This study will not ask for identifying details and all information used in the study will be coded to protect participates privacy and confidentiality. No identifiable information will be connected to the survey questions. Additionally, all data will be stored in a safe and secure location.

Your participation is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with California Baptist University, the School of Behavioral Sciences, or the Master of Arts in Forensic Psychology graduate program. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal rights or future claims.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Ysmara Sainz, ysmarahaydee.sainz@calbaptist.edu). You may also contact the student's advisor, Dr. Ana Gamez (951-343-4791, agamez@calbaptist.edu). If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the IRB (IRB@calbaptist.edu).

Signature

_____

Date

_____

APPENDIX D

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Community Resources
National Suicide Lifeline
Contact: (800) 273-8255

HELPLine 24-Hour Crisis/Suicide Intervention
Contact: (951) 686-4357

24/7 Mental Health Urgent Care
Address: 9990 County Farm Rd., Riverside, CA 92503
Contact: (951) 509-2499

Riverside University Health System Medical Center Emergency
Treatment Services (ETS)
Address: 9990 County Farm Rd. (Suite 4), Riverside, CA, 92503
Contact: (951) 358-4881

California Baptist University Counseling Center
Make an appointment at: calbaptist.edu/counseling-center/

Riverside Community Hospital
Address: 4445 Magnolia Ave., Riverside, CA 92501
Contact: (951) 788-3000

Pacific Grove Hospital (24 Hours)
Address: 5900 Brockton Ave., Riverside, CA 92506
Contact: (951) 330-3649

Riverside County Mental Health
Address: 1195 Magnolia Ave, Corona, CA 92879
Contact: (951) 273-0608

Orange Psychiatric Medical Group
Address: 4510 Brockton Ave. #375, Riverside, CA 92501
Contact: (951) 276-1100